



Why me? Media Pack

Guidance for media professionals interested in Restorative Justice

We are often approached by journalists and producers. This guide is designed to help answer some of the questions which we are frequently asked.

Why me? are the only national charity fighting for victims of crime to have access to Restorative Justice. We increase the profile of Restorative Justice within police forces, policy makers and the public, and have our own service which delivers RJ to those who cannot access it locally. High quality media coverage can contribute to increasing wider understanding of Restorative Justice and the powerful impact it can have for both the victim of crime and the perpetrator.

Our organisation was founded by Will Riley after he was burgled and assaulted by Peter Woolf. His aim was to help others affected by crime to experience the benefits of Restorative Justice. You can [read more here](#).

We work with a number of individuals who have experienced Restorative Justice to allow them share their experiences and speak out about the change which they want to see in the criminal justice system. [Their stories](#) give an insight into the enormous potential of Restorative Justice to change lives. Where it is appropriate, we will help put journalists and producers in touch with our ambassadors and help facilitate interviews.

Please obtain our consent before re-producing any personal stories on our website.

What is Restorative Justice?

Restorative Justice allows people affected by crime to communicate with the perpetrator, often with the aim of a face to face meeting. This gives them the chance to ask questions about the crime. They can explain how it has impacted them and seek assurance that the person responsible won't do something similar again. This is what many people affected by crime want, which is why [85% of victims who go through Restorative Justice are satisfied with the experience](#). Restorative Justice also leads to a significant drop in re-offending, as it helps people who have committed crimes to recognise the harm they have caused. Restorative practice can also be used to address non-criminal harm.

Ethical and Practical Considerations

Journalists and producers wishing to focus on Restorative Justice need to consider a range of issues to secure interviews and publish/broadcast material.

It is unlikely to be possible to follow participants in real time as they participate in RJ. There are practical reasons why this is difficult, such as the need to secure permission from the harmed, harmer and prison authorities. The presence of someone filming the exchange also has the potential

to influence what all parties feel comfortable expressing. Moreover, participants have the right to pull out at any time, which could jeopardise the investment of time and resources into filming.

Post-conference interviews are often the best way forward for journalists who want to speak with people who have been through Restorative Justice.

In such cases, these considerations need to be kept in mind:

- It may be necessary to obscure faces or alter voices, to protect participants' privacy.
- Many people who have participated in Restorative Justice to address a harmful event in their lives may be vulnerable people, and this should be kept in mind.
- Media coverage should not reduce someone's ability to continue rehabilitation by significantly damaging their reputation.
- Details of a prison where someone was held or where a Restorative Justice conference took place should not be disclosed.
- The perspective of the people affected may evolve over time and their views during the process may shift. Immediately after the meeting may not be the best time to seek informed consent to participate.
- Take care to find out dates of events that are significant for the person affected or their family, such as the date of the crime, and other critical dates such as the date of trial. These can sometimes hold great emotional significance.
- The wider family of the victim may not be supportive of media coverage and revisiting past traumatic events.

Additional Sources of Information

We have a variety of resources on our website explaining Restorative Justice and providing evidence about its effectiveness. Read more here:

[What is Restorative Justice?](#)

[Evidence for Restorative Justice](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)