



Community Conferencing: Effective Community Justice for Juvenile Crime and Conflicts

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"We find that all of us, as a society, are to blame, but only the defendant is guilty."

We *CAN* do better.

Justice as healing, learning & accountability

Addressing Common Needs Expressed by Stakeholders

- Provide meaningful response to juvenile crime
- Address DMC issues
- Give victims a voice
- Better outcomes – socially and fiscally
- Address root causes

The push back

- Too soft on crime. It let's kids off the hook.
- “Too touchy feely”
- What if they re-offend?
- Principals don't want to bring together any more than 2 people at a time. It get's too crazy.

Traditional Justice (retributive and rehabilitative)

Victims are peripheral to the process

The focus is on punishing or on treating the offender

The community is represented by the state

The process is characterized by adversarial relationships among the parties

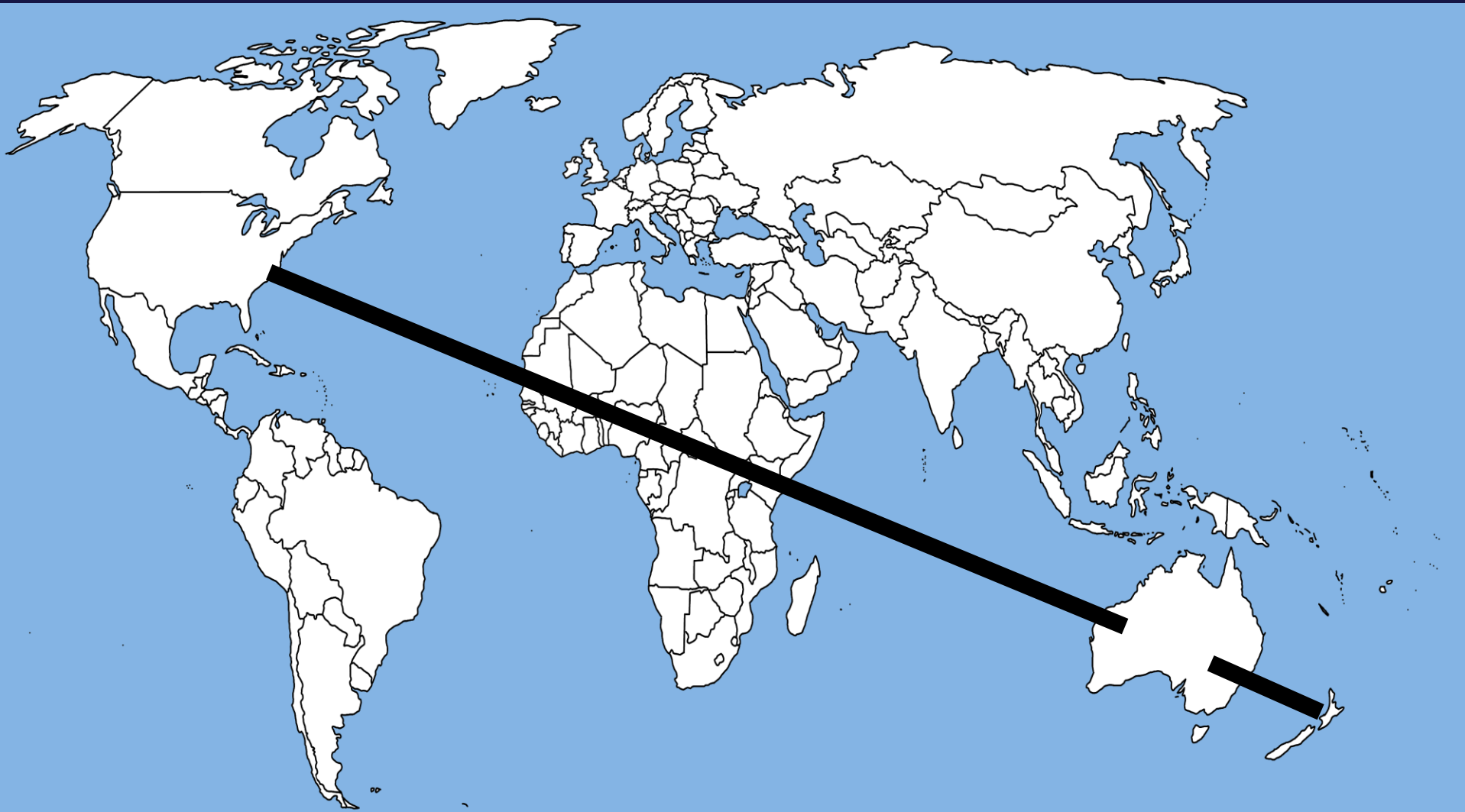
Restorative Justice

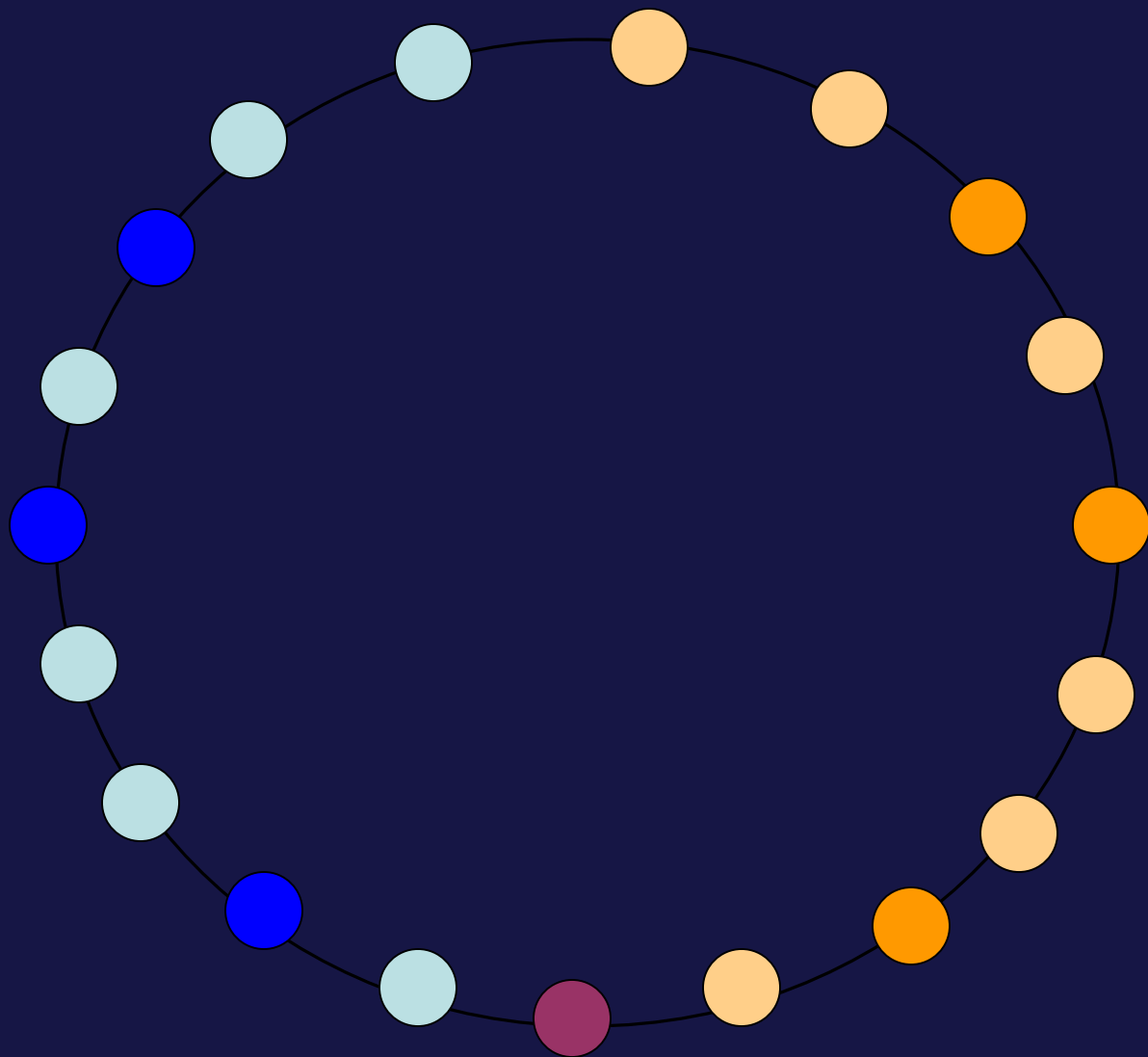
Victims are central to the process

The focus is on repairing the harm between an offender and victim, and perhaps also an offender and a wider community

Community members or organizations take a more active role

The process is characterized by dialogue and negotiation among parties





What happened?

How have people
been affected?

What can be done to

