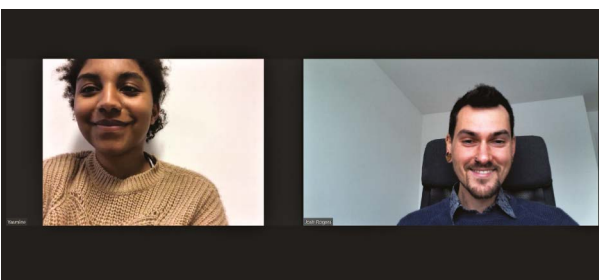
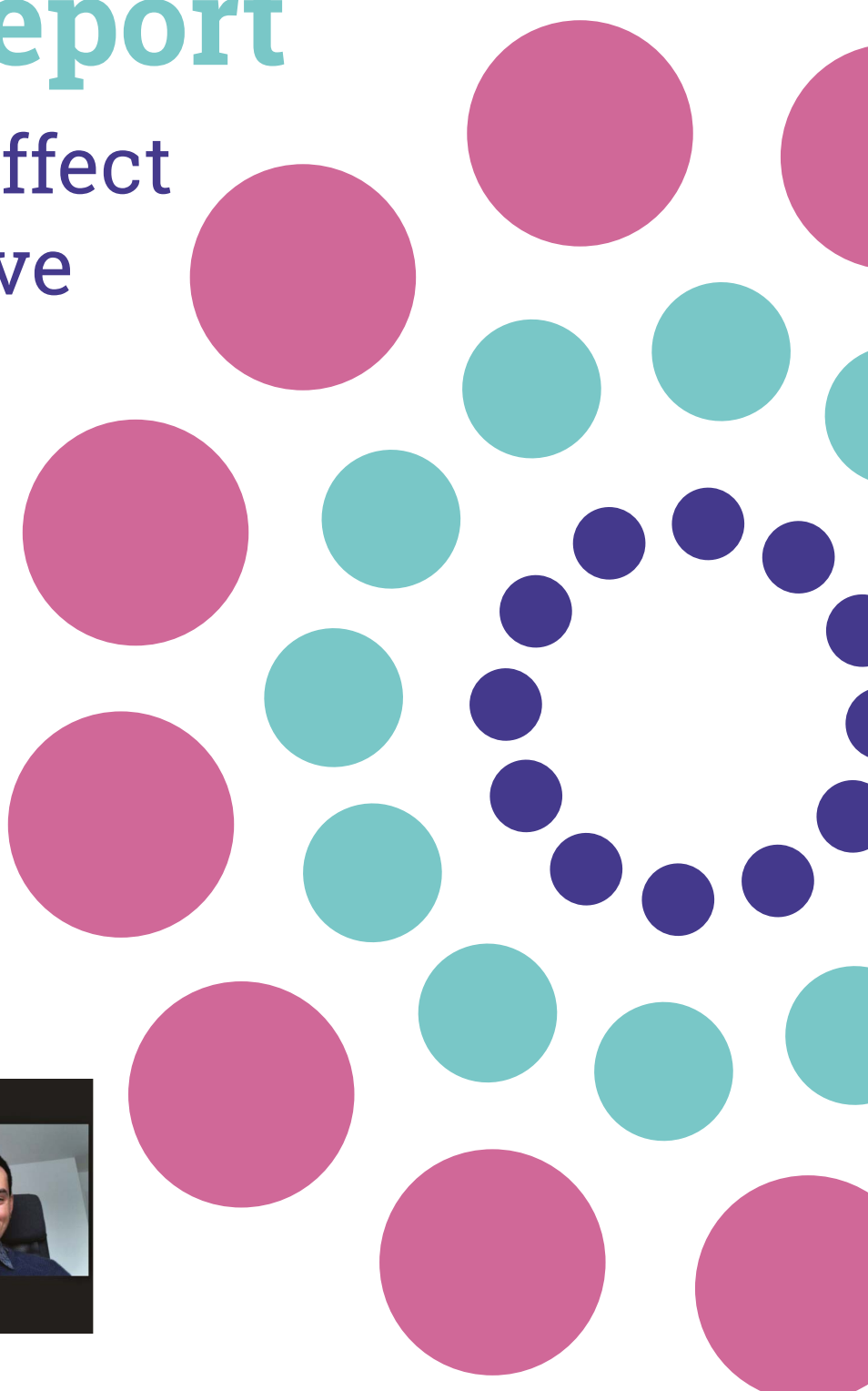


RJ Working
Restorative Approaches to Harm

2020 Impact Report

The ripple effect
of Restorative
Practice in
Cornwall





What we do to reduce inequality

RJ Working empowers young people to build relationships and better deal with conflict.

