

Restorative Conferencing Models

	Victim-Offender Mediation	Family Group Conferencing	Circle Sentencing
Who Participates?	Mediator, victim, offender are standard participants.	Coordinator identifies key participants. Close kin of victim and offender invited. Police, social services, and other support persons also invited. Broader community not encouraged to participate.	Judge, prosecutor, defense counsel participate in serious cases. Victim(s), offender(s), service providers, support group present. Open to entire community. Justice committee ensures participation of key residents.
Victim Role	Expresses feelings regarding crime and impact. Has major role in decision regarding offender obligation and content of reparative plan. Has right of ultimate refusal; consent is essential.	Expresses feelings about crime, gives input into reparative plan.	Participates in circle and decision making; gives input into eligibility of offender, chooses support group, and may participate in healing circle.

Gatekeepers	Courts and other entities make referrals.	Court, community justice coordinators, police, school officials.	Community justice committee.
Relationship to Formal System	Varies on continuum from core process in diversion and disposition to marginal programs with minimal impact on court caseloads.	Primary process of hearing cases in some locations (with juveniles in New Zealand) which requires ceding of disposition power and results in major impact on caseloads. Police-driven process in other locations with possible problems of net-widening and minimal impact on caseloads.	Judge, prosecution, court officials share power with community, i.e., selection, sanctioning, follow-up. Presently minimal impact on caseloads.
Preparation	Typically face-to-face preparation with victim and offender to explain process.	Phone contact with all parties to encourage participation and explain process. Possibly face-to-face contacts with victims,	Extensive work with offender and victim prior to circle. Explain process and rules of circle.

offenders, and families.

Follow-up	Varies. Mediator may follow up. Probation and/or other program staff may be responsible.	Unclear. May be police, coordinator, or others.	Community justice committee. Judge may hold jail sentence as incentive for offender to comply with plan.
Primary Outcome(s) Sought	Allow victim to relay impact of crime to offender, express feelings and needs; victim satisfied with process; offender has increased awareness of harm, gains empathy with victim; agreement on reparation plan.	Clarify facts of case. Denounce crime while affirming and supporting offender; restore victim loss: encourage offender reintegration. Focus on “deed not need” (i.e., on offense and harm done, not offender’s needs).	Increase community strength and capacity to resolve disputes and prevent crime; develop reparative and rehabilitative plan; address victim concerns and public safety issues; assign victim and offender support group responsibilities and identify resources.

Source: Adapted from Bazemore, G., & Umbreit, M. (2001). *A Comparison of Four Restorative Conferencing Models*. Washington, DC: U.S.

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