

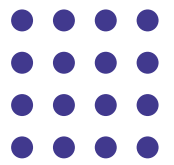


RJ Working
Restorative Approaches to Harm

2021 Impact Report

Restorative
Practice
in Action





Vision and Mission

RJ Working exists to equip young people with the principles, language and confidence to build a more compassionate and fair society.

At RJ Working we:

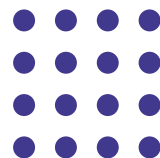
- **Believe** every young person should have the right to access Restorative principles as part of their education
- **Use** Restorative Practice training to equip young people to better look after themselves and each other, in person and online
- **Recognise** the value of young people's complex lived experience and the potential of Restorative Practice to empower their leadership
- **Support** young people's commitment to tackling harms to identity, especially racism, and **their commitment to climate justice**.

Introduction

RJ Working was set up to develop and share the benefits of Restorative Practice in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. These benefits include increased social cohesion and shared language for problem-solving challenges such as conflict, differences of opinion and identity, social divisions and inequalities. There is a growing recognition that the cognitive learning which is essential to children and young people's educational attainment, depends on them first feeling safe and being resilient, socially and emotionally. As we approach our 10-year anniversary, in addition to a wealth of work across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, RJ Working has expanded to other parts of the UK in a variety of ways – for example with Universities in London and communities in Northern Ireland - to promote Restorative Practice. We are embarking on embedded culture change in partnership and collaboration with a range of other organisations. We believe the Restorative model will be central in equipping communities for the challenges to be faced by future generations.

Snapshot of 2021 Outcomes

- Increased social and emotional literacy - children and young people are better able to identify and express feelings and needs
- Children and young people more able and confident to tackle conflict and seek solutions
- Children and young people with increased confidence and capabilities for discussing their own and differences of identity and beliefs
- Reduced conflict, fewer sanctions, fewer exclusions
- Increased wellbeing, increased resilience, strengthened and improved relationships between students and staff
- 95% of primary school children say they are better able to take care of themselves and each other
- Teachers report increased confidence and participation in anxious and withdrawn students
- RJ Working flagship programme has been positively used as an intervention for young people with complex social-emotional and mental health needs



In 2021 the pandemic was not over – the need for relationships, recovery and community was stronger than ever. Through online and in-person outreach RJ Working has been able to connect with more young people and support their choices. Repairing and recovering from the social costs of Covid, the disconnection and disruption, is an ongoing process as these have had lasting impacts and have entrenched inequalities. RJ Working's 2021 initiatives included:

1. Our **16+ developments** with 147 students being introduced to the relevance of Restorative Practice for identity-harms
2. Our work with **Gypsy Roma Traveller families** growing into an in-depth engagement pilot project, addressing needs and coping strategies
3. A **whole school approach** on the Isles of Scilly starting to expand to a whole community approach, across the generations, involving parents and the Local Authority workforce.
4. This year we have also created and facilitated an exciting **Practice Forum** for leading schools to enable them to achieve national accreditation status from the UK Restorative Justice Council.
5. We responded to the huge numbers of young people going off the school roll with a co-designed **Restorative Connections programme** to meet the needs of young people learning out-of-school

In all our programmes, we facilitate young people's teamwork and leadership. We invite them to change the nature of the conversation and connection they have with each other and with the adults in their lives, developing their capabilities for communication and problem-solving and developing their confidence and self-esteem.

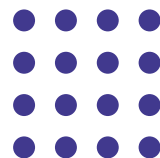


What do Young People say about our programmes?

- "I feel more confident in my identity"
- "A brilliant balance of fun and respect"
- "I fell out with a friend and used what I learned to get my friend back"

And what do the adults say?

- "I loved meeting people from diverse backgrounds and work environments, all passionate about putting RJ into practice"
- "Children have found their voices"
- "This was some of the best training I've ever had"



Young People Tackling Racism Restoratively

Alongside paying quality attention to interpersonal relationships, we know it's vital to use Restorative Practice to develop the culture that is the context of young peoples' lives. If this culture is one which perpetuates injustice, we need to face up to that collectively.

