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# Juvenile Justice in Pennsylvania

**Mission-Driven**



**Performance-Based**



**Outcome-Focused**



The preparation of this Monograph was supported by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) Subgrant #DS-16T-13188, awarded to Shippensburg University. The awarded funds originate with the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view or opinions contained within this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent any official position, policy or view of the PCCD or the U.S. Department of Justice.

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# On-Line Balanced and Restorative Justice Resources



The Juvenile Court Judges' Commission: [www.jcjc.state.pa.us](http://www.jcjc.state.pa.us)

The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency:  
[www.pccd.state.pa.us](http://www.pccd.state.pa.us)

The National Center for Juvenile Justice: [www.ncjj.org](http://www.ncjj.org)

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention:  
[www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org](http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org)

The Office of the Victim Advocate: [www.o.va.state.pa.us](http://www.o.va.state.pa.us)

The Office of Victims of Crime: [www.ovc.gov](http://www.ovc.gov)

The Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers:  
[www.pachiefprobationofficers.org](http://www.pachiefprobationofficers.org)

The Balanced and Restorative Justice Project: [www.barjproject.org](http://www.barjproject.org)

The Center for Restorative Justice and Peacemaking:  
<http://2ssw.che.umn.edu/rjp/>

Restorative Justice: [www.restorativejustice.org](http://www.restorativejustice.org)

Or contact the Center for Juvenile Justice Training and Research at  
717-477-1709

Upon finding a child to be a delinquent child, the court is required by the Juvenile Act to enter an order of disposition that is consistent with the protection of the public interest and best suited to the child's treatment, supervision, rehabilitation and welfare. Moreover, the Juvenile Act requires this disposition to provide balanced attention to the protection of the community, the imposition of accountability for offenses committed, and the development of competencies to enable the child to become a responsible and productive member of the community.

For nearly a decade, key organizations involved in Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system have been devoted to assisting courts in achieving the objective of the "balanced attention" mandates of the Juvenile Act. These organizations have diligently built a solid foundation for juvenile justice system enhancement that includes the statutory requirements of both the Juvenile Act and the Crime Victims Act, and a clear mission statement that is accompanied by a comprehensive set of beliefs and guiding principles. Changes in policy and practice at the state and local levels are purposefully being aligned with this foundation. Especially exciting are recent statewide efforts to measure the performance of our system that are serving as a model for the nation.

Our first monograph, published in 1997, attempted to set our course. This monograph describes the progress that has been made throughout Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system in our efforts to achieve the statutory mission that guides our work. These efforts have been marked by an ongoing, systemwide dialogue that has centered on our collective commitment to this mission. It is hoped that this monograph will stimulate new ideas and additional discussion that will further enhance the quality and impact of our work.

Although written primarily for juvenile justice practitioners, broad distribution of this document at the local level is also encouraged as a means to enhance our communities' understanding of the critically important work that is being done on their behalf throughout Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system.

James E. Anderson  
Executive Director  
Juvenile Court Judges' Commission



*Resource Guide and Reporting Form for Service Providers* was published.

2003

The *Pennsylvania Juvenile Delinquency Benchbook* was published.

Allegheny County Juvenile Probation published the first County Report Card on juvenile justice.

*Building Bridges Between Your Court and Your Community* was published.

First train-the-trainer in the Victim/Community Awareness: An Orientation for Juveniles curriculum was held.

JJDPC members, James Anderson, James Reiland and Patricia Torbet, presented Pennsylvania's plan for juvenile justice at the National Conference on Juvenile Justice held in Philadelphia. The plenary session was titled "Mission-Driven, Performance-Based and Outcome-Focused Practices."

2004

Governor Ed Rendell included new juvenile justice system outcome measures in the budget request for the JCJC.

The JCJC required all counties to report, on a quarterly basis, outcome data on all delinquency cases at case closing.

Universities and colleges throughout the Commonwealth were invited to two regional forums to encourage the inclusion of balanced and restorative justice principles in their juvenile justice curriculums.

*Victim/Community Awareness: An Orientation for Juveniles* was published.

*Best Practice Guidelines for Victim Impact Panels within Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice System* was published.

2000

The Crime Victims Act was amended to include victims of juvenile crime.

Victims of Juvenile Offenders advocate positions were fully funded through the state budget.

