

# **Moving Forward:**

**Future Approaches of**

**Nova Scotia**

**Restorative Practices**

# **COALITION OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE AGENCIES**

## **CoRJA**

### **PRESENTATION TO: STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012**

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## Who is CoRJA?

*Restorative Justice is not simply a program or a practice, it is a philosophy, a set of principles.*

*In 1999 the Nova Scotia Restorative Justice Program was implemented through service agreements with eight not-for-profit community justice agencies and one tribal organization offering services specifically for Aboriginal youth.*

*Over the past decade The Nova Scotia Community Justice program has gained attention as a national and world class leader through its innovative and progressive model.*

*In 2009, the Community Agencies delivering Restorative Justice initiatives across Nova Scotia formed The Coalition of Restorative Justice Agencies (CoRJA) to provide support for common issues that impact our agencies as a whole as we deliver restorative justice programs for the Province of Nova Scotia. With a united voice to government, CoRJA works to advocate and promote awareness of our community agencies.*

## RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

### **Definition:**

Restorative Justice is not about restoring justice; it is restoring relationships and repairing harm. Although within Nova Scotia it has historically been used within a criminal context, there have been many other applications where restorative approaches have been beneficial in creating safer communities.

Restorative Justice emphasizes the way in which crime hurts relationships between people who live in a community. Crime is seen as something done against a victim and the community - not simply as a violation against the state. Crime may be any wrong that weakens relationships between people or harms community living. The Restorative Justice process, as implemented by the Nova Scotia Restorative Justice Program, strives to repair relationships within the community. In addition to strengthening the community, the individual's needs are met through the development and implementation of programs to address these areas.

### **Expanded role for victims:**

Through the Restorative Justice process, the offender is held accountable to those he or she has harmed. Many victims say that they tend to feel left out of their own cases in the traditional justice system. In contrast, restorative justice programs allow the voices of victims to be heard through active participation in the Restorative Justice process which allows victims to have input into the outcome.

### **Restorative Justice gets the community involved:**

Restorative Justice involves individual community members, community agencies, police, schools, organizations, religious communities and business in a variety of preventative and responsive programs to bridge gaps between people and organizations. Communities have the right to feel safe and secure. Restorative Justice helps communities build their sense of safety and capacity for collective action by having community members be active in peacemaking.

### **Restorative Justice Requires the Offender to Take Responsibility:**

Restorative Justice offers an opportunity for the offender to accept responsibility for their actions and then actively work towards repairing the harm caused to victims and community. Some offenders choose to appear in court rather than participate in the Restorative Justice process when they find out they will be required to face those they have harmed.

## **FOUR GOALS OF NOVA SCOTIA RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PROGRAM**

### **1. Reduce Recidivism**

It has been shown that face-to-face meetings with victims can have a profound effect on the future behaviour of offenders. The nature of the restorative process provides an opportunity to focus on and address the underlying causes of the criminal behaviour and the constructive reintegration of the offender into the community.

### **2. Increase Victim Satisfaction**

The victim's voice is rarely heard in the formal justice system. By having a forum in which a victim can express how the offence has impacted them, and assist in the identification of the reparative measures, victims may derive greater satisfaction. Victims are supported throughout the process by the community agency staff and volunteers.

### **3. Strengthen Communities**

The community justice agencies strengthen communities by building relationships through restorative practice. The agencies collaborate with community-based service providers for programming such as Mental Health and Addiction Services. The agencies also deliver programs to meet the needs of our communities, including Anger Management, Voices for Girls, and Drug, Alcohol Awareness, and Restorative Options for Youth in Care. Many of the community justice agencies across Nova Scotia are leaders in supporting their local communities in the development of long-term initiatives using Restorative Approaches, including CATCH (Children at the Critical Hour), Restorative Practice in Schools, and Elder Abuse.

