



# RESTORATIVE JUSTICE: AN ALTERNATIVE PROCESS TO JUSTICE

USE THIS RESOURCE TO

LEARN ABOUT OPTIONS FOR  
REPORTING THAT MAY BE AN  
ALTERNATIVE TO THE STUDENT  
CONDUCT PROCESS OR THE  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM.

## THE NEED FOR ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS FOR JUSTICE

As colleges and universities continue to strengthen and improve their response to sexual assault, domestic violence, and dating violence, a number of survivors are seeking additional options to redress the harm they have experienced. Some survivors are seeking a response outside of, or in addition to, what the student conduct process or the criminal justice system can provide. A recent survey conducted at nine colleges and universities showed that only a small percentage of sexual assaults were reported to anyone other than a friend or relative and that reasons for not reporting included concerns about confidentiality and being treated poorly, blamed, or punished.

## WHAT IS RESTORATIVE JUSTICE?

Restorative Justice (RJ) is a growing practice in both the criminal and social justice fields that seeks to repair and address the harm experienced by victims, as well as any harm done to their community.

RJ also has been identified as a strategy for addressing underreporting of sexual assault, domestic violence, and dating violence on campus by offering victims an option for remedying the harm while also responding to their concerns about how they will be treated by the student conduct or criminal justice systems. The implementation of an RJ framework or the infusion of RJ practices into existing processes may be a viable option to repair the harm and open the doors for continued education, keeping in mind, however, that improving the criminal justice system response and campus adjudication process continues to be a critical strategy for addressing underreporting of these crimes. RJ is intended to promote victim autonomy and change offender behavior through a process that is designed to provide meaningful accountability for the person who has inflicted the harm.

An effective RJ framework prioritizes healing for the survivor while also aiming to elicit behavioral change in the offender, redress harm to the community, improve campus safety, and address confidentiality concerns. RJ can take various forms, such as circle or family group discussions, community boards or panels with a third party, or victim and offender dialogues, and requires a skilled facilitator who also has sufficient understanding of sexual assault, domestic violence, and dating violence, as well as trauma and safety issues. In addition, RJ is strictly voluntary for victims and requires the offender to willingly and actively take part in the process of rectifying the harm. RJ is not the same as mediation, and should not be treated as such.

Restorative justice or alternative practices are being used more widely around the world today as it becomes evident that traditional punishment cannot solve the problem of sexual violence at scale. If these processes are something that may be helpful to survivors on your campus, we encourage you to reach out to a school implementing this work near you to learn how they were able to do it and what type of restorative options they provide.



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## ACADEMIC PROGRAMS USING OR CURRENTLY EXAMINING THE USE OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICES ON CAMPUS:

- [Bethel College Certificate in Criminal and Restorative Justice](#)
- [Eastern Mennonite University Center for Justice and Peacebuilding](#)
- [Fresno Pacific University Center for Peacemaking and Conflict Studies \(Graduate\)](#)
- [Fresno Pacific University Criminology and Restorative Justice Studies \(Undergraduate\)](#)
- [Governors State University Restorative Justice Certificate Program](#)
- [International Institute for Restorative Practices](#)
- [John Marshall Law School Restorative Justice Project](#)
- [Johnson State College Criminal Justice Program](#)
- [Loyola Law School Center for Restorative Justice](#)
- [Marygrove College Criminal Justice Program](#)
- [Northeastern University Law School Civil Rights and Restorative Justice Project](#)
- [Simon Fraser University Center for Restorative Justice](#)
- [Suffolk University Center for Restorative Justice](#)
- [University of California-Berkeley Restorative Justice Center](#)
- [University of California-Davis Transformative Justice in Education Center](#)
- [University of Hull Masters in Restorative Justice](#)
- [University of Minnesota Center for Restorative Justice and Peacemaking](#)
- [University of Texas Institute for Restorative Justice and Restorative Dialogue](#)
- [University of Wisconsin Law School Restorative Justice Project](#)
- [Vermont Law School Masters in Restorative Justice](#)