2001

Act 30 of 2001 expanded the roles of the PCCD's Juvenile Advisory Committee (JAC), and changed the JAC's name to the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee. Among other duties, the JJDPC advises the PCCD on the establishment of priorities for juvenile justice and delinquency prevention.

The video, *Achieving a Balanced and Restorative Justice System in Pennsylvania*, was produced and widely disseminated.

The National Center for Juvenile Justice led the development of intermediate outcomes along with the protocol for probation departments to collect, analyze and present immediate outcome data.

*Best Practice Guidelines for Crime Victim Inclusion in Community Justice Panels within Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice System* was published.

2002

The bi-annual *Special Edition Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice* newsletter was published for the first time.

## Key Organizations

Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system benefits from the untiring efforts and skillful collaboration of many agencies and individuals as they translate into action the changes made to the purpose clause of Pennsylvania's Juvenile Act by Act 33 of Special Session Number 1 of 1995. The **Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee** (JJDPC) of the **Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency** (PCCD) stands at the vanguard of these efforts. The JJDPC is a federally mandated State Advisory Group and, by state statute, has responsibility for juvenile justice planning, coordinating and policy setting and for establishing priorities for juvenile justice projects supported by various federal and state funding streams. Based upon recommendations from the JJDPC, the PCCD awards funds that support juvenile justice system initiatives and programs that its **Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention** administers.

The **Juvenile Court Judges' Commission** (JCJC) and its member judges play a key leadership role in advancing system goals at the state and county levels. The JCJC's Grant-In-Aid program, which is contingent upon compliance with Juvenile Court Standards set by the JCJC, is the principal state-funding source for juvenile probation services in the Commonwealth. The JCJC staff provides consultant services to juvenile courts and probation departments in all 67 counties on matters ranging from the efficiency of administrative procedures to program development. The JCJC Balanced and Restorative Justice Specialist coordinates statewide efforts to achieve balanced and restorative justice. Its Center for Juvenile Justice Training and Research, at Shippensburg University, coordinates a graduate education and training program and administers the Commonwealth's juvenile delinquency disposition reporting program. The Juvenile Court Judges' Commission also serves in a liaison capacity with the juvenile courts, the Governor's Office and the General Assembly with regard to legislative proposals affecting Pennsylvania's juvenile justice and child welfare systems.

The **Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers** deserves special recognition for its stalwart guidance in implementing changes required by Act 33. It was the Council that convened a broad-

based committee of juvenile justice representatives to examine the ramifications and implications of the Act. This committee assumed responsibility for the creation of a strategic plan for implementing new balanced and restorative justice goals that incorporated the best thinking of juvenile justice professionals from across the Commonwealth. Juvenile probation administrators, supervisors and line staff are on the front-line of system enhancement efforts. Their commitment and dedication help shape juvenile justice policy and practice in Pennsylvania.

Act 33 and the subsequent amendments to the Crime Victims Act assured new rights for crime victims throughout the juvenile justice process and mandated that specific services be provided to them. PCCD's **Victim Services Advisory Committee (VSAC)**, working in partnership with the JJDPC, has helped shape victim-sensitive policies and procedures. The **Victim Services Division** of PCCD has also played a vital role. With the addition of Victim of Juvenile Offender advocates and the expansion of the Victim's Compensation Program, the VSAC and the Victim Services Division have assisted in enhancing the juvenile justice system's response to victims.

And still there are others who play an integral role in system enhancement. The **National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ)**, the research division of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, provides technical assistance to advance system goals and measure system outcomes and supports the work of the JJDPC in advancing its vision for juvenile justice. The NCJJ also generates and disseminates information to practitioners across the state, primarily through the *Pennsylvania Progress* series.

The **Department of Public Welfare (DPW)** has incorporated juvenile justice goals into its Needs Based Planning and Budget process. In addition, the DPW's Master Case Planning process implemented in its Youth Development Centers and Youth Forestry Camps addresses juvenile justice goals.

Last, but not least, the **Private Sector** service delivery system has demonstrated enormous creativity in the development of new initiatives. Their enthusiasm and resolve contributed to a case-closing report that ensures a focus on juvenile justice system goals.

to the Governor's office, *Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice: Analysis and Recommendations Update*.

*Victim/Community Awareness: Establishing a Restorative Justice Community* was published.

