

# RESTORATIVE JUSTICE GIVES YOU A VOICE.

## What is Restorative Justice?

Restorative justice is an approach to justice that offers a chance for everyone involved to share their story. It brings the victims of crime, their offender, and community members together to talk about what happened and explain how the crime has affected them. It provides the chance to address the harm that has been done and to find ways that it can be repaired.

- It is focused on problem solving.
- It encourages meaningful dialogue.
- It builds understanding and equality.
- It promotes offender accountability.
- It provides an opportunity for healing, reparation, and reintegration.

## Nicola Valley Restorative Justice Program

For More Information Contact Us At:

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Nicola Valley Community  
Justice Services Society

*Restorative Justice*

## How Does Restorative Justice Work?

Restorative justice is a voluntary process which can only happen if all parties are willing to participate. It involves many carefully planned processes that include victim and offender mediation, peace-making circles, and most importantly, Community Justice Forums. These forums are a great resource tool for dealing with criminal matters, as well as, conflict and dispute resolution.

## What is a Community Justice Forum?

A Community Justice Forum is a safe and controlled environment in which an offender, victim, their families and supporters are brought together under the guidance of a trained facilitator. Together they discuss the offence, how they have been affected, and jointly develop a plan to correct what has occurred. The agreement can involve an apology, restitution to the victim, community service work, and counselling or addictions treatment for the offender.

## During The Process You Will Discuss:



What happened during the offence



How you and others were affected by what happened



What questions and concerns you have in the aftermath of the offence



What are the things that can be done by the offender to repair the harm

## The Benefits of Restorative Justice

### To Victims:

- It inspires empowerment.
- It allows them the chance to be heard.
- It encourages meaningful dialogue.
- It offers higher rates of satisfaction over the normal criminal justice process.
- It provides reparation and closure.

### To People Who Offend:

- It provides an opportunity to make things right.
- It offers a way to put the incident behind them.
- It is a quicker resolution than the court process.
- It has a higher rate of compliance.

### To The Community:

- It has a high rate of success in reducing repeat offenses.
- It offers increased safety.
- It is cost effective.
- It builds stronger communities.

## Where Can I Get More Information?

The Nicola Valley Restorative Justice Program and the Merritt RCMP are happy to answer any questions or comments you may have regarding Restorative Justice and Community Justice Forums.

If a trained facilitator is not available within your community, please call our coordinator and we will ensure that a trained facilitator is made available to you. The coordinator can also arrange a training for interested and committed members of your community to train as CJF facilitators.

For more information or if you are interested in the training, please contact us at (250) 378-5010 or the Merritt RCMP detachment (250) 378-4262

## Why are Community Justice Forum's Successful?

A Community Justice Forum is powerful in its ability to reintegrate an offender and restore balance for victims. The process provides an opportunity for offenders to accept responsibility for their actions and to understand the impact of their behaviour on others. As a result, when offered the chance, many offenders are willing to do whatever they can to repair the harm they have caused. Also, when victims are able to express how they have been affected by what has happened and then see and hear genuine expressions of remorse, they are more likely to accept and to forgive. This brings about the closure they are looking for in order to put the matter behind them and move on.

## Do My Circumstances Qualify?

The following criteria must be met before an offender can be considered for the process:

- The offender must take responsibility for their actions and be willing to participate voluntarily.
- Victim involvement is essential to the process.
- Criminal cases are referred to the program by the Police or Crown.
- The facilitator must feel the case is suitable for restorative justice and its process.

