



# Expanding the Option for Restorative Justice

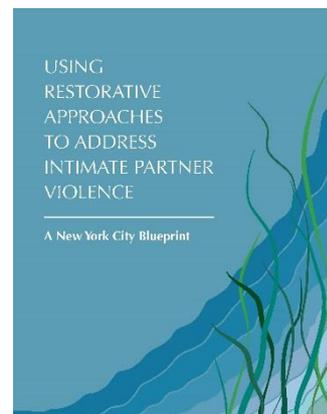
Addressing Intimate Partner Violence and Other Violent Crimes

Restorative justice is inspired by centuries-old practices but the need for it has never been more urgent. As jurisdictions around the country seek to reduce the well-documented harms of the legal system, the Center advocates for expanding the use of restorative justice as an option to promote racial justice and address a broad range of serious cases.

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## Helping Survivors Heal

After [studying how some practitioners around the country](#) are using restorative processes to address intimate partner violence, we've started bringing policy leaders, community-based organizations, people directly impacted by harm, and advocates to the table to develop options for community-based interventions that apply [restorative justice principles to intimate partner violence](#).



The goal is to promote safety, help survivors heal, and support everyone's well-being, while reducing the use of incarceration and the collateral consequences of criminal convictions.

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## Addressing Violent Crimes

**We're also using restorative justice in cases involving serious violent crimes, including homicide.** These efforts aim to meet the needs of those who have been harmed and invest in everyone's long-term healing. For the person who has caused harm—often a victim themselves—restorative justice offers an opportunity to come face-to-face with the impact of one's actions as well as a chance to take active steps towards repair. Throughout this work, we center the needs of those directly impacted by harm. Ultimately, we seek to honor the needs of the survivors, which are often unrecognized by the criminal legal system.



These efforts build on our experiences over the last decade with peacemaking circles. **With the support of Native American trainers, we've introduced this approach to the justice system in New York.**

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## Building Strong Schools

Today, volunteer peacemakers handle community conflict and crime with strategies that promote healing and wellness and don't end with a permanent criminal record or jail. We've even taken that framework to our city's public high

schools, recently completing the implementation of restorative justice in a large-scale randomized controlled trial examining changes in the use of exclusionary school discipline and school climate. The results from our research are due this summer, but we've collected our [lessons learned from implementation](#).

Restorative justice offers an important framework for transforming a system that too often fails to meet the needs of our communities. As Cheryl Graves said in our recent [panel on restorative justice](#), **"A lot of people think about restoration as 'how do we go back and fix something?' I look at it as moving forward."**

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