1998

The Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers gathered professionals representing all aspects of the juvenile justice system and developed a strategic plan to implement balanced and restorative justice principles and practices at the local level.

The JCJC, with funding support from the PCCD, created a Balanced and Restorative Justice Specialist position to coordinate the development of balanced and restorative justice throughout the Commonwealth.

The JCJC, through state funding allocations, began funding specialized probation positions.

The PCCD funded the Balanced and Restorative Justice Implementation Grant. Today this grant continues as the Juvenile Justice Enhancement Training Initiative.

1999

Balanced and Restorative Justice Coordinator positions were established at the county level.

The National Center for Juvenile Justice completed a statewide process evaluation regarding the adoption and implementation of balanced and restorative justice principles and practices at the local level.

A statewide training entitled "Enhancing Your Juvenile Court's Response to Victims" was conducted.

*Victim/Offender Conferencing in Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice System* by Howard Zehr and Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz was published.

1995

Governor Tom Ridge called Pennsylvania’s General Assembly into special session to focus on the issue of crime. Act 33 of Special Session 1 changed the purpose clause of the Juvenile Act to broaden the juvenile justice system’s purpose, goals and clients

1996

Governor Tom Ridge charged the PCCD’s Juvenile Advisory Committee with responsibility for “developing a strategic plan to take Pennsylvania’s juvenile justice system into the next century.”

The JCJC convened a statewide policy forum to explain the underlying philosophy of the new purpose clause. Dennis Maloney and Dr. Gordon Bazemore of the National Balanced and Restorative Justice Project led the session.

The JCJC held eight regional training sessions on the revised Juvenile Act for county teams of judges, probation officers, district attorneys, public defenders and victim advocates.

The PCCD, the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, the Colorado Division of Criminal Justice and the Centers for Disease Control initiated a project to identify “blueprint” violence prevention programs.

The theme for the PA Conference on Juvenile Justice was “Community, Victim and Offender: Changing Roles in Juvenile Justice.”

1997

The *Balanced and Restorative Justice in Pennsylvania* monograph was published.

The Juvenile Advisory Committee introduced the mission statement and guiding principles for the juvenile justice system in its first report

## The Foundation: Purpose, Mission, Principles and Goals



The purpose of Pennsylvania’s juvenile justice system was fundamentally redefined in 1995 during a special legislative session that focused exclusively on the issue of crime. The revised language mandates that Pennsylvania’s Juvenile Act is to be interpreted to effectuate the following objective:

“Consistent with the protection of the public interest, to provide for children committing delinquent acts programs of supervision, care and rehabilitation which provide balanced attention to the protection of the community, the imposition of accountability for offenses committed and the development of competencies to enable children to become responsible and productive members of the community.”

The principles upon which this legislation was based have their origin in *Juvenile Probation: The Balanced Approach* by Maloney, Romig and Armstrong (1988). The authors sought to reconcile the seemingly incompatible values of community protection, accountability and competency development so that decision-makers would consider the possible relevance of each of these core values in shaping system responses.

The legislation was also rooted in the philosophy of restorative justice, which gives priority to repairing the harm done to crime victims and communities and defines offender accountability in terms of assuming responsibility and taking action to repair harm. In addition, the Pennsylvania Crime Victims Act was subsequently amended to expand the Victim’s Bill of Rights to include provisions for victims of juvenile offenders.

Principles of both philosophies, combined with a continued commitment to programs of treatment, supervision, and rehabilitation are the essence of Pennsylvania’s Balanced and Restorative Justice model.

**Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system has not implemented a new program. It has changed what it is aiming for; it is continuously refining its understanding of how to get there; and it is beginning to measure results. The product of these efforts will be a juvenile justice system that is driven by its mission, based on performance, and focused on outcomes.**

True systems change begins with a firm foundation and a vision for moving forward. Pennsylvania is on sure footing. Working from the expanded purpose clause, in 1997 the PCCD's Juvenile Advisory Committee crafted the juvenile justice system's mission statement:

**Juvenile Justice;  
Community Protection;  
Victim Restoration;  
Youth Redemption.**

**Community Protection** refers to the right of all Pennsylvania citizens to be and feel safe from crime.

**Victim Restoration** emphasizes that, in Pennsylvania, a juvenile who commits a crime harms the victim of the crime and the community, and thereby incurs an obligation to repair that harm to the greatest extent possible.

