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# Moving from Harm to Healing in EDI, Medical Education and Clinical Practice

Summary and reflection opportunities for the webinar, “Moving from Harm to Healing in EDI, Medical Education, and Clinical Practice,” a session from the January 24, 2025 [It Starts with Us](#) virtual panel series.

## Learning Objectives

1. **Explain** some of the key principles, practices, and assumptions of retributive and restorative justice models.
2. **Analyze** the benefits and drawbacks of retributive and restorative approaches and the factors that influence their use.
3. **Reflect** on ways to incorporate restorative justice concepts into your role as a healthcare provider, educator, or staff member.

## What are some features of retributive & restorative justice models?

<i>Retributive Justice...</i>	<i>Restorative Justice...</i>
	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part of colonial justice systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part of some Indigenous justice systems</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assigns blame &amp; punishment for harm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeks to repair harm &amp; restore community</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focuses on who did the harm &amp; deterrence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focuses on those harmed and closure</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires separation &amp; silence between those involved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasizes conversation &amp; listening between those involved</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimizes the role of context or history, reduces people who do harm to a single bad act</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Views people who do harm holistically, within a context &amp; history that may have played a role in their actions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased likelihood of ongoing participation in an expensive cycle of recidivism &amp; repeat harm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased likelihood of behaviour change &amp; decreased recidivism; less expensive to administer</li> </ul>

## Why do we traditionally use retributive justice models?

Western assumptions about justice include the idea that punishment models are effective, cheaper, and faster. We tend to think it is “fair” when someone who did harm has their power & agency taken away by an adjudicator or judge. However, there is a lot of evidence that retributive systems don’t work and are not effective deterrents.

## Why choose restorative practices instead?

When there is harm between people who must continue to work with each other (for example, in professional and educational settings), restorative justice practices seek to repair the relationship and restore trust in the institution.

- **Guided conversations with a skilled facilitator who listens without judgment** can be transformative and expand the options for outcomes.
- **Participants collaborate in deep listening** to hear the effects of harm, and then they collaboratively decide what actions will restore balance to the community and repair the harm.

### Tips:

- Be open & curious.** Become comfortable with discomfort.
- Use conflict as an opportunity.** People in conflict are often open to change.
- Prioritize the agency of the person harmed** by asking them if they want to implement restorative justice principles.
- Communicate your successes** to help engage society around a transition to restorative justice.
- Use the supports that are available at UBC:**
  - Get an experienced facilitator who understands restorative justice principles
  - Participate in restorative justice projects
  - Align any restorative justice work with the promises we have made to our community

## How can we make retributive systems more restorative?

Perspectives on systems change and restorative justice implementation vary.

**Incremental approach...** Some restorative justice practitioners advocate for small changes from within, with the belief that they will build up to become substantial change over time.

**Revolutionary approach...** Others argue that the best way forward is dismantling and rebuilding things in a way that is better for everyone. Shain Jackson, Executive Director of Golden Eagle Rising Society, said “Any great revolution starts with the kicking in of a rotten door. This door is really rotten.”

## Reflection questions for this session

1. When you think of the context(s) you live and work in, which approach to change (above) resonates with you?
2. How do community relations benefit your workplace and team?
3. What approaches do you use to resolve professional conflicts?
4. Would you categorize your approaches as mostly retributive or mostly restorative? Why?
5. How can you increase your implementation of restorative principles when teaching or supervising staff?
6. Can you think of one retributive component of your leadership approach that you can attempt to substitute with a restorative practice?

## Further Reading

1. Karp, D. (2023). Becoming a Restorative University. *International Journal of Restorative Justice*. <https://doi.org/10.5553/TIJRJ.000175>
2. Dufour, G. K. (2024). The Insidiousness of Institutional Betrayal: An Ecological Systematic Review of Campus Sexual Violence Response Literature. *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, 25(5), 3903–3922. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380241265382>