



# What Works for Health

## Policies and Programs to Improve Wisconsin's Health

Social & Economic Factors - Community Safety - Prevent neighborhood crime and violence

### Restorative justice in the criminal justice system

*Is this program or policy in use in your community? Tell us about it.*

#### Description

Restorative justice in the criminal justice system uses victim and offender dialogue to address the harm caused by a crime as well as victims' experiences, interests and needs (Latimer 2005). This approach can be practiced using sharing circles, victim-offender mediation, or facilitated face-to-face conferences that include victims, offenders, their families, friends, and other community members. Restorative justice can occur throughout the criminal justice process, from pre-arrest to post-sentence, and can take place in settings such as prisons, therapeutic facilities, and communities (Daly 2016, Koss 2014). Judges may consider reducing some offenders' sentences following restorative justice participation (Sherman 2007).

#### Expected Beneficial Outcomes

Reduced recidivism  
Increased satisfaction with justice process  
Reduced post-traumatic stress

#### Evidence of Effectiveness

There is strong evidence that restorative justice in the criminal justice system reduces recidivism (Campbell-Strang 2013, Latimer 2005, Sherman 2015, Sherman 2007). For juvenile offenders, effects on recidivism appear strongest when restorative justice practices are implemented with researcher involvement and high fidelity to tested models (Schwalbe 2012, Hipple 2014).

Victims of crime who participate in restorative justice efforts have greater levels of satisfaction with the justice process than those who participate in the traditional justice process (Campbell-Strang 2013, Latimer 2005). Restorative justice conferencing can also reduce victims' post-traumatic stress symptoms (Sherman 2015, Angel 2014, Koss 2014).

Offenders who participate in restorative justice appear more likely to comply with restitution requirements than those who participate in the traditional justice system (Latimer 2005). In some circumstances, offenders report greater levels of satisfaction with the restorative justice process than the traditional justice process (Latimer 2005, Sherman 2007).

Victim-offender mediation appears to reduce juvenile recidivism (Nugent 2004). Arizona-based studies indicate that juvenile offenders in restorative justice conferencing are less likely to reoffend than peers in a traditional diversion program (Rodriguez 2007, De Beus 2007); effects are greater for girls and youth with few prior offenses than boys and youth with more prior offenses (Rodriguez 2007). First-time juvenile offenders who participate in restorative justice programs may be less likely to reoffend than peers in the traditional justice system (Bergseth 2013); additional evidence is needed to confirm effects (Cochrane-Livingstone 2013).

Researchers suggest that police-led conferences and in-person requests to victims support victim participation in restorative justice conferences (Sherman 2007). Victim-centered practice, open and respectful interactions in a safe environment, and facilitator training also support effective restorative justice for youth (Choi 2012).

A Washington-based analysis estimates that restorative justice conferencing cost about \$1,080 per participant in 2016, with a benefit to cost ratio of \$3.49 (WSIPP-Benefit cost).

#### Implementation

##### United States

Restorative justice has been implemented in some states, such as Illinois (IBARJ), and in many American Indian and Alaskan Native communities (Tribal Youth-RJ). City-level efforts are also underway in many communities, including Baltimore's Community Conferencing Center (CCC-Baltimore), Brooklyn's Common Justice (CJ-Brooklyn), and Minneapolis' victim-offender mediation program (OJJDP Model Programs).

<b>Health Factors:</b>	Community Safety
<b>Decision Makers:</b>	Community Members Local Government State Government Federal Government
<b>Evidence Rating:</b>	Scientifically Supported
<b>Population Reach:</b>	20-49% of WI's population
<b>Impact on Disparities:</b>	No impact on disparities likely

## Wisconsin

Wisconsin has many restorative justice programs, for example, in Barron ([Barron-RJP](#)), Dane ([Dane-CRC](#)), and Burnett County ([Northwest WI-RJ](#)).

## Implementation Resources

[CJR-RJ](#) - Center for Justice and Reconciliation (CJR). Restorative Justice (RJ). Accessed on March 30, 2017

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[Rodriguez 2007\\*](#) - Rodriguez N. Restorative justice at work: Examining the impact of restorative justice resolutions on juvenile recidivism. *Crime & Delinquency*. 2007;53(3):355–79. Accessed on March 24, 2017

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