### **4. Increase Public Confidence in the Justice System**

Prior to 1999, the formal justice system assumed primary responsibility for crime prevention and crime control. As a result, communities have become increasingly alienated from the justice system. With the introduction of the NSRJ program, the use of restorative approaches invites the participation of communities in achieving reconciliation between offenders and those harmed through the commission of an offence. Greater participation and voice by communities and victims, has enhanced public confidence in the justice system.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Community Justice Agencies have been delivering programs to youth in conflict with the law since 1981. Restorative Justice became a mandatory Provincial Program in 2001 and has become a key feature of the formal justice system's response to youth criminal activity.

Provincial Restorative Justice Agencies have redirected over 17672 cases (as of November 2011) away from the formal court system. Successful completion rates typically hover around the high 80 to low 90 percent rate.

According to Dr. Donald Clairmont's 2005 report based on the 1941 youth who were directed to Restorative Justice Agencies by that date, only 23% returned to the criminal justice system whereas those who were directed to Youth Court for a first offense returned at a rate of 51%<sup>1</sup>. Even more importantly, according to Dr. Clairmont's report, follow-up surveys conducted after the compilation of these initial statistics indicate that only 9% of interviewed youth who had attended Restorative Justice processes had committed a further offence. These and other statistics reflect the effectiveness of our agencies and the level of social and community change that our staff and volunteers have brought to Nova Scotia through their work on this program.

Taking a larger view, NSRJ has garnered world attention. Some of this is the direct result of the partnership the Nova Scotia Restorative Justice/Community University Research Alliance (NSRJ-CURA). A Jordanian delegation travelled to Nova Scotia to meet with and learn from NSRJ practitioners. In October 2010, a Nova Scotia delegation attended the IIRP Conference in Hull, UK.

NSRJ also partnered with the Nova Scotia Gambia Association, Mount Saint Vincent, HRM Police and other parties/services on the Community Policing in the Gambia Project which saw NSRJ Caseworkers travel to the Gambia four times over a five year period to train/work with police and educators in Africa.

In June 2011, NSRJ-CURA co-hosted the IIRP Conference that took place in Halifax at which time the world came to our backyard to see what we have been doing in Nova Scotia. Many workshops were held that highlighted the progressive work of our community agencies in the field of Restorative Practice.

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<sup>1</sup> Clairmont, Don, The NS Restorative Justice Initiative, Final Report to Ottawa, December 2005 – page 173.

## **MOVING FORWARD**

This is an exciting time in Nova Scotia. As outlined in the Crime Prevention Strategy that was announced by Minister Landry at the 2012 Crime Prevention Symposium, Restorative Approaches are expanding beyond the realm of criminal justice and reaching out into communities. Community Justice Agencies have been leaders in their field for over 10 years and are positioned to offer expertise and skills to support this growth.

It is recognized that throughout Nova Scotia there exists a broader understanding and desire for restorative approaches across government departments and everywhere from classrooms to boardrooms, such as the recent extension of the Schools Plus program where restorative practices will be used. This year, the Nova Scotia Youth Facility will be establishing a “restorative cottage” utilizing restorative practices. A new Restorative Approach to senior / elder abuse is being explored in Nova Scotia.

CoRJA encourages and supports future growth of the member agencies and their involvement in Restorative Approaches, whether it be in Justice, Education, Community Services, Health, or the private sector. Nova Scotia has been a leader internationally in Restorative Justice approaches and can continue to be so through collaboration and coordination. Continued expansion and growth in our communities is the key to our success in the future.

All levels of Government are managing through difficult fiscal times. The Community Justice Agencies already have limiting budgets and additional resources will be required to move forward with the use of Restorative Approaches.

A new way of thinking about Government funding approaches is required to ensure we do not dilute the effectiveness and success of Restorative Approaches through individual departmental silo thinking and funding. A multi-departmental collaborative approach to funding Restorative Practices will ensure a better return on the investment and achieve richer outcomes for the community.

CoRJA members, including their strong cadre of community volunteers, is a virtual Centre of Excellence in Restorative Approaches for Nova Scotia. We are positioned and ready to play a leadership role as Nova Scotia embraces and reaps the benefits of expanded Restorative Approaches throughout our communities and society.