The young people we worked with in 2021 said that they want the space and skills to talk about racism and support from adults if they have experienced racism. To meet these needs in 2021, we:

- **Integrated** issues of identity and identity harm into all our programmes
- **Supported** the set-up of student-led 'Equality, Diversity & Inclusion' groups in FE settings
- **Delivered** workforce training in FE settings to support effective tackling of racism and other identity harms
- **Reached** wider communities and sectors through our multiagency Tackling Racism Restoratively programme, including the voluntary sector, education, social work, and Local Authorities

— “ —
I would like to remember everything that Yasmine said about racism, because I never realized how it was. I understood that it's a terrible thing but I never really saw how big it was.

Young person,
Cornwall

— “ —
A safe space created, as hoped, for supported challenge around thinking about race and the need for a restorative approach

participant of Tackling Racism Restoratively one-day workshops

Participants told us:

Our programmes have supported people to:

— “ —
Speak out when I hear racist comments

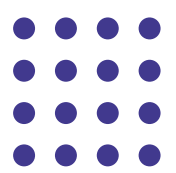
— “ —
Talk about identity more regularly

— “ —
Stop the denial of racism as an issue

97% of participants

said that the workshop has enabled them to tackle racism more effectively





Young People in Education

Restorative Practice as a way of young people learning about themselves and each other, interactively and experientially continues to be our key focus. Our flagship schools programmes are for young people aged 13-15, designed as a framework within which the most marginalized young people populate, co-create and make their own. Alongside these Ripple Effect programmes, in 2021 we reached even further:

- This year we also expanded our partnerships to reach more younger children and to empower 16+ leadership forging Restorative pathways from KS1 all the way to College
- We are trialing a new Primary model incorporating longer term intensive contact with parents and wider families on a weekly basis
- We initiated and supported a network of Cornwall's schools on their journey to achieve Restorative Organisation status with the UK Restorative Justice Council – a national first!
- We began to co-create a Restorative Connections programme for young people learning out of school

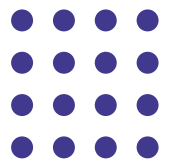
Case Study: Five Islands Academy

As the only school on the Isles of Scilly, Five Islands Academy is in a unique position within the community. 2021 showed the peak in benefits of RJ Working's involvement in previous years, we have now trained 125 young people in depth and supported the development of the whole workforce. Seven of the staff team have completed more intensive training, and the outcomes at this stage are evidenced through a transformative whole-school approach, in which every young person's voice is heard. This ranges from practices such as Restorative Circles marking the beginning and end of the week for each class, to initiatives such as a group of young people leading a commitment to welcome refugee families on the Isles of Scilly.



These examples highlight some aspects of our work in 2021





Case Study: Penpol Primary

In September 2021, we worked with 58 Year 6 children and 6 teaching staff at Penpol School. The children responded with energy and enthusiasm, honesty and compassion. Both the RJ Working team and Penpol staff team witnessed a significant shift in the level of trust children demonstrated towards each other and their teachers. School staff recognised and valued children's increased confidence, especially significant for those who had previously been low in self-esteem.

Step-Up survey data showed:

- **94%** know more about using Restorative Practice to look after themselves
- **84%** are more confident to step up when there is a problem

School staff said:

- *"It has enabled them to feel a sense of equality and talk freely about things they wouldn't normally talk about."*
- **100%** agreed the children are better able to look after themselves and each other

Moving forward, how do you plan to use Restorative Practice? School staff said:

- circle time for continuing to build relationships
- meetings for resolving issues during breaktimes when confrontations usually happen

Young People in Community

The power of Restorative Practice to build community is evident in all our work....