**Youth Redemption** embodies the belief that juvenile offenders in Pennsylvania have strengths, are capable of change, can earn redemption, and can become responsible and productive members of their communities.

Furthermore, all of the services designed and implemented to achieve this mission and all hearings and decisions under the Juvenile Act—indeed all aspects of the juvenile justice system—*must be provided in a fair and unbiased manner.*

In 2001, the Juvenile Advisory Committee was re-named the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee and was charged with expanded duties for planning and coordination within Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system. In conjunction with the development of a strategic plan for the system, the committee re-affirmed its commitment to the 1997 mission statement and strengthened the definitions of terms

- ✓ Informing and supporting the Needs Based Planning and Budget process.

Despite significant progress, juvenile justice practitioners will continue to be challenged as they strive to balance and address the needs of victims, offenders and communities; deliver services in a fair and unbiased manner; and maintain a commitment to implementing “best practices” and focusing on outcomes. It will continue to take concerted energy and sustained attention by juvenile justice practitioners at the state and local levels.

However, the juvenile justice system cannot accomplish its mission alone. Collaborative efforts between the juvenile justice system and other service systems—schools, child welfare, behavioral health—must be sustained and strengthened in order to address the needs of victims and communities as well as offenders. Likewise, community members and organizations must be engaged in promoting positive youth development for all young people, but especially those at highest risk of delinquency and other problem behaviors.

# Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice: Mission-Driven, Performance-Based, Outcome-Focused



Pennsylvania's efforts to purposefully align its basic beliefs, guiding principles and broad mission with clear goals and certain practices provides the framework for making a good juvenile justice system even better. Key leaders remain committed to this course of action.

A juvenile justice system engaged in targeted systems change must also measure its results. Pennsylvania leads the nation in its efforts to focus on outcomes—outcomes that are aligned with system goals and use measures that indicate the extent to which the system is working effectively and achieving its goals.

Based upon early efforts by Allegheny County to present a report card of achievements to community members, the National Center for Juvenile Justice worked with representatives of the JCJC, the Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers and the PCCD to develop outcomes and measures associated with system goals. The NCJJ field-tested a data collection process that is now available for routinely gathering case-level information regarding specific court-intervention outcomes at termination.

In addition, beginning in 2004, Governor Rendell's budget proposal for the Commonwealth set forth new performance measures that require the JCJC to collect information that is intended to measure the performance of Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system. This information is gathered on a quarterly basis.

The early results are encouraging. Over time, the information can be used in a variety of ways, including:

- ✓ Enlightening future planning and funding.
- ✓ Increasing public confidence in the juvenile justice system.
- ✓ Bolstering staff morale.

comprising the statement. The committee also articulated what it hoped would be widely shared and firmly held beliefs related to juvenile justice in strengthening the guiding principles originally developed to direct the operation and shape the policies of the system. These guiding principles are set forth in their entirety in the PCCD monograph, *Mission and Guiding Principles for Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice System*.

Coupled with the statutory requirements and a firm philosophical base, the mission statement, beliefs and guiding principles provide a solid foundation for system enhancement efforts. This foundation is set within a framework that connects it to system goals, practices and outcomes. For example, the juvenile justice system goals—community protection, accountability and competency development—are aligned with the beliefs. The ways these goals are pursued—through specific practices aimed at certain outcomes—are affected by consideration of the whole range of guiding principles.

This framework serves as a guide for action at all levels. At the administrative level, it influences policy development, planning and budgeting, resource allocation, and training requirements. At the supervisory level, it helps identify what activities or practices are required to achieve system goals and how performance should be monitored. At the case processing level, it sets goals for decision-making from intake to aftercare and dictates what information is needed to inform decisions.

The purpose of this monograph is to report on the progress Pennsylvania has made in putting this framework into practice and to look ahead to where we need to go. It discusses current thinking about the juvenile justice system's goals and identifies some recommended practices for consideration. While written primarily for juvenile justice professionals—from judges to front-line probation officers, attorneys to service providers—it will also be useful to county commissioners, other state and local policy makers, and community members.

# Community Protection



The citizens of Pennsylvania have a right to safe and secure communities. No one would argue with that right. The fear of serious juvenile crime drove many states, including Pennsylvania, to enact tough legislation in the mid-1990s to subject more juveniles to prosecution in the criminal justice system. However, for the most part, young people who commit crimes are not serious, violent or chronic offenders and can be managed safely in the community.

