Balanced and Restorative Justice
for Juvenile Detention Centers

Improving Center Culture and Repairing Harms

An Implementation Model for
Center Staff and Administrators

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Introduction

In 2013, the Illinois Balanced and Restorative Justice Project (IBARJ) had the opportunity to provide training in Balanced and Restorative Justice Practices (BARJ) at the Champaign County Juvenile Detention Center. The successes we witnessed there and the positive feedback we received from staff and youth prompted us to offer more trainings, ongoing assistance, and sustainability planning. The Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission recognized the benefits of this work and supported us in expanding in Champaign and beyond.

In 2014, IBARJ approached all of the Illinois juvenile detention centers (JDCs) about implementing BARJ, highlighting the positive outcomes of BARJ implementation at the DuPage County Detention Center (now closed) and the Champaign County Juvenile Detention Center. Four of the sixteen JDCs statewide (Lake, Winnebago, Peoria and Champaign) expressed interest in improving the climate in their centers and learning effective conflict resolution tools for staff and youth. Together, we developed a strategy for implementation and began a process that would span the next three years.

Over this time, we have learned many lessons about successfully integrating Balanced and Restorative Justice practices into JDCs. We have compiled this knowledge in the following Implementation Model for other juvenile facilities interested in improving their climate for both residents and staff and resolving conflict with a restorative approach.

This is not a manual for implementation. It takes training and ongoing support to implement BARJ with fidelity and in a sustainable way. IBARJ can help you develop a plan to integrate restorative practices in a way that fits your center’s unique needs.

1. Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) Overview

What is Balanced and Restorative Justice?

“Restorative justice represents a paradigm shift from thinking about justice as a mechanism for social control, to thinking about justice as a mechanism for social engagement.”

— Brenda Morrison, Simon Fraser University

Broadly, restorative justice (RJ) is a form of justice rooted in the belief that repairing harm and building empathy and relationships are effective ways to deter future criminal behavior.
More narrowly, restorative justice is a philosophical framework that poses an alternative to our current way of thinking about crime, criminal justice, and punishment. In criminal justice, restorative justice emphasizes the ways in which crime harms relationships in the context of community and brings together the people most impacted by a conflict to resolve it. Restorative justice addresses the needs and obligations of all parties involved, including those who have been harmed, those who have caused harm, community members, and anyone else impacted by criminal behavior. Restorative justice gives priority to repairing the harm done to victims and communities, and the accountability of the wrongdoer is defined in terms of assuming responsibility and taking action to repair that harm. This approach also helps to reintegrate the wrongdoer back into the community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criminal Justice Focus:</th>
<th>Restorative Justice Focus:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What rule was broken?</td>
<td>• What harm was done?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Who did it?</td>
<td>• How can the harm be repaired?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How will we punish them?</td>
<td>• Who is responsible?</td>
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While restorative justice is often discussed in the context of addressing crime, the broader philosophy behind it can be applied to a whole host of situations and settings. Restorative justice practices provide a range of opportunities for dialogue, negotiation, and problem-solving. These processes can create environments in communities, schools, and institutions that lead to a greater sense of safety, social harmony, and peace for all. RJ shifts the responsibility for community safety and youth development back to the community instead of over-relying on systems.

These outcomes are achieved through the use of restorative practices such as restorative conferences and circles. These interventions lead to dialogue where, often, guilt is admitted, hurt is revealed, restitution is explored, commitments about changes to behavior made, and responsibility for accountability and obligation are agreed upon.¹

Balanced and Restorative Justice occurs specifically within the juvenile justice system and takes restorative justice one step further by suggesting that there are three components to creating a “balanced” approach for young people: accountability, competency development, and community safety.

¹ Bayley (1985).
• **Accountability** suggests that the young person who has caused harm has an obligation to make amends with the person or people harmed.

• **Competency Development** increases the expectation that the wrongdoer leaves the juvenile justice system more capable than when entering it.

• **Community Safety** reflects the various partnerships in the community that support the youth while providing a continuum of resources to reduce recidivism.

Restorative approaches seek a balanced approach to the needs of the three parties involved: victim, wrongdoer, and community. They achieve this through processes that preserve the safety and dignity of all.²

BARJ practices in communities often create opportunities for transformation where youth realize their responsibility and successfully complete the outcomes requested of them. These can include sincere apologies, restitution, and community service, all of which have been shown to lead to higher victim and community satisfaction and lower recidivism rates.

