

# Restorative Justice for Youth

## An Alternative to the Criminal System

Restorative justice is a response to wrongdoing that involves bringing together the interests and needs of the **person who has been harmed**, the **person who has committed the harm**, and **community stakeholders**, to arrive at a place of **accountability** and **reparation**.



Visit our website for more info about the South Carolina Restorative Justice Initiative: [www.scrji.org](http://www.scrji.org)  
Follow us on social media: @scrjinitiative

Restorative justice for youth operates in much the same way that it does for adults. For more on the philosophy and processes that animate restorative practice, see our [Restorative Justice one pager](#).

### Entry Points

Youth enter into restorative processes on their own or through referrals from a variety of agencies including schools, community-led organizations, and juvenile courts.

### Accountability

What constitutes appropriate accountability measures for an adult may be different for a teenager still living at home and going to school. A successful accountability plan must necessarily account for these influences and spell out the type of support that a young person will need from the adults and figures of authority in their life in order to fulfill their obligations.

Examples of support include:

- Mentorship
- Part time employment
- Therapy

### Outcomes

Research shows significant positive outcomes for youth who participate in restorative programs as compared to youth charged and adjudicated in the criminal legal system. [These outcomes include:](#)

- Lower rate of recidivism
- High rate of victim satisfaction in the process
- High rate of youth satisfaction in the process
- Overall improvement in youths' school performance, family relationships, and communication after participating in the RJ process.

### Examples of RJ Alternatives to the Criminal Legal System for Youth

- [New Zealand Family Group Conferencing](#)
- [Community Works West Restorative Community Conferencing Program](#)

### Best Practices

Restorative programs for youth should be offered **in lieu of criminal charges** and **guarantee confidentiality** throughout the process.