It has long been the policy of juvenile courts in Pennsylvania to make every effort to keep youthful offenders in their communities and some form of probation supervision is by far the most common system response to offending youth. Keeping youth at home or as close as possible to their communities makes sense for several reasons. For juveniles and their families, it is less disruptive. Victims benefit because juvenile offenders have the opportunity to take care of the obligations incurred as a result of the crime. And, when processes such as community service are used, the community and the youth have the opportunity to create healthy bonds.

In order to know which youth can be reasonably managed in the community, juvenile probation must assess the safety risks posed by the juvenile. That requires a review of the youth's offense history, if any, and an assessment of other factors that may point to continued delinquent behavior. Maintaining the youth in the community also depends on the availability of a wide range of treatment, supervision and control options and the support of informal systems of control—including families, schools, faith communities and youth-serving organizations.

A clear understanding of the risks a juvenile poses to public safety helps intake and the court make decisions about the setting and the structure required to keep the community safe. It also guides decisions regarding which risk factors to target, and how intensively. For those posing the least risk, the response might be diversion, consent decree or informal probation. Those assessed at moderate risk levels may be safely maintained in the community but under more intensive supervision and with more structure. Commitment to a physically secure facility should

programs; opportunities to practice and demonstrate new skills; experiential activities; positive relationships; ties with pro-social groups; and services and supports, such as tutoring and family-based services.

## Effective Skill-Building Programs Share Key Features

- ✓ **Youth are viewed as resources, not as problems.** Programs should focus on the strengths youth possess, rather than on their weaknesses. Treating youth as resources and as important people who are encouraged to make positive contributions to society can bring about lasting changes in how youth feel about themselves and their place in the community.
- ✓ **Interesting and valued activity.** Participants should be involved in something that is of value to the community, but that is also of interest to them. If they are doing something that interests them, they may be more likely to stick with the program as well as profit from it.
- ✓ **Interaction with conventional adults in their communities.** Juvenile offenders need to learn how to “survive and thrive” in their families and communities. Positive relationships with law-abiding adults who model pro-social, acceptable behaviors may help them accomplish this.
- ✓ **Opportunities to practice new skills.** It is important that juvenile offenders be able to practice the skills they are learning. Practicing new skills while engaging in healthy activities can lead to positive reinforcement from others and can increase the offender's self-esteem. In addition, juvenile offenders who are actively, visibly involved in community programs may help to improve the public's view of the juvenile justice system.
- ✓ **Community involvement.** The community should become a partner with the juvenile justice system by developing new opportunities for offenders to learn new skills while also contributing to the good of the community. Community members should make efforts to integrate offenders and build on their strengths by accepting them into their community groups, modeling acceptable behaviors, and allowing offenders to practice new skills and competencies.

*Source: Desktop Guide to Good Juvenile Probation Practice (NCJJ, 2002).*

# Competency Development



Under Pennsylvania’s balanced and restorative justice framework, competency development is defined as the process by which juvenile offenders acquire the knowledge and skills that make it possible for them to live productively, pro-socially, and lawfully in their communities.

There are five competency domains (and related skills and goals) most relevant to juvenile offenders.

DOMAIN	SKILLS	GOAL
<b>1. Pro-Social</b>	Problem solving, impulse control	Better social interactions and problem solving, reduced conflict
<b>2. Academic</b>	Study and learning skills, basic reading, writing and math	Catching up in school, advancing in school, acquiring a diploma or GED
<b>3. Workforce Development</b>	Getting a job, keeping a job, achieving a promotion, technological skills	Economic self-sufficiency
<b>4. Independent Living</b>	Budgeting, housing, health insurance, basic living	Self-sufficient living
<b>5. Moral Reasoning</b>	“Right thinking,” understanding how thinking and values affect behavior	Integrating the difference between right and wrong, making the right decisions for the right reasons

Although the juvenile justice system cannot ensure that every court-involved youth develops competencies in all areas, there is an expectation that each case will be assessed across all five domains and a determination made of what can reasonably be accomplished during the time of supervision.

The role of the juvenile justice system is to facilitate efforts that *advance* youths’ competencies. Advancing competencies requires: skill training

be reserved for the highest risk offenders. Interventions and consequences must be developmentally appropriate, suited to the needs of the offender and capable of keeping the community and victim safe from further offending.