**History of RJ around Illinois, the U.S., and the World**

While restorative practices have existed for centuries, the modern restorative justice movement has grown rapidly in the past 35 years across the world. Restorative practices in North America were founded by the First Nations people and tribes of Canada and the United States.³ Practices like circles have long been a chief part of indigenous cultures as a way to restore community safety, repair relationships, provide healing, and hold people accountable.

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² Boyes-Watson, C. (2014). Suffolk University, College of Arts & Sciences, Center for Restorative Justice
In 1978, the first-ever victim-offender mediation (or reconciliation) program in the United States was started in Elkhart, Indiana. Since then, the growth of restorative justice has been largely facilitated by non-governmental organizations that advocate for this approach to justice. By the 1990s, restorative justice became more popular, appealing to police officers, judges, schoolteachers, parents, and communities. By the 2000s, the movement was widespread, and it continues to grow today.

The Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 1998 included a BARJ philosophy for the Illinois juvenile justice system. However, this philosophical shift occurred in the context of a comprehensive, punitive juvenile court rewrite centered on victims’ rights, greater prosecutorial discretion, increased record-keeping, and expanded detention, as well as more adult criminal justice processes and terms. Restorative justice began to take hold organically in some Chicago communities and downstate Illinois, primarily as a diversionary measure to keep children out of court processes and institutions.

In September 2003, a three-day Illinois BARJ Summit was held in Springfield that attracted more than 140 participants, including the Chief Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court and internationally recognized restorative justice leaders. The primary goal of the Summit was to provide opportunities for geographically and professionally diverse people from communities and governments across the state to create a strategy to promote local development and implementation of BARJ practices, consistent with the purpose and policy statement of the Illinois Juvenile Justice Reform Act. The Summit was a transformational event that led to the creation of IBARJ, a statewide organization established to provide leadership, education, and support around the principles and practices of restorative justice across Illinois.

Since then, the number of BARJ and RJ practitioners and trainers in Illinois has increased tremendously, creating more opportunities for youth, parents, communities, and schools to participate in restorative practices. Many communities began using peer juries, circles, and victim-offender mediation programs as diversion tactics. Schools began adopting restorative justice practices as both prevention and intervention initiatives. As the use of BARJ expanded, the word “balanced” was dropped from the language, leaving the focus on restorative justice as a holistic philosophy that encompasses all of the principles, values, characteristics, and practices of BARJ.

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2. Applying BARJ in a Juvenile Detention Center

What are the benefits of BARJ for a Juvenile Detention Center?

The use of Balanced and Restorative Justice in a juvenile detention center setting improves center culture and provides tools for building relationships and community, as well as effective conflict resolution options.

Restorative justice is a values-based approach. Values such as respect, empathy, integrity, and accountability become the framework for how to treat one another at a JDC. They also become the foundation for the discussions that take place at the center. This includes restorative chats with two or three people, as well as larger, more organized discussions like circles for community-building, problem-solving, or conflict resolution. Personal and group interactions play a significant role in shaping perceptions of fairness and justice.

A holistic approach to using restorative justice can lead to a shift in the culture and provide new skills for youth. Over time, restorative justice eventually becomes “the way we do business.” This is a slow process, but it can lead to an increased trust in the system and the center, specifically with regard to youth’s perception of justice. This, in turn, can influence the behavior of youth in the center and, once they are released, in the community.

This culture shift has been evident in evaluations of RJ implementation led by IBARJ at four juvenile detention centers in 2015-2016. Surveys of youth and staff showed that after restorative practices were implemented center-wide, youth had a better understanding of how their behavior affects others and were less likely to tease or harm their peers. Furthermore, staff made a greater effort to connect with youth, leading to greater mutual respect between youth and staff.
What does it look like in a JDC?

Resolving Harms and Building Relationships

Restorative justice is based in the belief that relationships and community are fundamentally important and valuable to all. Restorative practices are often recognized as powerful tools for repairing relationships and restoring a sense of community after harm occurs. These practices can be very effective when addressing disciplinary infractions and conflicts between individuals.

Restorative practices also have the power to help people build new relationships and strengthen communities before harm occurs. All youth-focused work is centered on building positive and meaningful relationships between both adults and peers. A JDC can provide a space for youth to build these relationships, experience community membership, and understand the importance of the shared values that accompany these. RJ also fosters community-building among staff during both training and implementation of restorative processes. JDCs become places where staff can develop and model positive interpersonal relationships, effective communication skills, and support for others.

Circles

A circle is a restorative practice that brings people together and creates the necessary climate for effective communication. This approach fosters a model of
leadership that empowers all members of the community, victims, and those who have committed harm, and establishes a framework for long-term relationship building. There are many types of circles that serve a variety of purposes, including peace circles, healing circles, welcoming circles, and more.

Circles provide a safe space in which youth can come together to process and resolve conflicts with their peers, build and repair relationships, problem-solve, and create understanding. Circles are communal spaces that reject power roles, so they are not led by facilitators. Instead, they are led by a trained “circle keeper,” whose role is to make sure that the circle remains a safe space where everyone involved is heard and listens to others. Participants begin by establishing shared values, giving youth a meaningful role in deciding the principles by which everyone at the JDC will live. In addition to empowering youth, this encourages them to live by these principles themselves.

When resolving a conflict, a circle will typically include those who have been harmed, those who have harmed others, people there to support those participants, and community representatives. The person holding the talking piece has the undivided attention of everyone else in the circle and can speak without interruption. By using a talking piece, participants are able to be fully heard as they speak, and are freed to fully listen as the talking piece travels around the circle. The use of the talking piece allows for the full expression of emotions, deeper listening, thoughtful reflection, and an unrushed pace, and it is an important way to invite input from people who find it difficult to speak in a group.
Circles can be especially powerful in addressing conflicts between staff and youth, which are characterized by an obvious imbalance of power. By bringing youth and staff together on equal footing to listen to one another, circles encourage mutual respect and cooperation.

**Group Work**

Restorative practices like circles create a space for open dialogue, trust, respect among participants, and the temporary elimination of power and control. This is very conducive to group work, which builds community and relationships with youth and staff at the centers. Restorative practices complement the group work that centers already do. These practices can easily be integrated into existing group sessions. The key pieces of the process, like the use of a talking piece, also teach participants new skills and encourage listening, empathy, and mutual understanding.

**Restorative Conferences**

Restorative conferencing is a more formal process for handling specific rule violations or harms caused. Conference places those who have been harmed face-to-face with those who have harmed them, facilitating a meeting to discuss both the violation and its impact. The affected parties are brought together by a trained facilitator and given a voice in deciding the appropriate response to the harm. The process encourages those who have caused harm to accept accountability for their actions and helps everyone reach an agreement about how to move forward.

Both restorative conferencing and circles are powerful tools not just in mediating conflicts with detained youth, but also in addressing challenges and building community among JDC staff. Even when there is no specific conflict to address, the circle process can help staff build the

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**A story from Lake County**

Two young men from different gangs were having a disagreement, and a verbal altercation ensued. After the staff intervened, it was decided that instead of separating them, they would be brought together to try a new restorative method they had just learned: conferencing.

First, a staff member met with each of the young men separately. Both agreed to participate in the conference rather than being sent to their rooms, and the staff brought the two together and held a restorative conference. As it turned out, the disagreement had been based on a misunderstanding and miscommunication. Each of the boys apologized to the other for the part he’d played.

After the conference, it was time for gym. One of the boys was assigned to pick the members of his team.

The first person he picked? The boy he’d just had a conference with!
trust and respect they need to cooperate well in a challenging environment. When there are specific conflicts, mediation can allow individuals to discuss their concerns without rupturing that crucial bond.

What challenges might arise during implementation?

Buy-In

Like any other initiative, buy-in from all administration and center staff is key for successful implementation and sustainability. It is common for staff at a JDC to be initially resistant to BARJ if they believe it is not punitive enough for a center setting.

Before training, staff may say things such as:

- "You don’t know what our kids are like."
- "This will never work with our kids."
- "This is just another ‘program of the year’ that will get replaced next year with something."

But once staff participate in a training, they often see the value of the philosophy and processes right away, because the focus is on accountability and learning. In the words of one staff member:

- “I thought it would be challenging to implement, but it wasn’t. We aren’t as control-driven. We’ve moved from a control orientation to listening and making connections.”

Time

Training, implementation, and the practices themselves take time, and in a juvenile detention center, it can seem like a challenge to find that time. But as restorative practices become the norm in a center through everyday use, center policy, and new staff training, priorities shift and these practices come to be seen as simply “the way we do things.” Circles can be incorporated into regular group time; restorative chats and conferences can be used instead of a discipline infraction process. IBARJ’s pilot centers found that the time taken to use restorative practices did not take any longer than it did to “write up” a resident or to hold a group session as usual.
Resources

The most successful programs implemented in JDCs have taken several years to reach their optimal impact for youth and staff. This long-term approach means that the initial implementation plan will require ongoing resources to develop the program; evaluate it continually; respond to challenges such as staffing changes; and provide sustainable development for supporting new administrators, staff, and youth populations.

Continuing technical assistance throughout the implementation of restorative practices boosts the benefits delivered to youth, the buy-in of staff, and the sustainability of the practices. Funding for IBARJ’s initial project was provided by the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission through both JABG and Federal funds. Centers also contributed by paying staff for attendance at trainings and associated travel costs, as well as time with supervisors and superintendents to participate in the development of the project.

Status Quo

The criminal justice system in the U.S. has been stuck in a retributive paradigm for decades, and this vicious cycle has created a punitive status quo that some professionals in this field find difficult to overcome. Changing hearts and minds is always difficult, especially among those who are used to doing their job in a particular way.

Policy

Policies at a JDC are in place to create a safe environment for all, but sometimes these policies promote unfair and unjust outcomes. Policy changes are needed to create sustainable change, but first, staff and policymakers must understand the restorative philosophy and practices to fully understand which policies need updating. Policy change should include staff training policies, group session procedures, responses to discipline infractions, and shifts in the overall culture of the facility.

3. Readiness Assessment

How do you know if you’re ready to implement restorative practices in your JDC? Before you begin, take stock of your existing programs, successful initiatives, and challenge areas, as well as what you will need to do to prepare. To determine the readiness of your center, you’ll need to assess your leadership, your staff, and your
local community. You know your center and community best, so it’s important that you drive this assessment—but IBARJ can help.

Leadership

Support from Key Decision-Makers

First, consider how much your leadership knows about RJ. Will you need to introduce your superintendent and administrators to restorative practices, or are they already knowledgeable and enthusiastic about adopting them? Either way, a good first step is to offer a formal overview of restorative justice to your JDC’s key decision-makers. IBARJ can help you explain the restorative philosophy to administrators with different levels of familiarity, as well as an overview of how other JDCs have used restorative practices.

This is also a good time to invite key decision-makers to imagine how restorative practices might be applied in your particular center. What would it mean for your center to have a restorative climate? What problems might this solve? What policies would need to be updated to formalize this shift?

Logistics

Once the center’s leadership is prepared to adopt RJ, the practical aspects of the transition will need to be considered. Administrators will need to weigh in on when and how to train staff of all different levels, as well as how to update center policies. New policies must be made with input from administrators and staff alike, so training will need to come before policy change. Administrators and staff will also need to have input on how to integrate restorative processes into youths’ existing schedules. Each center has a unique schedule, but all centers implementing restorative practices have found ways to include them in their daily routines and disciplinary protocols.

Staff

Assessing the Climate of Your Center

Next, consider the overall climate of your center and how this is shaped by your staff. Do staff get along and work well together? Do they trust one another? Are they usually flexible and open to new ideas, or do they seem set in their ways?

Your next step may be developing a plan for relationship-building among your staff. Using restorative practices for this purpose can not only improve staff relationships, it can also introduce them to the foundational restorative principles they will need to
know when it comes time to implement them center-wide. Circles are a powerful way to bring people together on equal footing, air concerns, resolve conflicts, and develop shared values that will help prevent future conflicts among staff. This step is good for the health of your center, regardless of your staff’s knowledge of restorative justice.

**Staff Training Readiness**

Think about your center’s normal staff training schedule. Consider how BARJ training could be integrated into existing training opportunities. Keep in mind that in addition to an introductory training on RJ, staff will need ongoing support as they develop their skills. IBARJ provides trainings at multiple steps throughout the implementation process that can help to ensure that these changes are sustainable. It’s also wise to consider early on whether there are individuals on your staff who could become in-house trainers to reduce your center’s reliance on outside support in the long run.

**Community**

**Awareness**

It’s important to look outside your center to assess the local climate in which you’re operating. Is your community aware of and/or using restorative justice practices in any way? Consider whether the youth in your center may have come into contact with RJ principles before. Have your local schools adopted restorative practices, like many Illinois schools? Have these practices been integrated into other stages of the juvenile justice system, such as diversion opportunities? Can the youth in your center expect to encounter restorative justice elsewhere?

If RJ is present throughout in your community, this awareness can provide valuable support for your efforts within your center. Local support can help ensure the long-term sustainability of the practices you adopt. Expanding RJ across these interconnected systems will ultimately help bring about the paradigm shift needed for the community as a whole to go from punitive to restorative.

**Community Organizational Support**

This local support can have practical benefits as well. There may be organizations within your community that can assist you, as well as trained individuals prepared to volunteer. RJ is growing rapidly across Illinois, and with our statewide network of practitioners, IBARJ is well-positioned to help you find them. IBARJ can also help build the capacity of these local supports, including any community partners that already operate within your center. Involving them in RJ trainings can help them
understand your center’s new culture. Having these resources within your own community can make the difference in ensuring long-term sustainability.

4. Training

Training should start with an overview for the administration. It’s important that this group understand what restorative justice is, which practices staff will learn, and the impact those practices could have on both the young people and the staff in the center. To ensure quality implementation and sustainability, it is crucial that the administration not only have the opportunity to ask questions, but also be a core part of the planning.

The first group of staff to be trained should be a cross-section of those who will readily adopt restorative practices and those who may not. It should include both supervisors and line staff, as well as the person who oversees training for the JDC. The first trainings should be Restorative Justice 101 and Relationship-Building Circles to introduce the foundational concepts of RJ. After these trainings, staff will understand the restorative philosophy as well as the power of the circle and how it will help their residents build relationships with one another, as well as the staff that supervise them.

Next, staff should be trained in Peace Circles and Restorative Conferencing to respond to conflict and harms. This will give them the skills they need to facilitate meetings between residents when harm has occurred. Conferencing can also be an effective way of addressing harms that occur between a resident and a staff member.

Finally, a Training for Trainers will help the JDC move towards sustainability. This training prepares one or more staff members who have been using the practices to become restorative justice trainers for the facility. This reduces the need for outside trainers and ensures that new staff will receive training in restorative practices right away. It also means that there will always be a fellow staff member available to answer questions and assist with facilitation.

5. Implementation of Practices across the JDC

Staff should always remember that restorative justice implementation is a paradigm shift—it won’t happen overnight. It is a long process, and it takes work. But it should also be fun!
Implementation should begin with circles, which help lay the groundwork for the center’s transition to RJ by building relationships and creating a safe space for communication. Circles can easily be incorporated into what the JDC is already doing with its group work. The first few circles should be low-pressure and fun, with a focus on experiencing the process.

Staff should also model and practice restorative behavior by holding staff meetings in circles. Even if the residents do not witness these meetings, it will give staff a chance to practice what they are expecting of the residents. Staff will become more and more comfortable with circle-keeping as they practice, and will strengthen their relationships with one another along the way.

When harms occur between residents or between youth and staff, Peace Circles or Restorative Conferences can be used. The first conference a staff member conducts should be for a minor incident, to help him or her ease into the role of facilitator. In these situations in particular, co-facilitation with other staff members is recommended.

Finally, restorative practices should be taught to new youth entering the JDC as part of the intake process. This will help them understand from the beginning how the center operates and what is expected of them.

6. Technical Assistance and Coaching

Ongoing technical assistance and coaching will be necessary to ensure that staff are implementing practices properly, having their questions answered, and feeling adequately supported.

Although technical assistance can be provided via email and phone, on-site professional development gives staff the opportunity to co-keep circles and co-facilitate restorative conferences with experienced facilitators. This in-person support often helps staff boost their confidence and develop their skills. IBARJ has an online resource toolkit that will be provided to staff once training has occurred.

On-site technical assistance can also include attending the JDC’s monthly staff training sessions to answer questions and provide refreshers for staff, or meeting one-on-one with the training supervisor to work through challenges.

In addition to helping with restorative processes within the center, technical assistance can also help centers identify community partners that can provide additional support and help build capacity.
7. Policy Change

Once everyone in the JDC has been introduced to RJ and the initial trainings have been completed, center leadership will need to formalize these changes in the center’s policies. There are three main areas where restorative practices should be integrated into policy: staff training, youth discipline, and youth intake.

Staff Training Policy

In addition to the training that all current staff will need as you begin to implement RJ, your center will need to provide ongoing training to reinforce what they have learned. Your policies and procedures should be updated to affirm that training in restorative practices is now a core part of your center’s regular staff training routine.

New staff will also need to be introduced to RJ as part of new-staff training. Restorative practices should be presented as “the way we do things” so that incoming staff, just like incoming youth, understand what is expected of them. If your center faces frequent staff turnover, this is especially important for maintaining your center’s commitment to these practices.

While IBARJ and other local organizations can be instrumental in establishing your training routine, it’s wise to consider practical ways of keeping these trainings consistent and sustainable in the long term. One way to do this is to train some of your staff to become in-house trainers to reduce your reliance on outside support. The process of updating your training policies is a good opportunity to establish a formal plan for finding staff to fill this role.

Youth Disciplinary Policy

One of the most powerful ways to transform your center with restorative practices is to incorporate them into your disciplinary policy. Make restorative practices the default response to rule violations and conflicts among both youth and staff. Outline in your policies exactly how these practices will be applied in various situations, and who will be responsible for enacting them.

Youth Intake Policy

Restorative practices also offer an exciting way to welcome new youth to your center and set positive expectations for their time there. Explaining the center’s policies through the lens of the RJ philosophy and restorative practices can help youth see
themselves as part of a community and view center staff as people who care about their well-being, not just disciplinarians who enforce rules.

Introducing RJ to newcomers doesn’t just benefit them—it also helps to establish restorative practices as the norm in your center. Over time, restorative practices will become a center-wide standard that all youth have experienced from day one.

8. Evaluation

You’ve trained your staff, implemented restorative practices, and updated your policies. But how can you tell if it’s working? You can get a sense of how you’re doing by tracking four key measures: staff satisfaction, youth satisfaction, discipline data, and community feedback.

Staff Satisfaction

The success of the changes you’ve implemented depend on the enthusiastic support of your staff. It’s important for staff to embrace both the philosophical shift to restorative practices and the policy changes that reflect this shift. Assessing staff satisfaction should begin on day one, with pre- and post-training surveys to gauge initial reactions to these new ideas. Although seeking feedback at every training is a must, it’s also not enough; staff satisfaction should be measured on a regular basis throughout implementation. Invite staff feedback through frequent surveys that encourage them to report honestly on how they feel about the transition and whether they have suggestions to improve the process.

Youth Satisfaction

At its core, RJ is meant to ensure a safe, positive environment for those who need it most: the youth at your center. Therefore, the success of this shift relies on how youth feel about it. As with staff trainings, any trainings for youth should include pre- and post-training surveys. Youth should be asked to weigh in regularly on how they feel implementation is going. As with staff, invite them to give their honest opinion about specific practices, as well as whether they generally feel safe, respected, and valued at the center. Allow youth to submit their feedback anonymously so that they don’t have any reservations about expressing their honest opinion.
Discipline Data

In addition to feedback from staff and youth, the positive changes brought by implementing RJ should be apparent in your center’s discipline data. Make sure that your center tracks not just the frequency of infractions by youth, but also the nature of those infractions. Check the data regularly and note any patterns you may see. Has there been a reduction in the rate of infractions, especially violent ones? Are youth repeating those infractions less often? If not, use that information to further refine the practices you are using to handle discipline.

Community Feedback

Your community partners can also be a valuable source of information about how your new practices are working. Survey volunteers to get their perspective on the center’s climate and whether they have noticed any significant changes. The parents of the youth in your center may also have important feedback on this topic, so find a way to incorporate their voices in your evaluation process as well possibly using a circle as a way to do this.

9. Sustainability Planning

Our goal at IBARJ is to help RJ become a permanent fixture in your center, well beyond our involvement. Throughout this guide, we have flagged steps you can take from the very beginning to guarantee your long-term success. In review, here are the three cornerstones of sustainable change: policy change, in-house trainers, and self-assessment.

Policy Change

The clearest way to affirm your center’s commitment to restorative practices is to update your policies to reflect this new philosophy. Formalizing BARJ as “the way we do things” can help these practices stay in place even when your center experiences turnover among its staff and leadership. Update your training, discipline, and youth intake policies to ensure that RJ is present in everything you do.
In-House Trainers

Empower your staff to train their colleagues. This will make you independent of training organizations in the long run, and will make it easier to implement ongoing trainings. Establish a system that encourages key staff to take on this responsibility.

Self-Assessment

Find ways to make it as easy as possible for you to monitor your progress in implementing restorative practices. Develop outcome measures specific to restorative practices and include them in your center’s regular self-assessment routine.

“I am continually humbled by human capacities for openness, heart-centered connecting, humility, compassion, understanding, and love. I find that restorative justice in general, and peacemaking circles in particular, help us connect with our deepest and best selves and bring these dimensions of ourselves to some of the hardest challenges we face.”

—Kay Pranis

Ready to implement restorative practices in your Juvenile Detention Center?

Give us a call!

We’d be happy to answer your questions, learn more about your JDC, and start strategizing to develop your center’s own implementation plan.

Sara Balgoyen, Executive Director of IBARJ

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