**CoRJA MEMBERSHIP  
2012**

**Community Justice Society - Halifax region**

Halifax Regional Municipality  
Executive Director - Yvonne Atwell  
Board member - Denise Levangie

**Cumberland Community Alternatives Society**

Cumberland County  
Executive Director - Jennifer Furlong  
Board member - Jean Jacklin

**John Howard Restorative Justice (The John Howard Society Central Region)**

East Hants and Colchester Counties  
Director - Chris King  
Executive Director of John Howard - John Peach  
Board member - Bob MacDonald

**John Howard Society restorative Justice North Eastern Region**

Counties of Pictou, Antigonish and Guysborough  
Director - Susan Hughes  
Executive Director of John Howard - John Peach  
Board member - Bob MacDonald

**Island Community Justice Society**

Cape Breton Island  
Executive Director - Angela Steele  
Board member - Linda Parris

**Mi'kmaw Legal Support Network**

All of Nova Scotia -First Nations  
Executive Director - Paula Marshall  
Co-ordinator of Projects - Grace Campbell



**South Shore Community Justice Society**

Counties of Queens and Lunenburg  
Executive Director - Susan Himmelman  
Board member - Kevin Marlin

**Tri County Restorative Justice**

Counties of Digby, Yarmouth and Shelburne  
Executive Director - Tanya Bain  
Board member - John Chant

**Valley Restorative Justice**

Counties of West Hants, Kings, and Annapolis  
Executive Director - Marge DeBodt  
Board member - Tara Moore



For further information, please contact the agency in your particular area.

The Mi'kmaq Legal Support Network (MLSN) began operations in July 2002 with the purpose is to develop and maintain a sustainable justice support system for all Mi'kmaw/Aboriginal people in the Nova Scotia Criminal Justice System. Throughout these years, MLSN has been able to carry out a number of activities that have benefited many Mi'kmaq/Aboriginal people who have been involved with the criminal justice system throughout the province of Nova Scotia.

MLSN exists as a justice support system for Aboriginal people who are involved in the criminal justice system in Nova Scotia. Through the past number of years MLSN has provided core services through the Mi'kmaw Court Worker and Mi'kmaw Customary Law programs and more recently the Victim Support Services program. On a monthly basis, these 12 staff provides service to 40-50 Mi'kmaq/Aboriginal clients living on and off reserve within NS. Each client has unique needs during the justice process and requires many hours of staff's attention; geographical distance increases this variable.

As well, MLSN provides additional support services for all Aboriginal people in Nova Scotia by identifying and addressing gaps in the mainstream justice programs and services such as the program of Building a Bridge and the Court Interpreters programs. Since its inception, MLSN has always attempted to make a non-Mi'kmaq system of justice better for Aboriginal people in Nova Scotia. This system is largely process oriented and lacking Aboriginal cultural values. MLSN programs and services help bridge these gaps but it is often found that the criminal justice system needs to be more receptive to Mi'kmaq concepts of justice.

MLSN is a partner of the Nova Scotia RJ program and as such, a member of CORJA. MLSN provides a variety of justice tools specific to Aboriginal people in Nova Scotia. The Mi'kmaw Customary Law Program provides culturally relevant community based programs such as justice Circles, community sentencing, and healing circles through cost-share agreements between the federal and provincial governments. This allows Aboriginal people in Nova Scotia to assume a significant role in working with offenders and resolving civil and criminal disputes in their own communities.

As the NSRJ program grows in mandate and scope so does the complexity and responsibilities of each organization. The reputation of the NSRJ organizations as leaders in service delivery and credibility has created a competence in Nova Scotia's justice system. CORJA and its membership agencies deserve a round of applause for meeting the goals of the program to the benefit of the Province.

On behalf of MLSN we would like the honorable members present to be aware of the programs, its impact on the justice landscape and the resourcing needs to accomplish all that it does.

