



EUROPEAN **FORUM** FOR RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Connecting People to Restore Just Relations

Restorative Approaches to Support the Transition From Prison to Probation

WORKSHOP ON TRANSITION FROM PRISON TO PROBATION:
CONTINUITY OF CARE AND

CONTROL² DECEMBER 2025, BARCELONA

EDIT TÖRZS – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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European Forum for Restorative Justice

NGO, network, 450+ members, based in
Leuven, Belgium, founded in 2000

Vision: every person in Europe has access to
high quality restorative justice services in
any time and in any case

Strategic aims:

1. Developing practice
2. Raising awareness
3. Contributing to policy development

All informed by research.



European Forum for Restorative Justice



What we do:

- Events
- Trainings
- Publications
- Research projects
- Guidelines and manuals
- Quality review tools
- Information provision
- Awareness raising campaigns
- European Restorative Justice Policy Network
- EU, CoE, UNODC
- Working groups and committees
 - values and standards of RJ
 - RJ in prison
 - gender-based violence
 - environmental restorative justice



Restorative Justice

- a values-based approach for more humane criminal justice

“Restorative justice is a process which enables those harmed by crime, and those responsible for that harm, if they freely consent, to actively participate in the resolution of matters arising from the offence, through the help of a trained and impartial third party” (usually called mediator or facilitator) – CoE REC on RJ

- A values-based approach with core principles – voluntariness, inclusion, participation, accountability, restoration, confidentiality -> many practice models can fit (e.g. victim-offender mediation, conferencing, circles, surrogate programs)
- As a movement, holistic view on our societies and on social justice aiming at more humane justice.

Restorative Justice

Approach to crime/conflict

Crime/conflict – not only against the law/norms, but a violation of social relationships

Crime causes harm

Focus on restoration of the harm and relationships

Crime offers opportunities for change

Crime is not determining future

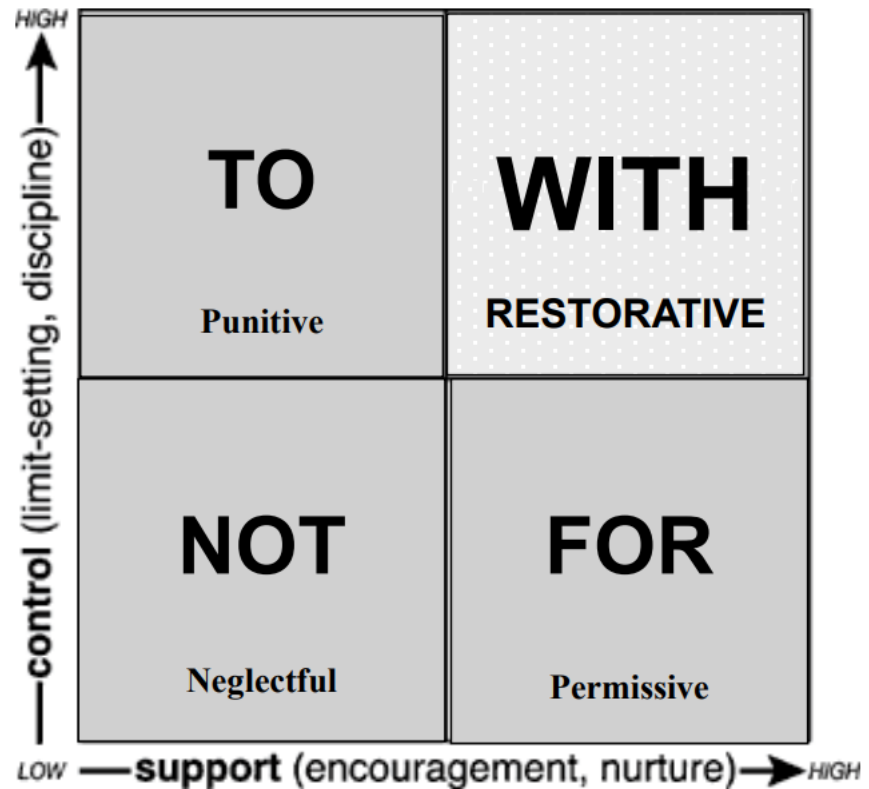
Possibility to take responsibility

Including all stakeholders – offender, victim, social network and society

Restorative Justice

Social discipline window

Wachtel and McCold, 2004



Restorative Justice

Process characteristics

Possibility to restore harm

Focus on active participation, ownership, responsibility, rights to and for restoration

Importance of communication (dialogue, storytelling, life-world, multi-partiality)

Involvement of the social network

Process-driven

Needs-based

Non-judgmental

Future-oriented

Restorative Justice

**From the perspective
of the person who
caused the harm**

Strength-based approach

Focus on qualities and competences

Focus on agency: identity, hope, belief,
motivation

Possibility to take up responsibility and actions

Supports desistance from crime

Participative communication

It is not an add-on technique – a task of every
professional (trauma-informed, empathetic, non-
judgmental care)

Restorative Justice - restoration in four directions

1. Self-restoration

Reflection, growth as a person, agency, own narrative, agency

2. Restoration towards the social network from closest to broader circles

3. Restoration towards the victim dealing with impact, harm, guilt, shame, regret, responsibility

4. Restoration towards (local) society employment, housing, investing in family, circles of support/activities; desistance from crime, pro-social engagement

2018 CoE Recommendation on restorative justice in criminal matters

CM/Rec(2018)8

58. Where offenders are sentenced to supervision and assistance by probation services, restorative justice may take place prior or concurrent to supervision and assistance, including during sentence planning work. Using restorative justice alongside sentence planning would allow restorative justice agreements to be considered when determining supervision and assistance plans.

