

NSRJ-CURA PROFESSIONALIZATION PROJECT

International Institute for Restorative Practices Conference

Hull, England

October 2010

Presenters: Susan Henderson and Sylvia Dearing

Justice



Workshop Format

Background:

- Nova Scotia Restorative Justice Program (NSRJ)
- Nova Scotia Community Justice Agencies
- Community University Research Alliance (NSRJ/CURA)

Professionalization Project:

- Description, process, findings

Your voice:

- Question for consideration
- Discussion

Justice

NSRJ CURA
Community University Research Alliance


NOVA SCOTIA

BACKGROUND

Nova Scotia Restorative Justice Program:

- Provides extrajudicial sanction – Restorative Justice – under section 10 YCJA
- Four entry points – Police, Crown, Court, Corrections
- Brings youth, victims, supporters, other indicated parties together to explore criminal incident and to identify ways to make amends
- Initiated 1999 – currently available for youth aged 12-17 who meet minimum requirements

Justice

NSRJ CURA
NATIONAL SOCIETY OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE


NOVA SCOTIA

BACKGROUND

NS Community Justice Agencies (CJA's)

- 8 non-profit, individual agencies including 1 Mi'kmaq program who cover all of province
- Contracted by NS Government to offer mandated programs like Restorative Justice
- Volunteers put the “community” in our work
- Distinct Boards with additional/individual focuses
- Recently formed - Coalition of Community Justice Agencies (CoRJA)

Justice



BACKGROUND

NSRJ/CURA

- Partnership between NSRJ, CJA's, formal justice partners, and universities – led by Dalhousie University
- Completing 5th year
- Sixteen research projects with five distinct themes:
 - 1) translation of principles into practice;
 - 2) community;
 - 3) diversity & equity;
 - 4) gender; and
 - 5) conceptualizing and measuring success
- CJA's took lead in the Professionalization Project

Justice



RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- What is Professionalization?
- Why Consider Professionalization in RJ?
- Professionalization: Structural Elements
- Benefits to Professionalization in RJ
- Disadvantage to Professionalization in RJ
- Challenges to Professionalization

RESEARCH QUESTIONS CONT'D

What is Professionalization?

How would the professionalization of restorative justice agency workers in Nova Scotia impact the workers, volunteers, and clients, as well as restorative justice values, principles, and practices?

Justice

NSRJ CURA
NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR RESTORATIVE JUSTICE


NOVA SCOTIA

FINDINGS

Definitions are not concrete or widely agreed upon but have common structural elements, as follows:

- Minimum required qualifications/education
- Degree of regulation and licensing
- Standards and codes of professional conduct
- Service to the community

Agreement exists that professionalization involves:

- Distinct, specialized knowledge or techniques
- Recognition
- Service to community

Justice

NSRJ CURA
NATIONAL SOCIETY OF REGISTERED JUDICIAL OFFICERS
COUNCIL OF UNIVERSITY REGULATORS OF AMERICA


NOVA SCOTIA

BENEFITS

- Increased respect and credibility
- Higher wages
- Job security
- Increased retention of staff
- Gender effect
- Increased accountability/quality of service

Justice

NSRJ CURA
NORWELT LITIGATION AND FINANCIAL SERVICES


NOVA SCOTIA

DISADVANTAGES

- risk of compromising RJ values and principles
- affect facilitator/participant relationship
- policy implications
- potential impacts on volunteers
- gender effect

CHALLENGES TO PROFESSIONALIZATION

- RJ skills “unteachable”/ are rather “inherent”
- Differing opinions

NEXT STEPS?

- No clear winner
- CoRJA

Justice

NSRJ CURA
National Society of
Judicial Referees of Canada


NOVA SCOTIA

QUESTION FOR CONSIDERATION

How would the professionalization of restorative justice agency workers impact staff, volunteers, and clients, as well as the delivery of restorative justice values, principles, and practices?

Justice

NSRJ CURA
National Society for Restorative Justice
Canadian Restorative Justice Association


NOVA SCOTIA