# Programs Currently being Delivered/ Future Development

AGENCY	CURRENT PROGRAMS	AGENCY VISION	OTHER ACTIVITIES		
	Core Programs Workshops		Committee  Community		
Community Justice Society	Youth RJ (12-17 yrs)  Community conference, north end Community circle  Waterville youth Centre	Rites of passage  Voices for Girls  IMOVE in my own voice  Stoplift  Voices for Change  Noggin Knowledge  Victim support circle  P.A.R.T.Y program	Adult RJ  Support for restorative practice in schools  Bullying programs  Social Marketing to promote CJS  Fund-raising  Building strong partnerships with the business sector		

<p>Cumberland Community Alternatives Society</p>	<p>Youth RJ (12-17 yrs) Youth CSO Adult CSO</p>	<p>Anger Management Stoplifting Voices</p>	<p>IARJPP site  Continue to support implementation of RJ in Schools  Develop a Drug and Alcohol educational workshop</p>	<p>Schools Plus Advisory  Interagency Committee on Family Violence  Cumberland Kids (CYS County Partner Group)</p>	<p>Regular attendance at Youth Justice Court  Presentations to local schools and community groups  Provide placement and employment opportunities for post-secondary students  On-going education and training of Justice stakeholders and community partners</p>
<p>John Howard (Truro) Restorative Justice</p>	<p>Youth RJ (12-17 yrs) Adult RJ Youth CSO Adult CSO</p>	<p>Offer a Variety of Crime Prevention Workshops  Offer Variety of Life Skills Sessions  Victim Empathy  Personal Development Mentor  Employability Workshop &amp; ongoing after care support  Ongoing program development to meet the individual's needs</p>	<p>More active presence in the schools  Develop meaningful intervention programs for young adults.  Work in collaboration with court/judiciary stakeholders to address issues surrounding youth case processing time.</p>	<p>Colchester Partners Domestic Violence Action Plan Court Case Processing Committee</p>	<p>JHS Work Resource Center (we accept clients at the office for CSW)  Regular Court Attendance  RJ Group at Nova Institution  Volunteers  Recruitment/training/meetings  Provide RJ presentations to local community groups/schools  Provide student placement for NSCC students/Community Services Youth Engagement  On going meetings with stakeholders and referrals sources - training/refreshers</p>

<p>John Howard Society (Westville) Restorative Justice</p>	<p>Youth RJ (12-17 yrs)  Youth CSO  Adult CSO  Launch Out - Youth Employability Program ( 2X yr) - funded by Service Canada</p>	<p>Resume writing workshop  On-site tutoring program  Time Management Workshop (developed specifically for pre-breach referrals/curfew breaches)</p>	<p>Adult RJ  Collaborating with schools re: Restorative Practices in schools  Re-visiting pre-breach referrals with options to breaching  Expanding agency programing to assist client needs</p>	<p>Roots for Youth - Committee Members  School Plus Committees  Pictou County Parnters</p>	<p>Volunteer Recruitment/training/meetings  Provide RJ presentations to local community groups/schools  Provide student placement for NSCC students/Community Services Youth Engagement  On going meetings with referrals sources - training/refreshers</p>
<p>Island Community Justice Society</p>	<p>Youth RJ (12-17 yrs)  Adult RJ (currently only within CBRM)  CSO  CATCH / YIP</p>	<p>Anger Management  Anti-bullying collaboration with school board via Schools Plus</p>	<p>Continue with Adult RJ to see implementation across Cape Breton Island  Seek ongoing funding for pilot programs - CATCH and YIP  Networking to enhance community awareness of services and programs  Education and collaboration of RJ practices and principles in other community agencies and schools.</p>	<p>Association for Safer Cape Breton Communities  Domestic Violence Court Working Committee  Child &amp; Youth Strategy - Eastern Region  Inter-Agency on Family Violence  Asset Building</p>	<p>Volunteer Recruitment/training/meetings  Provide RJ presentations to local community groups/schools  Provide student placement for post-secondary students  On going meetings with referrals sources - training/refreshers</p>

