



## JJPOC Meeting Minutes

June 16, 2022  
2:00pm-3:30pm  
Zoom Conference Call

### Attendance:

Rep. Toni Walker  
Rep. Anthony Nolan  
Marc Pelka  
Gary Winfield  
Erica Bromley  
Christina Quaranta  
Macklin Roman  
Patrick Callahan  
Janeen Reid  
Hector Glynn  
Marilyn Moore  
Martha Stone  
Judge Dawne Westbrook  
Derrick Molden

Gary Roberge  
Stacy Schulman  
Derrick Gordon  
Susan Hamilton  
Gwendolyn Samuel  
Angel Quiros  
Brian Hill  
Lisa Sementilli  
Catherine Osten  
Judge Patrick Carroll  
Tais Ericson  
Robyn Porter  
Amy Marracino  
Veron Beaulieu

### TYJI Staff:

William Carbone  
Erika Nowakowski  
Shauntaye Monroe  
Brittany LaMarr  
Susan Cusano  
Eva Ott Hill  
Danielle Cooper

### Welcome and Introductions

Undersecretary Marc Pelka welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Undersecretary Marc Pelka welcomed the youth and family members from the community expertise workgroups, Connecticut Justice Alliance, Full Circle, AFCAMP, and the Center for Children’s Advocacy.

### Overview of the Meeting

Erika Nowakowski introduced Laura Furr from Laura Furr consulting, and Kris Wraight, restorative justice trainer and facilitator. They will be giving a recap of the restorative justice training. She also introduced Martha Stone and Latoya Fernandez from CCA, who will be giving a presentation on restorative justice.

### Acceptance of JJPOC Meeting Minutes

Undersecretary Marc Pelka asked for a motion to accept the May 19, 2022, meeting minutes. The motion was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously.



## **JJPOC Training on: Authentic Community Engagement and Restorative Justice Recap**

Laura Furr and Kris Wraight gave a recap of the authentic community engagement and restorative justice training they facilitated with JJPOC members. Approximately 30 members from the JJPOC participated in the training. They will be sharing some next steps that came out of this training. They worked with those that attended to think about how to center young people and their families more in the participants work. Kris has worked with young people on healthy relationships and on restorative justice practices. Restorative justice gives individuals the opportunity to use tools to address harm, putting in place systems of accountability to transform those how have caused harm. Restorative justice also offers tools that can be used on everyday interactions to help recenter relationships. It is important to keep in mind that these practices are rooted in indigenous wisdom. In the training, they focused on the social discipline window that is rooted in the foundational concept of restorative practices that all human beings are happier, more productive, and more likely to change behaviors when things are done with them rather than to or for them. This means that in restorative practices, it is important to have high expectations for one another, while also providing the support people need to meet those expectations. Everyone has been socialized to be in different boxes; this impacts the way people form systems like the juvenile justice system. If people in power are creating and implementing systems of accountability when they were socialized to be, that can undermine the system. Kris asked how we can get to the with, to create systems that support people to change while also being held accountable.

The community expertise work group has challenged the JJPOC to work with them, to meet the request of involving youth and families in the decisions that the JJPOC is making. Laura talked about adultism which is the oppression of young people based on their age. Oppression is the most extreme version of the to, not, or for windows, when we oppress people in those windows, we remove their self-efficacy and their self-determination. The group should be thinking about these things in terms of the balance of power that we have. Laura shared a power map that the group did, the example was of a youth participating in a JJPOC workgroup meeting. Laura pointed out how the group should be mindful of opportunities to change these experiences of young people and families when they are a part of these meetings. Working on creating experiences of power and partnership to reduce experiences of oppression. Some of the ways that people wanted to apply what they learned were, adults speaking up quicker when they see young people being oppressed, communicating more with youth and families directly, and more. It is important to think about power and oppression, a lot of work will be benefitted by being aware and consistently thinking about the power dynamics in a situation. Thinking about changing agendas of meetings so they are more participatory, being open to change, and creating liberating spaces in these settings. There was consistent positive feedback from the training, people felt that they learned a lot about how they can better engage youth.

## **Restorative Justice Presentation**

The Center for Children's Advocacy gave a presentation on restorative justice. CCA started the restorative justice project about six years ago through a grant from Open Society Foundations. They first worked with CTJA, they then expanded to the Children's Center in Hamden, Waterford Country School, and then MYI. After CTTS closed, they worked with CSSD to bring restorative practices into Hartford



and Bridgeport Juvenile Detention Centers. Now the program is in 10 different CSSD facilities, contract facilities and some DCF facilities. Within the last few years, CCA has partnered with the Center for Restorative Justice, who have helped with the vision and the training for this program.

