

7.0 Regional Restorative Justice Team Protocol

Location

Regional RJ Teams are organized according to regional catchment areas for Community-Based Restorative Justice Agencies contracted to provide NSRJP processes by the Nova Scotia Department of Justice.

RJ Team Roles & Responsibility

The Regional RJ Team Leads are responsible to oversee the referral process to restorative justice and to ensure the necessary information and support is available to carry out implementation of restorative processes. In doing so, they must ensure referrals are consistent with the eligibility requirements set out in the applicable protocol. The Regional RJ teams process, track, review, assess, plan and determine the approach to cases referred. The teams also oversee and support process implementation at all stages of the restorative process: preparation/case work, case sessions, monitor and follow-up support to implement process plans. Team members will collaborate to ensure case management and implementation of the restorative justice program.

Membership

Regional RJ Teams are collaborative partnerships between community-based Restorative Justice Agencies and Community Corrections. The exact membership will vary by region and according to the resources required as determined and assigned by the Lead Team. Membership will be drawn from:

- Restorative Justice Agency Executive Directors/Directors/Caseworkers
- Assigned Senior Probation Officers/ Probation Officers/ Provincial Program Officers

Operations

Team Leads will be designated from each of Community Corrections and the relevant community-based Restorative Justice Agency ("Lead Team"). The Team Leads will work collaboratively to oversee and administer referrals and ensure case management. Team Leads will meet weekly (additionally if needed) in order to assess and assign files referred and provide oversight and support for the NSRJP.

The RJ Team Leads will communicate with Justice Partners and the Courts to support their understanding and consideration of whether a referral to the NSRJP is appropriate and to provide ongoing progress updates. Team Leads will, as needed or requested:

- Consult with Justice Partners to provide information, or
- Facilitate case conferences with relevant Justice Partners and/or the Court and other Regional RJ Team members as appropriate to consider potential for referral for particular cases.

The Regional RJ Team will be convened by the Lead Team at least once monthly (additionally as needed) to support program implementation and operations. Monthly case management meetings may also include others from Community Corrections and RJ agencies involved in implementing restorative justice processes as necessary.

Regional Restorative Justice Teams shall operate in accordance with these protocols and the program principles, goals and objectives listed below, the current Provincial Principle-Based Guide for Practice, other policy and procedures approved by the Restorative Justice Program Governance and Management Committee, and relevant provisions in agreements with the Province for service.

A referral by a Justice Partner or the Court to the NSRJP, once accepted, will commence a restorative process, overseen and facilitated by the applicable restorative justice regional team. Regional RJ Teams will take a principle-based approach based on the NSRJP program principles to case work, process design and facilitation. Restorative processes will focus on understanding and addressing harms and impacts to support future just relations among individuals, groups, communities and institutions involved. Processes will generally result in an agreed upon restorative plan developed in collaboration with participants. Outcomes are not pre-determined but developed through the process and tailored to the specific circumstances and needs of the parties involved.

Working Principles

The Regional RJ Teams will guide their work and ensure that the implementation of restorative justice in all cases reflects the core principles of restorative justice that Justice Partners have committed will guide the development, governance and implementation of the NSRJP and the work of the Justice Partners in support of the NSRJP:

- **Relationally focused:** attention to interconnection, seeking to understand and promote just relations between individuals, groups and communities
- **Comprehensive and holistic:** takes into account histories, contexts and causes of harm and its impacts
- **Inclusive and participatory:** culturally grounded and trauma informed, attentive to the needs of parties and the safety and well-being of participants
- **Responsive:** Contextual, flexible practice, accessible, efficient and effective processes, informed by data and knowledge
- **Focused on promoting individual and collective accountability & responsibility**
- **Collaborative and non-adversarial:** among parties to the process and system and community partners
- **Forward-focused:** educative (not punitive), problem-solving, preventative and proactive

Justice Partners have adopted the following goals and objectives for the NSRJP:

- **Respond to needs of individuals and communities affected by crime:**
with particular attention to the needs of victims and those harmed by crime (individuals and communities)
- **Harm reduction:** reduce cycle of harm and injustice, prevent further harms to vulnerable individuals and communities and reduce over-representation of marginalized individuals in the justice system
- **Support individual and collective taking of responsibility for harm and public safety**
- **Increase access to justice:** more effective, timely, inclusive, equitable justice system
- **Provide responsive justice:** human-centered justice processes that consider root causes and seek meaningful outcomes and responses
- **Increase public confidence and accountability in the administration of justice**
- **Build and support healthy, safe and strong communities**