59. ... lists interventions without a dialogue between offender and victims, that adhere closely to restorative justice – e.g. community reparation schemes, COSA, offender reintegration ceremonies etc.

60. ... restorative approaches can be used in conflicts between prisoners and prison officers, between prisoners, or between probation workers and the offenders they supervise. They may also be applied where there is a conflict between staff within judicial authorities or criminal justice agencies.

2018 CoE Recommendation on restorative justice in criminal matters

CM/Rec(2018)8

61. Restorative principles and approaches may be used proactively by judicial authorities and criminal justice agencies. For example, they could be utilised to build and maintain relationships: **among staff** within the criminal justice system; between police officers and members of the community; **among prisoners; between prisoners and their families; or between prisoners and prison officers.**

This can help to build trust, respect and social capital between or within these groups. Restorative principles and approaches may also be applied proactively by judicial authorities and criminal justice agencies when **making managerial decisions and consulting staff**, and in other areas of staff management and organisational decision-making. This can help to **build a restorative culture** within these organisations.

56.2 Whenever possible, prison authorities shall use mechanisms of restoration and mediation to resolve disputes with and among prisoners.

103.7 Prisoners who consent to do so may be involved in a programme of restorative justice and in making reparation for their offences.

International instruments

European Probation Rules

CM/Rec(2010)1

European Rules on community sanctions and measures

CM/Rec(2017)3

Restorative justice practices

97. Where probation agencies are involved in restorative justice processes, the rights and responsibilities of the offenders, the victims and the community shall be clearly defined and acknowledged. Appropriate training shall be provided to probation staff. Whatever specific intervention is used, the main aim shall be to make amends for the wrong done.

10 In appropriate cases and having due regard to the rights and needs of victims of crime, **offenders should be enabled and encouraged to make reparation for their offences to the victims or to the community.**

UN Kyoto Declaration 2020

Reducing reoffending through rehabilitation and reintegration

42. Facilitate, where appropriate and in accordance with domestic legal frameworks, **restorative justice processes at relevant stages in criminal proceedings** in order to assist the recovery of victims and the reintegration of offenders, as well as to prevent crime and recidivism, and assess their usefulness in this regard.

United Nations Model Strategies on Reducing Reoffending (the Kyoto Model Strategies) – forthcoming

<https://docs.un.org/en/E/RES/2025/16>

A growing body of evidence shows that **reoffending can be prevented by promoting rehabilitation, social reintegration, individual desistance from crime and restorative justice.**

However, the problem cannot be solved by the criminal justice system alone. It is necessary to address the root causes of criminal behaviour, including poverty, social inequalities, marginalization, and racial and other forms of discrimination, as well as the practical difficulties and stigma that impede the successful reintegration of offenders into society.

Model strategy nr 11: Restorative justice – also during the sentence execution phase

Restorative Justice

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Many ways to use for supporting reintegration



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Within prison:

- restorative language
- victim awareness work
- victim-offender dialogue
- conflicts between inmates
- conflicts with staff
- replacing disciplinary procedures
- common decisions within the prison community
- supporting family or other supportive relations (especially between parent-child)
- family group conferencing before release
- contacts with victim support before release
- “restorative prisons”

Under probation supervision:

- re-entry circles
- restorative language (affective questioning)
- defining contents of the probation plan
- victim-offender dialogue
- addressing victims’ needs
- engaging with those providing support in the community
- conflicts with community of care
- issues during probation period – non-compliance with measures

Resources

<https://rm.coe.int/16806f9905> - Johnstone, G: Restorative Justice in Prisons: Methods, Approaches and Effectiveness

Barabas, T. and Felligi, B. (eds.) (2012) Responsibility-taking, Relationship-building and Restoration in Prisons. Budapest: Foresee
https://www.euforumrj.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/mereps_finalpublication_en-1.pdf

Claes, B. and Shapland, J.M. (2017) Desistance from crime and restorative justice. Restorative Justice, 4 (3). pp. 302-322.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/20504721.2016.1245912>

Cornwell, D., Blad, J. and Wright, M. (eds.) (2013) Civilising Criminal Justice: An International Restorative Agenda for Penal Reform. Hook, Hampshire: Waterside Press

Marder, I. D. (2020): Building restorative probation services

Toews, Barb (2006): The little book of restorative justice for people in prison, GoodBooks

UN Handbook on Restorative Justice Programmes (2020)

Restorative justice and alternatives to detention, EFRJ -
<https://www.euforumrj.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/Thematic%20Brief%20on%20Alternatives%20to%20Detention.pdf>



RE^START FESTIVAL

Leuven, 6–9 December 2025

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Manifesto

For Restorative Justice and Human Rights

Restorative Justice Week 2025 | November 18th, 2025

**From Question to Principle:
Restorative Justice as a
Human Right**



**13th International Conference
of the EFRJ
Poznan, Poland 11-13 June
2026**

**Focus on the individual and
social impact of restorative
justice**

Thank you!

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