



Line: Toward a Restorative Future

RJPM Mission

The Restorative Justice Project of Maine was founded to offer responses to crime and wrongdoing that are grounded in restorative principles. Our mission is to promote a justice that is community-based, repairs harm, and creates safety and wellbeing for all.

RJP Legacy Goals:

- All crimes in Maine are met with a restorative response
Restorative solutions are the norm; punitive solutions are the exception. Victims and communities have a prominent role in repairing harm caused by crime.
- All schools and education institutions in Maine use restorative practices to support learning, build community, and for dealing with conflict and wrongdoing.
- Restorative practices are well understood, used effectively and with fidelity to core values and standards.
- Restorative solutions are widely available: Anyone, anywhere, anytime can seek a restorative solution. Sufficient, sustainable resources are dedicated to restorative practices; it is easy to find professionals and volunteers who are able to facilitate restorative responses.

RJPM Vision





Restorative Justice Project – Belfast, Maine - Origins

Founded in 2005, RJP was conceived as a grass-roots citizen effort to promote alternatives to punishment, isolation and incarceration in favor of collaborative, non-adversarial processes focused on accountability, support and healing - inviting those most directly affected by harm to the center of determining a resolution.

Present Day RJP Work:

- **Foundations in Restorative Practices Certificate Program**– in partnership with the University of Maine, Hutchinson Center
- **Community Resolution** facilitated by trained local volunteers in response to harm across prosecutorial district six: Waldo, Knox, Lincoln & Sagadahocⁱ
- **Training and coaching towards whole-scale implementation** of restorative practice in discreet settings: Maine Coastal Regional Reentry Center (Belfast); Long Creek Youth Development Center (South Portland); RSU 13 (Rockland-area); RSU71 (Belfast area)

Future:

Our vision is to prevent and reduce crime and its impacts by implementing a data-informed, collaborative, place-based infrastructure and replicable model designed especially for rural communities. These **Community Justice Centers** will build safety through increased community connections and networks of care built around the factors that drive crime in rural communities, especially for young adults. In addition, CJsCs will offer all community members meaningful ways to belong and become involved in community life, building protective factors and social cohesion.



Building Community Justice Infrastructure:

- A **central doorway** for all services that make up the continuum of care for the county.
- A literal, **physical space** to convene meetings, where people can gather for support and connection around a variety of issues and needs.
- A set of **meaningful roles** that community volunteers can take on to participate more fully in the process of justice. Volunteer roles: leaders; advocates; mentors/credible messengers; circle keepers and connectors.
- A place for the **diversion/community resolution processes**, where instead of court hearings, restorative circles happen to provide a place for impacted parties to come together when crime or wrongdoing has taken place to repair, resolve conflict, and agree upon consequences.

Engaging Community, Building Lives, Restoring Hope

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- A **central hub and clearinghouse**, a place for community outreach, trainings, social events, support circles, discussions and dialogue and where proactive relationship building practice can take place.
- A **collaborative space** to be shared with other service providers working in the same geography toward the same ends, streamlining the process for those seeking support and increasing synergy and collaboration among service providers.
- A **data hub**, a place where shared measures are kept and tracked, or where data can be pooled, analyzed, and discussed - and from which continuous quality innovation can flow.



Why do community justice practices matter?

- ✓ Victims report high rates of satisfaction through direct participation
- ✓ Active accountability: restorative practice can attend to the root cause of the harm and reduce the likelihood that something similar will happen again
- ✓ Citizen engagement promotes understanding of local concerns, spurs empathy, drives allocation of resources, and offers direct support to fellow community members – all of which enhances community safetyⁱⁱ

ⁱ At present, limited funding to support referrals of adult offenders and those they have harmed is available in Waldo, Knox and Hancock Counties. Juvenile services are available district wide.

ⁱⁱ Sherman, LW and Strang, H (2007) Restorative Justice: The Evidence. London: The Smith Institute