Our asset-based aims

- To promote every young person learning Restorative principles and language as part of their education
- To empower young people's teamwork and leadership, using Restorative Practice to better look after themselves and each other
- To show the value of young people's diverse perspectives, insights, identities and experiences through Restorative Practice.

The RJ Working team trains and facilitates groups of young people at all key stages. We also work with their key adults and school leaders. This year, a defining issue has been the raising of racism through the Black Lives Matter movement. Using Restorative practice to tackle this form of harm has been central to each of the programmes discussed in this report. An overview of our approach has been published by the UK Restorative Justice Council <https://restorativejustice.org.uk/blog/zero-tolerance-and-tackling-racism-restoratively-uk-education>.

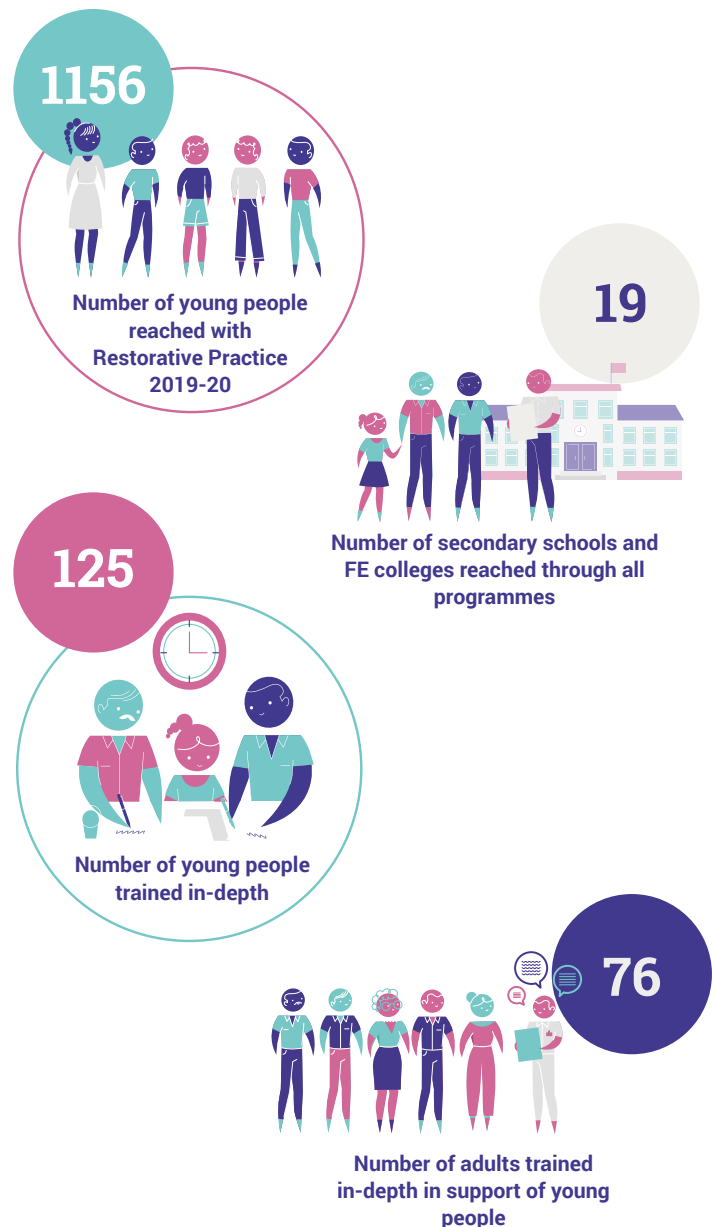
Covid-19 has taken its toll on schools and communities in countless ways, disrupting relationships and depleting resources. Restorative Practice offers a strengths-based approach for rebuilding and repairing community. Our response complements trauma-informed practice and fulfils government guidance*. The costs of Covid-19 will continue to deepen inequalities and we offer the Restorative model as 'social glue', a way of ensuring participation and a daily practice of every voice being heard. Adaptability is the key shared challenge and we are now offering interactive restorative group work online, coaching both young people and adults to build connections in new and creative ways.

* Schools must 'address and equip pupils to respond to issues linked to coronavirus' 'support pupils with approaches to improving their physical and mental wellbeing' <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>

Our impact

We catalyse change through an asset-based approach. This means we amplify the voices of young people by understanding their experience as an asset and by embracing young people's involvement at individual, programme and organisational levels.

We celebrate the Restorative changes happening in Cornwall. We invite cross-sector and multidisciplinary partnerships, here and further afield, to hear the voices and support participation of young people and support their participation and leadership.



