
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE + ACCOUNTABILITY

UNDERSTANDING THE FUNDAMENTALS.

AGENDA

- Defining Restorative Justice
 - Restorative Justice culture vs. Punitive Justice culture
 - Reimagining exercise + small group discussion
 - The role of accountability in Restorative Justice
 - Small group discussion
 - Q & A
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HOUSEKEEPING

- The chat
- Feel free to be on or off screen
- Small group breakouts
- Materials sent out after the session



RESTORATIVE JUSTICE: THE FUNDAMENTALS

- Restorative Justice (RJ) is a fundamental shift in how we respond to harm.
 - RJ shifts the emphasis from punishment to healing + repair.
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RESTORATIVE JUSTICE: THE FUNDAMENTALS

- When harm happens, relationships and communities are damaged.
 - RJ seeks to repair relationships and strengthen communities.
 - Conversely, punitive justice further damages communities by removing / expelling / incarcerating community members.
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RESTORATIVE JUSTICE: THE FUNDAMENTALS

- RJ aims to “put things as right as possible” by asking:
 - Who was harmed?
 - What do they need?
 - Whose obligation is it to meet those needs?

(Howard Zehr)

PUNITIVE JUSTICE

- “We are habituated to punitive justice because it is the only option we have been given.”
 - Our current system disincentivizes truth telling.
 - Our apologies are used against us.
 - Our real needs don't get met.
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QUICK REFLECTION

When considering the needs of all parties involved in an incident of harm or caught in a harmful environment / system, what are some of the needs that punitive justice is unlikely to address?

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Goals + Intentions

- “RJ is about being restored to wholeness.” - sujatha baliga
 - We want everyone to walk out with their dignity intact.
 - Going to the cause of the cause of the cause (Sonya Shah).
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RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

- RJ is not just a process, it is a *way*.
 - We seek to promote a *culture* of Restorative Justice.
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Qualities of Punitive Justice

- *Disposability*
- *Linearity*
- *“Cancel culture”*
- *Patriarchal*
- *Unilateral / hierarchical / individualist*
- *Rigid*
- *Urgent / hasty*
- *Litigious / arbitrary*
- *Tied to profit-earning + capitalism*
- *Superficial or temporary “solutions”*
- *Power over / power to*
- *Fear-based*

Qualities of Restorative Justice

- *Inclusivity*
- *Nonlinear / iterative / imaginative*
- *Beloved community*
- *Interdependent*
- *Community-centered / “in-relationship”*
- *(Co) creative / messy*
- *Slow / patient*
- *Survivor-centred*
- *Humanizing*
- *Rooted in healing*
- *Power with*
- *Rooted in courage + love*

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE: THE HOW

- We cannot be effective RJ practitioners out in the world if we are not first practicing RJ regularly in our own lives.
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SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

15 minutes / Groups of 4

What dimension of your work with Rising Scholars feel rooted in or representative of Punitive Justice culture?

Now re-envision your work with Rising Scholars through the lens of Restorative Justice. What would be different? What would the impact be on individuals and on relationships? What would the lasting impact be?

ACCOUNTABILITY

“Accountability is the corollary to grief for those of us who are responsible for harm...I have become persuaded that accountability does for those of us who commit harm what the healing process does for us when we are harmed: it gives us a way to recuperate our sense of dignity, of self-worth, of connectedness, and of hope -- the things we lost when we caused harm. In this work, I have come to accountability as something that is as essential as a grieving process to restoring us to our best selves.”

Danielle Sered, Until We Reckon

ACCOUNTABILITY

- Accountability means being responsible to yourself and those around you for your choices and the consequences of your choices.
 - Accountability is not a character trait; it is an active process that people choose to engage in voluntarily and ongoingly.
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ACCOUNTABILITY

“What changes us are the processes of making amends, incorporating another’s reality into our own, of knowing ourselves, our motivations, of being in practice that interrupts our unconscious and violent flailing. What changes us is vulnerability, acknowledgement, and responsibility.”

Prentis Hemphill, Letting Go of Innocence

ACCOUNTABILITY

- Accountability includes:
 - Looking further.
 - Feeling more.
 - Understanding ourselves and the patterns in which we are caught.
 - Acknowledging our impact.
 - Apologizing and making amends.
 - Becoming responsible for our own change and transformation.
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ACCOUNTABILITY VS. PUNISHMENT

- Accountability is *not* punishment.
 - Accountability is a self-generated willingness to accept responsibility for our own actions.
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WHAT GETS IN THE WAY OF ACCOUNTABILITY

- Trauma (personal and collective)
 - Shame
 - The myth of innocence
 - Punitive Justice
 - Systems of oppression that inherently criminalize marginalized identities
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SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

10 minutes / Groups of 4

Reflect on the following questions:

1. What gets in the way of accountability for you personally?
 2. What are the potential healing impacts of accountability?
 3. How do we cultivate a culture in which accountability is practiced and celebrated? How can we make accountability feel as safe as possible for those practicing it?
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Q & A

What question do you have about Restorative Justice?
