

RJ Working Practice Guidance

1. Introduction

Restorative practices are offered when there has been conflict or offending. They are offered to:

- people who have been harmed
- those who have caused harm
- others who have been affected by the harm (families, witnesses...)
- communities where harm has occurred

This practice guidance has been written to ensure that everyone involved in a restorative process with RJ Working knows what service they can expect.

2. Who we work with

Participation in any restorative work is voluntary.

Referrals are accepted from:

- individuals themselves, be they someone who has been harmed or someone who has caused harm
- those working with individuals or groups affected by conflict and/or offending

3. The Referral Process

RJ Working does not 'hold' cases or undertake 'casework' in the traditional sense. We provide an independent and impartial communication service that aims to address harm, provide opportunities for all parties to ask and answer questions; have their say and agree any appropriate outcomes/reparation.

Where another agency is making the referral, RJ Working's preference is to work through the restorative process in collaboration with the relevant worker(s) from that agency in order for them to support the person who uses their service and continue their specific work with that person, as appropriate.

Where individuals self-refer, RJ Working encourages them to be supported by a friend, relative, community worker or similar. Such support can help emotionally, practically and also serve as a witness to the process.

Each referral will be allotted a named co-ordinator. Most restorative work will be facilitated by two people working as a pair and they will arrange all necessary meetings.

RJ Working requires minimal information regarding referrals. We do note, however, that it is not always straightforward tracing other people involved in a conflict or offence and this often relies on information being made available by other agencies. RJ Working is committed to responsible (necessary and proportionate) information sharing agreements with relevant agencies.

4. Risk Assessment and Risk Management

RJ Working's policy and procedures regarding risk and including matters around lone and home visits will be followed. Information about risk issues will be sought from individuals and referring agencies.

5. The Restorative Process

Restorative processes can include:

- Preparation and planning
- Sending and receiving letters

- Shuttle meetings (where parties do not meet face to face but communications are ‘shuttled’ through the co-ordinators)
- Face to face meetings (sometimes called conferences)
- Monitoring action points in agreements
- Reviews of the outcomes of any of the above

It is very important that everyone involved in any restorative process has adequate time and support in order to prepare. The co-ordinators will encourage all parties to identify their needs, what they want to get out of a restorative process, what they expect to gain, how emotional issues can be managed etc.

It is very important that all parties feel safe and supported. Each situation is unique and every restorative process is too. People can decide what feels safe and reasonable for them, this may include practical matters such as choosing a venue for a meeting, knowing there will be separate waiting rooms etc.

6. Practice Standards

RJ Working works to the Restorative Justice Council’s ‘Best Practice Guidance’ and to Safeguarding Children and Safeguarding Adults legislation and local guidelines .

All co-ordinators/restorative practitioners will be RJC accredited practitioners or working towards RJC accreditation.

- All referrals will be acknowledged within one working day and allocated a co-ordinator who will contact the referred person within 5 working days to arrange a meeting with them, (and their referrer if appropriate).
- Every effort will be made to ascertain the name and location details of other involved parties in order to offer appropriate involvement in a restorative process, (involving agencies who are supporting that individual where possible).
- The co-ordinators will undertake all necessary planning and preparation meetings with all parties.
- Risk assessment for any process involved will be continuous. All cases, and particularly complex and / or serious cases, will be supervised rigorously.
- People’s specific needs and preferences will be taken into account, it may be appropriate to involve additional help from others such as interpreters, signers, advocates, specialist services such as - learning disability support services.
- Where an outcome agreement results from any restorative process (an agreement signed by all parties) it will be copied and supplied to all those involved in the restorative process.

7. Data Protection

As well as cjsm secure email, we will also ensure that any confidential information is held in complete confidentiality and that the systems we use have been approved as secure at the highest levels

8. Evaluation

RJ Working collects feedback on a voluntary basis from the individuals and organisations it works with. This information is used to improve our services.