



National Association of Community and Restorative Justice

"Shaping Justice for the 21st Century"

**Toward Safe, Just, and
Equitable Societies**



The NACRJ Vision

11/8/2016

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Why did we start NACRJ

- **Break the isolation felt by many practitioners by providing a supportive association that:**
 - Facilitates Networking
 - Promotes Collaborative Projects
 - Assists in Sharing of Information
 - Encourages Research
 - Conduct Biannual Conferences So that We Learn from One Another.
- **Provide a "big tent" structure to bring the various strands of relational justice (i.e. community justice and restorative justice) so we can help to shape policy and practice by:**
 - Policy Advocacy for Changes in Law
 - NACRJ Policy Statements Related to Operational Practices
 - Facilitate Access to Training and Technical Assistance

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TOWARD WHAT END...

A Safe, Just, and Equitable Society.

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Recent Painful Events

- **June 12, 2016 – Pulse Nightclub – Domestic Terrorism**
 - 49 Killed, 53 wounded
 - Homophobic and jihadist ideology
- **July 5, 2016 - Alton Sterling - Killed by a Baton Rouge Police Officer**
 - Confrontation over selling CD's outside a convenience store.
- **July 6, 2016 - Philando Castile - Killed by a Falcon Heights Police Officer**
 - Confrontation after a traffic stop for a broken tail light
- **July 7, 2016 - Mass Shooting - Killed Five and Wounded Seven Officers**
 - Dallas, TX - Brent Thompson, Patrick Zamarripa, Michael Krol, Michael Smith and Lorne Ahrens
 - Retaliation for questionable police shootings.
- **July 17, 2016 – Mass Shootiing – Killed Three and Wounded Three Officers**
 - Baton Rouge, LA - Montrell L. Jackson, Matthew Gerald, and Brad Garafola.
 - Retaliation for questionable police shootings

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THE COMMON THREAD THAT RUNS THROUGH THESE INCIDENTS APPEARS TO BE....

Fear of the "Other"

- Those who are different
- Usually based on racial, ethnic, gender, class or other biases
- Often exploited by powerful interests to serve other agendas
- Compounded by enmity fostered by:
 - Historical patterns of social injustice and neglect
 - Perpetuated and reinforced by traditional justice and law.

"The Law is, THE LAW"

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Relational Justice (i.e., Community & Restorative Justice)

COULD SERVE AS A CORRECTIVE
(AND.... IT IS RIGHT IN OUR WHEEL HOUSE)

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NACRJ

*Seeks to change how we think about justice issues:
 What it is...
 What it means...
 What it requires...
 How it is attained....*

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**TODAY, WE ARE INCREASINGLY AWARE THAT THE
 DIFFERENTIAL IMPACTS OF TRADITIONAL JUSTICE
 SYSTEMS OFTEN CREATES...**

*Injustice Committed in the
 Name of Justice*

*Which is Socially Destructive and
 Morally Indefensible*

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TRADITIONAL LEGAL JUSTICE SYSTEMS ARE ALSO HUGELY EXPENSIVE AND FAIL TO PRODUCE SAFE AND LIVABLE COMMUNITIES...

Economically and Socially Unsustainable

The roots of crime are persistent, long term, adverse social conditions that erode quality of life and foster high crime rates particularly in impoverished neighborhoods.

**Addressing these Conditions is
Beyond the Reach of Traditional Justice Systems**

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In Our View

- **Traditional legal justice systems are ineffective because:**
 - Being tough on criminals is not the same being tough on crime,
 - Does not improve quality of life conditions for those in high crime neighborhoods,
 - They often have socially destructive impacts,
 - The effects of justice systems are often counterproductive.

“Tough on crime” justice policies are overly simplistic, incorrect in their analysis of the problem and punitive attitudes are easily exploited for political gain.

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In the 21st Century Justice Systems Must Do...

- More than Arrest and Punish Offenders
 - It must:
 - Prevent Crime,
 - Heal Victims,
 - Promote Earned Redemption,
 - Address Injustices and Inequalities,
 - Address Quality of Life Issues.
 - And operate across all levels of society
 - *Micro* (individual, family, neighborhood)
 - *Meso* (institutional, community)
 - *Macro* (state, national)

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A Vision for the Future

- Over the next 20 – 40 years
 - **Reliance on “Traditional Justice” Systems Will Fade Back**
 - Used as the *Option of Last Resort*
 - **Non-Traditional “Relational Justice” Will Come Forward**
 - Restorative Justice (repairing harms to individuals and groups)
 - Community Justice (addressing adverse quality of life problems)
 - HYBRID – “Restorative Community Justice”
 - *Options of First Choice*
- *Applied Broadly – Inside and Outside Criminal Justice Systems*

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BUILDING SAFE, JUST AND EQUITABLE SOCIETIES REQUIRES:

Something Different than “Waging War” on those Who Violate Criminal Laws.

- Rethinking What “Justice” Means.
- Rethinking How “Justice” is Attained.
- Strengthening Informal Social Controls.
- Improving Neighborhood Quality of Life in High Crime Areas.

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NACRJ Role

- **Advocacy**
 - Policy Positions
 - Social Justice Issues
 - Evidence Based Practices
- **Assist our Communities**
 - Repair Harms, Address Community Problems, Strengthen Informal Social Controls, Increase Social Capital
 - Organizational and Systems Change
- **Walk the Talk in Our Organizations, Professions, Lives**
 - Modeling Relational Justice, Procedural Justice, and Social Justice
 - Supporting Practitioners and Advancing the Field

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Challenges

- Legislation to embed restorative and community justice in law and public policy.
- Ensuring
 - Victim involvement in restorative practices,
 - Co-equal partnerships in community justice practices.
- Gaining confidence of justice system “gatekeepers” (prosecutors, victim advocates) so that they don’t block or discourage referrals.
- Expanding availability of competent training in restorative and community justice practice.

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Challenges

- Ensuring fidelity with:
 - Theory, values principles of victim centered and victim sensitive restorative justice practice.
- Reducing power differentials, applying principles of democracy and deference to the wisdom of those closest to the problems.
- Working to reduce the huge disparities by race, ethnicity, and class by focusing on community and social justice.
- Recognition and support for well designed research as foundation for policy and evidence based practice.

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**This Vision of a Safe,
Just and Equitable
Society Can be Realized**

**Believe It, Model It,
Work for It**



“Si Se Puede”