repair the harm

prevent it from happening again

Referral Sources

Kinds of Cases

18,000

Baltimore residents safely resolved
their own crimes/conflicts
using Community Conferencing

95%

result in effective Agreements

60%

less re-offending

1/10th

the cost of court

This is not just for first time offenders!

Felony Diversion

After 1 year

Half as likely to re-offend

Felony Diversion

After 2 years

One-third as likely to re-offend

RJ gives us leverage in addressing
racial bias and disparities

We need to use it more.

Dept. of Education, Office of Civil Rights
Study of all 97,000 public schools
(2014)

- “...pattern of inequality on a number of fronts, with race as the dividing factor.”
- African American students suspended/expelled at 3x the rate of white students
- African American children make up 18% of preschool enrollment, but nearly 50% of preschool suspensions

Community Conferencing in Maryland

- Baltimore City
- Baltimore County
- Anne Arundel County
- Prince Georges County
- Carroll County
- Mid-shore Region
- Southern Maryland
- Calvert County

Other Community Conferencing Programs

- Brooklyn, NY (NY Peace Institute)
- Jefferson Parish (JDAI site in DA's office)
- New Orleans (Center for Restorative Approaches)
- Gainesville, FL (River Phoenix Cntr for Peacebuilding)
- Juneau & Sitka, AK
- Albany, NY (Albany County DA's office)

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