

Conversations About ...

“ Establishing a Culture of Harmony in the Presence of Dissonance “

ABSTRACT

Community Peacemaking Using Restorative Justice Principles:

This workshop is about creating a sustainable peace in communities which are experiencing the lack of it due to heightened criminal activity, racial or cultural prejudice, or from its neighbors being disagreeable. It exhibits a new application model for traditional Restorative Justice, which has been proven to be a successful tool for municipalities to interrupt disruptive activity, de-escalate unacceptable social behavior, resolve aggravated differences, and preempt potential criminal acts; in other words, “When Neighbors Are Not Being Neighborly.”

“Community dissonance” often masks the values of respect, open-mindedness, inclusion, effective communication, and right-relations. The model uses Restorative Justice principles to create Community Peacemaking Conferencing. Here, as in traditional Restorative Justice conferencing, dissonant parties can find the root cause of their problem and then together develop a path to harmony and peace between themselves. Achievable goals are reduced calls for police service, fewer distractions for municipal authorities and the cost savings realized from both. Proven results are reduced criminal behavior, arrests and court cases, along with reduced fear of crime and a restored sense of community. The model includes the establishment of circles of community connection, training of participants in restorative technique and language, and creation of community panels to deal with disruptive situations. Community Peacemaking Conferencing is a tool for working towards a sustainable peace in communities and their neighborhoods. This is a proven process which has significant potential, and one which should and can be implemented for creating peace and harmony.

Attendees of this workshop will be introduced to Restorative Justice philosophy, origins, principles and techniques. They will learn how Restorative Justice differs from Retributive Justice, and how RJ methods can bring about better communication and outcomes for all concerned parties of an altercation or offense. Attendees will learn how to apply RJ techniques into community settings away from the criminal justice system through Community Peacemaking Conferencing.

This workshop includes actual municipal initiatives where this model has been implemented . It also includes graphics which assist in its explanation.

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PRESENTER

James A Termotto, Sr.

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As an independent professional advisor, Jim consults with government and non-government agencies, institutions and firms on ethical and cultural issues related to their policy-making and strategic action plans. His contract work includes identifying the root and nature of specific social and civic problems, assessing the factors which promulgate those problems, proposing solutions that meet relative cultural differences, and creating ethical and lawful action plans for municipal bureaus, police services, institutions and, profit and nonprofit entities. Creating community peacemaking initiatives, and advocating for implementation of community restorative justice programs are significant parts of Jim's current world view. Working on these programs has resulted in his lecture series "Establishing a Culture of Harmony in the Presence of Dissonance," which presents and promotes an Ethics of Right-Relations for community diversity and peacemaking. These lectures are presented at professional conferences and universities in USA, Canada, UK, and across Europe. In addition to his lectures at local colleges, faith communities, and community groups, Jim is an ethics instructor at a continuing education institute, teaching courses in social and professional ethics, and restorative justice. He is a conflict resolution facilitator registered with Restorative Justice Society USA, and a Certified Restorative Justice Peacemaker with a Rochester New York Police Department Family Services program. There, he facilitates Restorative Justice resolutions to confrontations in the City of Rochester public school system. He is a North American member of Restorative Justice Council, and Conflict Research Society - both in United Kingdom; and, of National Conference on Restorative Justice USA. Jim holds Master degrees in ethics and critical thought from Queen's University, Kingston Ontario Canada, and Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, Rochester New York USA.