<p>Mi'kmaw Legal Support Network</p>	<p>Youth RJ (12-17 yrs)          Adult RJ          Court worker program</p>	<p>Victim support program          Building a Bridge project          Mi'kmaw Venture Program          Mi'kmaw Translators program          Community Service Hours          Gladue reports          Cultural Gatherings within Correctional facilities          Cultural Sensitivity sessions</p>	<p>The vision of the MLSN is that Mi'kmaq / First Nation people will have autonomy and control over their justice support system within a time-frame and operational structure to be determined by the Mi'kmaq / First Nation people and their leadership.</p>		
<p>South Shore Community Justice Society</p>	<p>Youth RJ (12-17 yrs)          Youth CSO          Adult CSO</p>	<p>Voices Program          Anger Management          Drug and Alcohol Program</p>	<p>Adult RJ          Expand on the Restorative justice in schools          Develop more programs for youth as the availability of programing is getting very limited in the area</p>	<p>School Plus          Big Brother/Big Sister</p>	<p>Court Attendance          Volunteer training          On going training of Stakeholders          Presentations to community groups and schools</p>

<p>Tri County Restorative Justice</p>	<p>Youth RJ (12-17 yrs)</p> <p>RJ in schools</p> <p>Piolet Project for Seniors</p>		<p>RJ in all Schools to deal with issues such as bullying and attendance (Agencies as Resources)</p> <p>Healing approaches to Senior Abuse ( Agencies as Resources)</p> <p>Collaborating with other organizations and businesses in the implementation of a restorative approach</p>	<p>Schools Plus Committee (Yarmouth and Digby)</p> <p>Clare Rec. Department</p> <p>Big Brothers/Big Sisters</p> <p>Early Intervention Program</p> <p>Health Care Center Steering Committee</p> <p>SHYFT ( Homeless youth shelter) Committee</p> <p>Community Heath Board ( Digby)</p>	<p>Provide presentations to organizations, schools, referral sources, councils etc.</p> <p>Sit on a variety of Boards</p> <p>Involved in several Interagency groups in Tri-Counties.</p> <p>Partner with NSCC Burrige Campus providing training opportunities for students.</p> <p>Continue working with schools interested in implementing a restorative approach.</p>
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<p>Valley Restorative Justice</p>	<p>Youth RJ (12-17 yrs)</p> <p>Pilot site for Healing for Elder Abuse</p> <p>Collaborative Reintegration Program at NSYF</p> <p>Youth CSO</p>	<p>Crime Prevention Programs/ Workshops for youth at risk or on RJ Caseload (Funded by Law Foundation)</p> <p>Options to Anger</p> <p>Positive Self</p> <p>Stoplift</p> <p>Justice Awareness</p> <p>Victim Empathy</p> <p>“Choices” Drug Education and Awareness</p> <p>Adolescent Alcohol Education and Awareness</p> <p>Leisure Education</p> <p>Off Highway Vehicle Workshop</p>	<p>Adult RJ</p> <p>To provide restorative healing for elders in our catchment area</p> <p>To continue to deliver Crime Prevention Programs/Workshops to youth - including newly developed cyber-bullying program</p> <p>Support for RJ (Practices/Approaches) in Schools</p>	<p>Kings Co. Department of Justice Best Practice Committee</p> <p>Annapolis/Kings Networking Committee</p> <p>Children and Youth Action Committee</p> <p>Kings County Crime Prevention Committee</p> <p>AVRSB Youth Health Center Committee</p> <p>Kings Co. Senior Safety Committee</p> <p>West Hants Addictions Committee</p> <p>West Hants Community Partnerships Committee</p> <p>Schools Plus Implementation Committee</p> <p>(Most committee involvement is by Director and/or staff member)</p>	<p>Provide VRJ presentations to community groups/committees/schools</p> <p>Volunteer recruitment/training meetings</p> <p>Ongoing meetings with referral sources &amp; community placement agencies - training/refreshers</p> <p>Provide placement and employment opportunities for NSCC and post-secondary students</p>
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