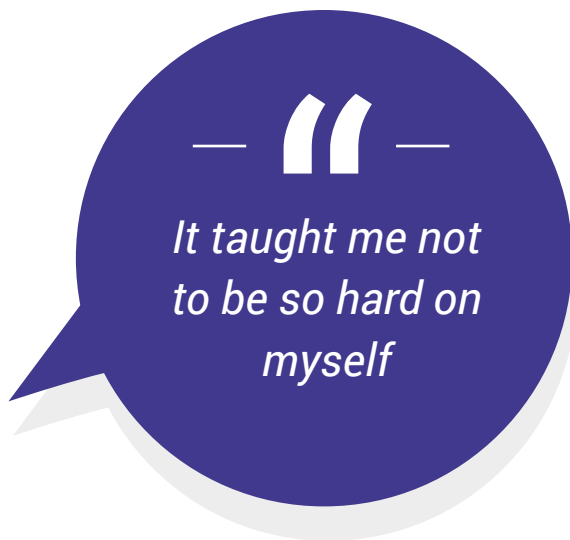


Empowering young people to lead change

The Ripple Effect

Our dynamic Ripple Effect programme can be delivered in a variety of ways. It equips young people with the language, principles and skills to be able to use Restorative Practice to better look after themselves and each other. Working with Year 9 students, we explore theory through scenarios, discuss film clips and rehearse restorative meetings.

From September to March we worked intensively in small groups across 5 of Cornwall's Secondary schools with 52 young people, to empower them to make a difference in their communities. We see confidence grow, groups become restorative teams, and empathy deepen as young people collaborate to work through challenges and share ideas.

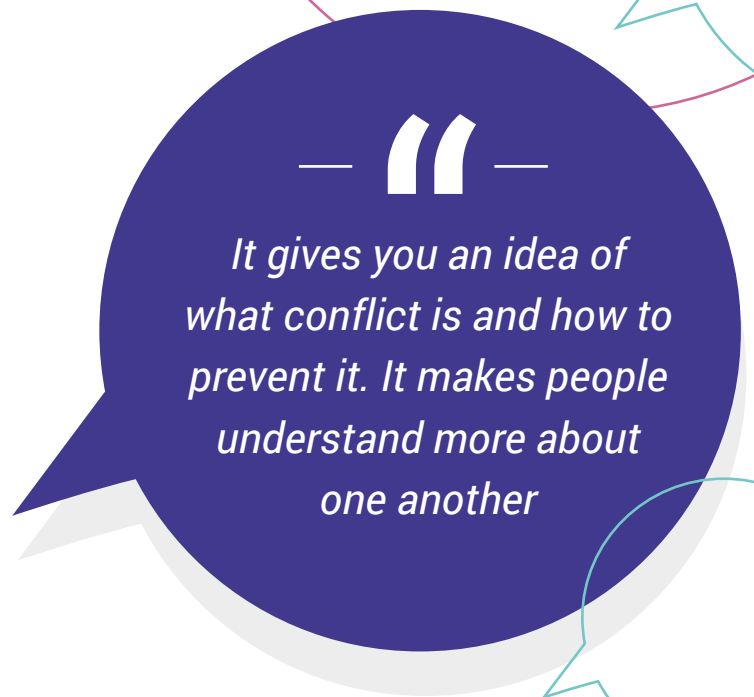


— “ —

It taught me not to be so hard on myself

I have better ways of dealing with conflict

100%
YES



— “ —

It gives you an idea of what conflict is and how to prevent it. It makes people understand more about one another

I have a better understanding of prejudice

100%
YES



Connecting young people for justice

Forming a vision for a better world


Restorative Justice is a global movement and Cornwall's young people are extending their sense of global citizenship through considering environmental harms and the social justice issues of migration and racism. In the spring and autumn of 2020, Josh and Louise worked with 30 young people in this way, first training in three different schools, then meeting at Pool Innovation Centre to develop their restorative thinking collaboratively. Conversations were developed through drama exercises and discussions; groups co-designed workshops to be shared with their peers and created social action plans. Young people who had arrived as strangers were soon working and laughing together; shared Restorative citizenship boosted their social confidence and communication.

At the start of lockdown, video conferences with these groups connected them through restorative questions to build understanding of the Covid-19 pandemic as a collective experience; young people owned their responses to imposed restrictions in a thoughtful and empathetic way.

For those able to meet us in person despite Covid-19, a second Young People Connect for Justice event included a ground-breaking dialogue about racism between trainers Josh and Yasmine, exploring the importance of discomfort in facing this harm together. Racial justice proved a powerful theme of the day, challenging young people to reflect on the issues of identity, inequality and diversity in Cornwall. When we asked, 'What is the one thing you will remember from today?', one strong reply was 'Everything Yasmine said'.

I feel more able to challenge injustice when I see it

100% YES



— “ —
I felt developed by building confidence

— “ —
Why use a restorative approach? The more you listen, the more you understand

— “ —
All of the students have found it thought provoking and I think on the whole it has changed their own perspective on how they deal with real life situations, so a big thank you from me

Staff member



Connecting young people for teamwork and leadership

Learning Restorative Practice for passing it on

Students at risk of isolation during lockdown worked in weekly online dynamic groups with RJ Working and their key school pastoral care staff member. The sessions enabled 40 young people, working in groups of 10, to connect with each other more deeply, develop trust and aspire to support others during challenging times.


