



Introduction Note



One of the things I love most about restorative justice is its call for **radical creativity**.

When restorative justice is applied in the criminal justice system, process participants are asked to think outside the box of defined crimes and prescribed penalties to instead consider the harms experienced by individuals, the specific needs generated, and what would repair the harm for the people involved. **The best restorative justice agreements are completely unique to the situation and feature repairs that could only arise through the process of deep**

listening and creative collaboration.

On a broader scale, as the restorative justice movement grows, we see an even larger call for radical creativity. How can restorative approaches be applied to community needs across contexts? How can we respond restoratively to our current political divide? To our deep history of racism? To economic inequities? To environmental harm? **These community needs call for a bold and creative application of restorative values and processes**, and the restorative justice community is answering that call.

It is this alignment with the value of creativity that draws so many incredible out-of-the-box thinkers to restorative justice work; **people with the capacity to reimagine the status quo and forge a new way forward**. Since joining VLS in August, I've been inspired and invigorated by meeting so many of these creative thinkers in our restorative justice community.

We hope that you will find this same spirit of radical creativity alive and well in this newsletter. Please read on for a feature on our "Reimagining Justice" art contest, creative applications of restorative approaches proposed by students in our program, and more!

With gratitude,

Stephanie Clark
Director of the [Center for Justice Reform](#) and the [National Center on Restorative Justice](#)



RESTORATIVE RESPONSES TO ENVIRONMENTAL HARM

One exciting emerging area of restorative practices is the application of restorative approaches to issues of environmental harm. On the European Forum of Restorative Justice's [website](#), you can find a collection of resources related to this emerging field, including helpful videos and links to further publications and resources such as an excellent [booklet](#) titled "Environmental Justice: Restoring the Future," which features many international examples.



STUDENT VOICE: INTEGRATING RESTORATIVE JUSTICE INTO JUDICIAL TRAINING

What training do judges receive in order to perform their role successfully?

Surprisingly, the answer to this question is inconsistent across jurisdictions and often the training program available is optional and woefully inadequate. But what if all judges received consistent and practically applicable training in restorative justice? How would that training impact their approach to the role and outcomes for the people who come through their courts?

[Read more](#) about MARJ Student Kyla Schweber's proposal that judges receive training in restorative justice.



PUBLICATION ANNOUNCEMENT: "THE RESTORATIVE JUSTICE RITUAL " BY LINDSEY POINTER

Dr. Lindsey Pointer's second book, "[The Restorative Justice Ritual](#)", was recently published by Routledge. The book considers the following key questions through an understanding of restorative justice as a ritual:

- How is the personal and relational transformation apparent in the restorative justice process achieved?
- What can be done to safeguard and enhance that effectiveness?
- Can restorative justice satisfy the wider public's need for a reaffirmation of communal norms following a crime, particularly in comparison to the criminal trial?
- Given its primary focus on making amends at an interpersonal level, does restorative justice routinely fail to address larger, structural injustices?

On February 2, The National Center on Restorative Justice hosted a virtual book launch. You can view a video of that event [here](#).



ON OUR BOOKSHELF: *THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE*

The Vermont Law School Library is newly subscribed to [*The International Journal of Restorative Justice*](#) (TIJRJ).

TIJRJ is a leading publication in the restorative justice field that features peer-reviewed articles, editorials, notes from the field, and book reviews.

“The journal’s aim is to contribute to the development of restorative justice by discussing its diverse, challenging and innovative facets, as well as to encourage fruitful discussions and debates. *The International Journal of Restorative Justice* will appeal to academics and researchers, to practitioners and policy-makers, and to those who want to keep up to date with the rapid changes in the field of restorative justice.”

We encourage you to check out this great resource! Interested in submitting an article to TIJRJ? Dr. Lindsey Pointer is a member of the International Advisory Board and would be happy to answer any questions you have or discuss ideas.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: DELINDA PASSAS MARJ'20

Delinda Passas was among the first cohort of online MARJ students in 2018, and continues to stay an active part of the VLS community through weekly conversations held for current and former RJ students. Delinda uses her background in restorative justice to share education on restorative practices, and foster relationships within the community to support an RJ program within her judicial district in Colorado. Please check out the video above or click [here](#) to learn more about Delinda's story.

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