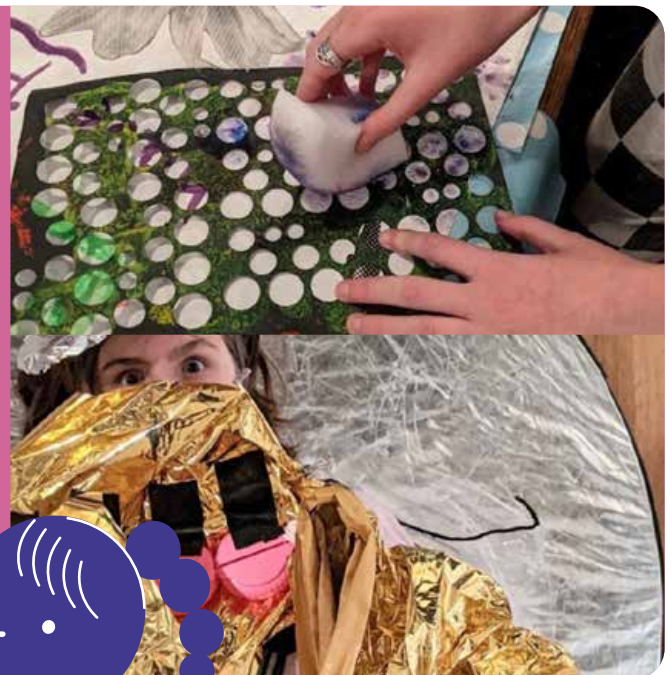
Case study: Splanna

Cornish for "Shine brightly"

In collaboration with Falmouth Art Gallery, this year we started a programme with a group of young people between the ages of 9-14, to collectively work towards understanding and contributing to environmental activism through art, debate, and Restorative Practice. Their name is Splanna!

Through the use of circle-keeping, open questioning and careful listening, the group has made a safe, creative framework. This has enabled them to find and use their voices for issues they care about, and translate their ideas into artistic works - a valuable platform for them to be seen, heard and understood.

Splanna will be exhibiting their work at Falmouth Art Gallery in May 2022.





Training Adults to Support Young People

We train adults to support young people's leadership in the development of Restorative Practice – and to be fair and compassionate role models.

In 2021, we:

- Worked with adults from 98 different organisations across many sectors, including social care, mental health services, the voluntary sector, education and Local Authorities
- Delivered multiagency training events to the standards required by the Restorative Justice Council to enable over 50 people to become Restorative Facilitators
- Reached almost 300 community members across the UK with our distinctive development of Restorative skills for racial justice and other identity-related harms.

How adults are using their Restorative skills to support young people

— “ —
This course has given me a takeaway set of skills that I can begin to use in my current work with young people already.

— “ —
This course has allowed me to develop methodologies to create safe spaces for community members to express their needs.

— “ —
I will use this to empower local communities to come together, reduce segregation and encourage open discussions without fear of reprisal.

Case Study: Restorative Leadership Programme in Schools and Colleges

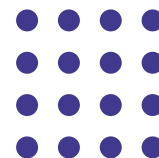
In 2021, four more cohorts of staff from schools and colleges participated in our six day Restorative Leadership Programme. Over 90 participants across 40 schools and colleges achieved an Institute of Leadership & Management Level 3 Award and Restorative Practice Facilitator Certification.

The key outcomes reported by participants were:

- Children and young people, previously less likely to engage and with higher levels of anxiety, became more confident and more able to engage with others
- Emotional literacy increased significantly, children and young people became more able to identify feelings and enjoyed talking about social and emotional challenges
- Consistent implementation of Restorative approaches achieved the greatest impacts on social and emotional learning and the wellbeing of children young people and adults
- Every participant reported stronger and more positive connections with children and young people by prioritising relationships and making time to connect individually
- Relationships between the children and young people strengthened as they learned to communicate clearly and resolve interpersonal issues themselves

— “ —
It was just incredible, starting that relationship with him and seeing how much he actually needed to talk to us.

— “ —
Mrs L, can we do our feelings again today? I really loved that



Looking Ahead: 2022

The end of 2021 saw the creation of two brand new initiatives: a Culture of Care to work with young people and families who have recently settled in Cornwall as refugees, and Restorative Connections to engage and support young people who are not in school.