## Diversion: Keeping the Community Safe and Responding to Crime Victims

In many cases, keeping the community safe from juvenile offenders does not require formal court handling. Diversion from the system is a reasonable option for those who pose minimal risk to the community.

Diversion under a balanced and restorative juvenile justice system must be consciously directed toward system goals, however. That means it must consider the concerns of crime victims. It should strengthen and promote community bonds whenever possible. And it should target and respond to the juvenile’s problem behavior in ways that advance competencies.

Pennsylvania’s Crime Victim Act stipulates that the victim of a personal injury crime or burglary is entitled “to submit prior comment to the prosecutor’s office or juvenile probation office...on the potential reduction or dropping of any charge or changing of a plea in a criminal or delinquency proceeding or diversion of any case, including an informal adjustment or consent decree.” Good probation practice calls for extending the same consideration to all victims of crime and taking into consideration the victim’s comments. Ideally, diversion should be able to address the harm done to the crime victims and provide the opportunity for crime victims to be actively involved throughout the process of determining how a case is to proceed.

*For more information on Diversion, see Chapter 6 in the Desktop Guide to Good Juvenile Probation Practice (NCJJ, 2002).*

# Accountability

In Pennsylvania, a juvenile who commits a crime harms the victim of the crime and the community and thereby incurs an obligation to repair that harm to the greatest extent possible. Holding juvenile offenders accountable requires that the juvenile justice system respond to delinquent behavior in a way that the offender understands the impact of the crime, acknowledges responsibility for committing it and takes steps to repair the harm done to victims and communities. *Accountability is not the passive acceptance of sanctions but rather an active participation in repairing the harm.*

Accountability measures are designed to contribute directly to victim restoration. Whenever possible, the juvenile justice system should require the participation of offenders in accountability-promoting processes, including:

- ✓ **Restitution**, which may be in the form of money or services
- ✓ **Community Service**, which involves activities that victims and communities see as meaningful contributions
- ✓ **Victim's Compensation Fund** payments
- ✓ **Impact of Crime Classes**, which teach offenders how victims and community members are affected by crime
- ✓ **Apologies**, which may be either oral or written and should acknowledge responsibility for the offending behavior, demonstrate an understanding of the harm done to the victim and community, express remorse, and promise not to re-offend

The Juvenile Act and the Crime Victims Act also give crime victims the opportunity to be active participants in the juvenile justice process and be viewed as clients of the system. Crime victims deserve court processes that treat them with dignity and respect; they need their voices to be heard. Closely coordinated efforts within the system assure crime victim inclusion in a sensitive and productive manner.

Crime victims have the opportunity to participate in the juvenile justice system by providing testimony and through:

- ✓ **Victim Impact Statements**: victims submit written or oral reports describing the harm done by specific crimes.
- ✓ **Victim Notification**: timely information regarding victims' cases is provided at various points in the juvenile court process.
- ✓ **Input in Decision-Making**: possible case resolutions are discussed with the victim before final decisions are made, and options suggested by the victim are considered.

Other restorative processes may also respond to crime victims' needs by providing opportunities for both direct and indirect dialogue between victims and offenders. Participation by the victim and offender is strictly voluntary for restorative processes such as these:

- ✓ **Community Justice/Youth Aid Panels**: trained volunteer community members decide on measures of accountability.
- ✓ **Restorative Group Conferencing**: the people most affected by crime—the family, friends and supporters of both the crime victim and the offender—define the harm and develop a plan for reparation.
- ✓ **Victim/Offender Conferencing**: a face-to-face meeting between the crime victim and offender to address the harm and how to make amends.
- ✓ **Circles**: parties having a stake in a specific offense come together to jointly discuss how the crime affected them and decide how reparation can be made.

## Victim Input at Disposition

If the victim is present in the courtroom, either at the conclusion of the fact-finding or in a separate disposition hearing, the judge should take advantage of the opportunity to convey the importance of victim input in the disposition process, to solicit victim impact orally and to amplify information that is already in a written victim impact statement. Many victims who are terse or under-responsive on paper are capable of providing much more information orally, in response to sensitive questioning, particularly once they understand the use to which their statement will be put.

*Source: Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice Bench Book (JCJC, 2003).*