



Restorative Justice Practices: Building Community and Repairing Harm

Overview

Restorative justice practices (RJP) focus on building relationships, repairing harm, making things right, and restoring the community. Incorporating restorative justice practices into community-building and problem-solving fosters healing and a spirit of camaraderie throughout the university. RJP encourages people to speak and listen from the heart, allowing for the utmost consideration and respect for each other. To meet the growing needs of the UCSF community, more RJP circle facilitators are needed to lead circle offerings.

Circle Offerings

- A *Community Circle* is an approach to community-building that creates space for participants with varying values, experiences, and backgrounds to discuss a particular topic.
- A *Restorative Healing Circle* is an approach to repairing harm that has been done within a community.

The **Valuing Open and Inclusive Conversation and Engagement (VOICE) Initiative** grant supported two trainings for circle facilitators. The trainings included:

- Foundations of Restorative Justice Practices - Participants will have the opportunity to learn the basics of restorative practices and their application.
- Advanced RJ training for Responses to Conflict and Harm - Participants will gain experience in responding to serious conflict and harm using trauma-informed restorative conferencing and harm circles.

The VOICE Initiative's 2021 theme of breaking barriers and addressing barriers that harm a community is aligned with the RJP program. Our efforts to train more facilitators to hold community and healing circles align with the mission UC National Center for Free Speech and Civic Engagement.

Facilitators

We recruited students, staff, and faculty from the UCSF community to receive the training to become community circle facilitators. In this experiential training, participants practiced the power of community-building in a circle, the importance of setting and maintaining this foundation, and learned about the restorative approach—its roots and underlying principles.

Impact

Trained facilitators volunteered to be circle facilitators to lead community-building circles and campus-wide healing circles dedicated to address national events.

Below are some of the comments we received from circle participants about their experience in community-building circles:

- “Great openness from the group, despite us all first meeting each other. Feels great to start building open community within UCSF.”
- “Being able to listen, share, and truly connect with members of my community that I would otherwise not have connected with in such a profound way.”
- “It was a good balance between genuine sharing and a sense of emotional safety.”
- “I appreciated the range of experience and perspectives and the mutual support we all showed each other.”