Programme purposes:

- Enabling young people to use an online platform interactively for social and emotional learning despite Covid-19 imposing separation.
- Building teamwork, leadership, communication and problem-solving skills.
- Learning about self and others, especially in support of younger students.
- Growing knowledge and understanding about relationships and restorative approaches in the school community.'

Story of restorative change – the journey of a group

Working in virtual circles, we build mutual respect and ensure every voice is heard. Young people create a shared learning agreement to cement their commitment to each other. Using a range of prompts, clips and slides we facilitate small group discussion. Moving from individual offerings to brave sharing in a circle builds a team and grows an organic dialogue. Moments of struggle are supported by encouragement of others, circles become responsive; young people share for each other – affirmed by their nods and non-verbal communications as well as verbally. Their wish to pass on their learning to younger people – the Year 7s joining their schools in September – was captured through filmed recordings, which were energetic and heartfelt.

Restorative skills and tools enable young people to realise their own potential.



— “ —
When looking after my sister and helping my mum, I've got new ways of solving problems

— “ —
Conflict is everywhere it's just how you deal with it that matters

— “ —
He's more confident with people over computers and Zoom... also, more confident in saying what he would like and what his needs are

Parent of Year 8 participant

**100%
YES**

Do you feel more confident after the training?



Young people preparing for employment

Restorative Skills for the Workplace

In 2020 we piloted the development of a programme for Key Stage 4 students who missed out on work experience due to Covid-19. In groups of 10, working online and in person when restrictions allowed, 50 young people helped to develop a bank of knowledge about the skills needed for workplace relationships, which we will continue to grow and take to employers.

Bespoke short films were used as prompts for circle work and students used discussion and reflection to apply the Restorative model to real-life scenarios. A specialist Schools Careers lead said, "I was welcome to contribute my ideas, and I felt a valued member of the team in helping it take shape. I loved the opportunity because it's given me new skills to take forward confidently."

Story of restorative change: journey of a Young Person

A young person, alienated by authority within school found it hard to maintain focus in a conventional setting, struggled with achieving through traditional academic means and felt socially excluded. However, online he was more comfortable interacting with his peers and gradually became a confident spokesperson in the group.

This young person found that thanks to his own practical experience, he could understand the employment situations offered for discussion. He was able to participate in explaining to others in the group the interpersonal skills needed for employment. Mistakenly phoned by a school staff member struggling with technical issues and intending to reach their IT department, he collaborated to solve the issues and experienced a great sense of achievement through unusually working alongside adults as equals, as he had learned to do in the group. **In safe, facilitated restorative spaces, genuine collaboration becomes the norm.**

— “ —
Despite having conflicting opinions on a situation, often both sides will experience the same emotions and needs. being able to acknowledge this can both prevent and resolve a lot of conflicts

— “ —
Difficult situations can be mitigated through communication

Will the learning help you in your future work through developing your communication skills?

100% YES

100% YES

Did the workshops increase your learning of employment skills?



Key adults empower young people

Restorative Practice training programmes

Building staff expertise in schools ensures young people are supported as leaders of change. Culture change happens collectively; young people and adults collaborate to trial new ways of working, using the Restorative model to work through challenges and strengthen relationships. This year we trained colleagues from Secondary Schools and FE sites, and then directly worked with them as partners in co-delivering training to young people. In this way skills are embedded and professional standards supported. High quality relationships with adults are vital for young people to thrive; staff confident in leading circles and approaching conflict restoratively become agents of change within their school communities, from playground to boardroom.

This year, we trained 76 adults in our 3 day and 6 day programmes, reaching a range of fields from education to community arts, charity sector, local government, and social care.

— “ —

Thank you for a wonderful few days. It was both inspiring and incredibly insightful. The training was incredibly organised and as a participant I always felt in safe hands

Adult learner – Community

— “ —

Even after the first session, I was empowered to begin applying my learning in my school environment in my role. I see Restorative Justice as a hugely powerful tool to be used in schools to repair harm and reduce conflict, and am passionately committed to making it central to our attitudes, language and practices.

Parent of Year 8 participant

— “ —

Such a powerful, insightful learning experience

Adult learner – Education

— “ —

I find [some] behaviours deeply challenging, such as identity-based harm... asking Restorative Practice questions might be the first step towards stretching open perspectives

Adult learner - Charity



With thanks to all of the young people, schools, valued supporters and community members who have engaged in our work this year in pursuit of a fairer, more compassionate society for all.



We appreciate the support of the following organisations:



Contact us on:

