

## Tip Sheet

### *V.I.T.A.L. Steps Applied to Case Practice*

#### **Focus: Restorative Justice and Young Adults**

**Best Practice Summary:** Restorative justice is an approach used around the world. It is a guiding framework that places the needs of young adults, families and communities at the center of a response. Restorative justice shifts from viewing a particular action as an offense towards an appreciation for a behavior as an act that damages others, communities, and relationships. Restorative justice aligns with a trauma informed, child center approach that recognizes positive relationships as the strongest motivation for individual change. It is an important tool in keeping youth residing in their communities.

Every team member can engage in a healing relationship with youth. Restorative practices also reduce harms associated with disproportionate minority contact by offering alternatives to current punitive responses that deepen youth involvement with the justice system.

**Goals for the Activity:** Restorative justice efforts focus on repairing relationships, building communication and trust within community, preventing further problems/issues. In group settings, restorative justice utilizes the "talking circle" as a primary means of communicating in a community. When one person finishes talking, the conversation moves to the next person in a clockwise direction. Restorative justice is used in juvenile review boards, in schools, in some 24/7 treatment settings, community organizations and many other settings where a community exists.

- Restorative practices can be used to prevent conflict, build relationships and repair harm by enabling people to communicate effectively and positively.
- Restorative practice can involve a proactive approach to preventing harm and conflict and activities to repair harm where conflicts have already risen.
- Restorative practice supports peoples to recognize that all their activities affect others and that people are responsible for their choices and actions and can be held accountable for them. This enables people to reflect on how they interact with each other and consider how best to prevent harm and conflict.
- Restorative practices invite full participation and consensus. The practices give voice to those involved in and affected by a given incident of harm, and invite dialogue among them where appropriate.
- Restorative practices work towards healing what has been broken. A restorative response seeks to address the harms – both tangible and intangible – resulting from an incident, and to do what is possible to help meet the needs of any and all affected.
- Appropriate reparation should be discussed and expected.

- Restorative practices can be helpful where there has been division. Harmful actions can create alienation, and distrust in the community.

**V.I.T.A.L. Values and/or Essential Practice principles in action**

- Restorative justice focuses on the **practice principles** of relationships, equity, belonging and shared power.
- It is consistent with the **core practices** of fortifying and supporting.

**For coaching and support of skill development in supervision**

Reflect on the core practices in V.I.T.A.L: Are we engaging and exchanging information, assessing and understanding strengths, fortifying and supporting, and reflecting and adjusting as we learn?

**Resources:**

Sherman, L., & Strang, H. (2007). Restorative Justice: The evidence. London: Smith Institute.  
Retrieved from: [https://www.iirp.edu/pdf/RJ\\_full\\_report.pdf](https://www.iirp.edu/pdf/RJ_full_report.pdf)

**Suggested CQI Checklist**

Has the team looked at any restorative justice literature that may help with communicating and listening to adolescents on the case load?

Has the team considered using a 'talking circle.' Such a forum may be a good way to connect with youth and to foster listening.

Has the conversation focused on communities at all? It might be helpful to shift conversations to talk more about communities. Have a conversation about the community young adults live in and how their behavior has impacted others and what can they do to repair that. Sometimes just framing it this way can evolve into a whole new perspective.

Has the team considered referring the young adult to a community-based agency that uses components of restorative justice. Learning to use their voice in a supportive and genuine way is a powerful tool.

**Level of Mastery Demonstrated:** Consider the level of skill demonstrated by staff on this task.

**Foundational:** The team member is at an early stage of core practice and skill acquisition. The team member is supported in learning the skills. The team member has an opportunity to develop skills. Coaching agendas may target specific skills for development. The skills are demonstrated and actively coached by team leaders.

**Rising:** The team member occasionally applies the practices and skills independently. Coaching agendas focus on generalizing skills. The team member demonstrates increasing understanding of the practices. Skills are demonstrated and coached by team leaders.

**Secure:** The team member consistently applies skills independently to a wide range of settings and aspires to apply knowledge and understanding. There is a range of evidence that shows a deeper understanding of concepts and that skills are sustained over time.