Latoya Fernandez, the restorative justice coordinator from CCA, went over the components of restorative justice. It is important to understand these because the process has level and steps to it. The first being relationship. This is the most important piece because you must be able to build with those who are a part of the circle. The relationship piece is culturally responsive to the youth in the facilities they serve. The next piece is respect. It should be mutual when you come into the space. The responsibility piece addresses accountability in a way that youth own their actions and understand the impacts. Repair gives youth the opportunity to fix what they broke, teaching youth that there are steps in repairing a broken relationship. The last piece is reintegration. Youth should know that they are redeemable, when they make an error they can come back on track, then model that leadership for other youth. The long-term impact is youth going back into their communities and modeling this for others.

There was a panel with Kia Level-Burden, Verdell Reid, and Louis Roger on restorative justice from the field. The first topic that the panel addressed was staff buy in. Kia Level-Burden spoke about going into facilities and the importance of talking to staff about their current practices and what they would like to see. It is important to acknowledge that these staff are on the front lines, so it is important to show support. The next topic that was addressed was why RJ. It was brought up that when working with people it becomes a culture of care, it helps to avoid doing further harm. It helps youth within the facilities to build a sense of community and how to take responsibility for showing respect to other people. It has given kids the opportunity to voice their opinions in spaces they could not before. The last question was how restorative justice has uplifted and enhanced youth in residential center, what do we hope they bring into back to their communities. Some things that RJ has brought to juveniles is giving them the opportunity to not be judged because it is so integrated into the culture. It gives youth a way to express their feelings or issues, it helps to empower them. Once youth leave the facility RJ helps them to get their thought together, plan, and move forward to find a solution

Jason Szanyi for the Center for Children's Law and Policy gave a short presentation on evaluations. He has been involved in youth justice reform in CT for about a decade. They do work evaluating restorative justice practices within the state of CT. One of the early signs that this was benefiting kids and staff was that a pilot program in CJTS was extremely impactful, in reducing conflict and acting out behaviors. The climate was described as more positive and behavioral health within the facility improved. CCA talked CCLP with evaluating the implementation of RJ in other facilities in Connecticut. The insider-outsider between the Center for Restorative Justice and CCA was transformational. CCLP had yet to see this depth and level of implementation of restorative practices anywhere else. There was buy in and ownership of RJ including during the pandemic. Judicial and DOC leadership really embraced and stuck with it despite all the other challenges that were happening. CCLP talked to young people and staff, they received overwhelming positive feedback from them. COVID was a disruption, but overall facilities did a good job of implementing it despite barriers that arose. Staff from the facility was grateful for the training and assistance from the Center for Restorative Justice. It takes those higher up in the facility reinforcing that RJ should be a priority so that it can be consistently implemented. Despite COVID



facilities were able to establish benchmarks and milestones, although there should be more transparency and accountability. A training structure should be created that can be sustainable for everyone at every facility.

Hartford CPA gave a presentation of what a restorative circle looks like. They showed the process of creating an agreement and creating a safe space. They presented what a restorative circle looks like in real time. CCA has a new partnership through a new OJJDP and other state agencies that will help to support their work with the Center for Restorative Justice. Martha Stone introduced the director of the Center for Restorative Justice, Susan Maze-Rothstein. Susan Maze-Rothstein expressed her excitement for the next chapter of working with CCA. What they are going to work on together is the notions of integration and sustainability. She talked about how much community matters in these kinds of practices. They plan to focus their work with the leadership of the agencies that can help to establish permanent structures. There needs to be cultural change which means creating an understanding among the leadership. Training them at each level to help give an understanding of the practices in depth, training existing and new staff as well. She also stressed that it is important to engage youth and families in these practices. The goal is that no matter where a youth is in the system, they will have access to restorative justice practices.

## **Discussion**

In future meetings, restorative justice will continue to be discussed. In July, DCF will be presenting on the children's behavioral and mental health system. DCF has also provided funding to the YSBs for extensive training on restorative justice. In the future, the hope is that members can hear more about restorative justice practices at the schools. There will be a second day of training, hopefully in person, that will continue to address youth engagement and restorative justice.

**Next Meeting: July 21, 2022, 2:00-3:30pm**