In 2022, we will be developing our connections with these varied and complex communities as we work to reach and include all young people growing up in Cornwall. To remain inclusive and accessible, some of our work will remain online and we are excited about how this will expand our reach beyond Cornwall and to other regions further afield in the UK. This is just a sample of our rich tapestry of plans for 2022! Please see our website for ongoing developments www.rjworking.co.uk

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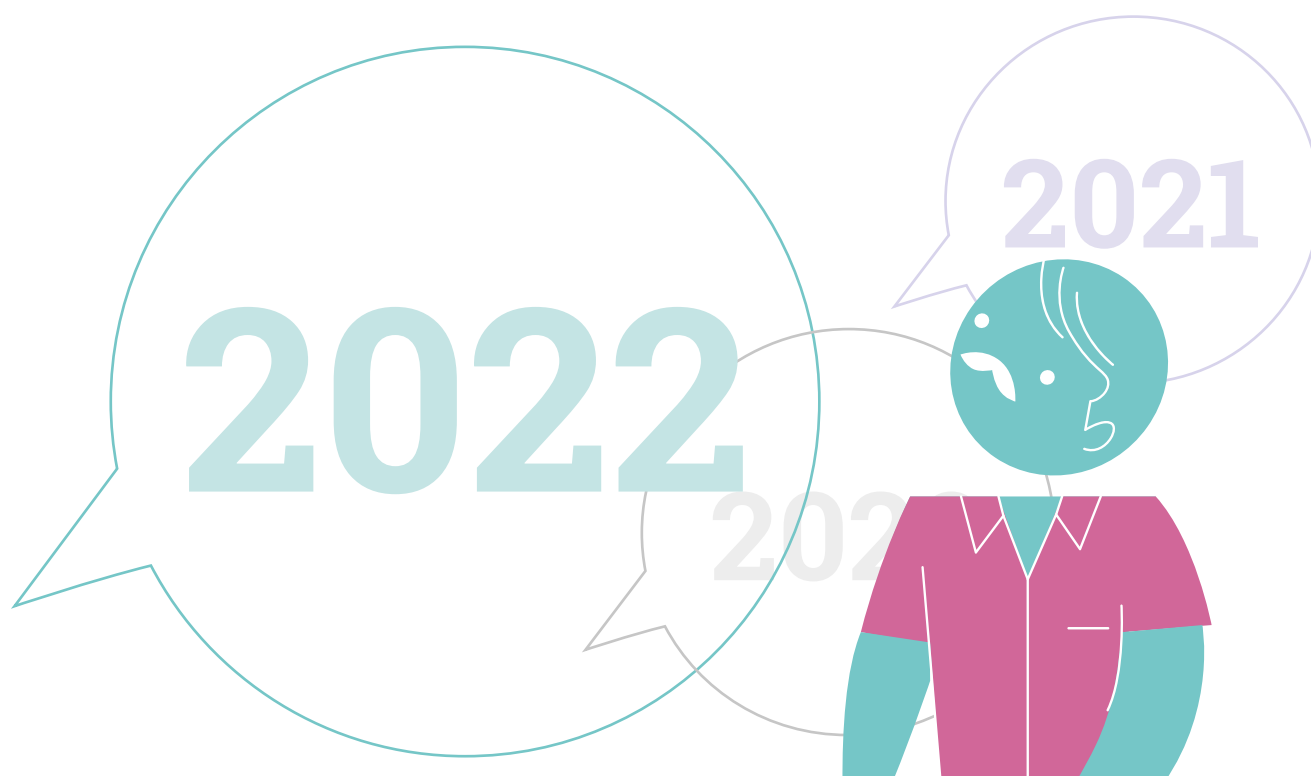
New Partnerships

With visionary leadership and an inspiring commitment to social justice, the Local Authority Council of the Isles of Scilly are a leading new partner. In 2022 key staff from the Council will participate in our Restorative Facilitator training. We are excited to see the Council's developments and application of Restorative practice and the impacts this will have for both the Council and the wider community.

Education Excellence

Recognising years of effort, new learning and a consistent approach to cultivating a Restorative ethos, our leading Restorative schools in Cornwall are submitting evidence to the UK Restorative Justice Council as part of their application to achieving Restorative Organisation status (previously their Quality Mark) and will have achieved this by the end of the school year in 2022.

Each has found their own unique way of implementing Restorative approaches into school life, from the development of Relationship Policies using Restorative principles, to daily Restorative circles and ongoing training with RJ Working. We are frequently impressed by the creativity and ethical commitment of these schools and their capabilities for prioritising the wellbeing of their children and young people. This pilot Practitioners Learning Forum that we set up and facilitate, has been so successful that we expect to roll out the process to many more communities across Cornwall and beyond.



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:



Quaker recognised body

