

# RESTORATIVE JUSTICE EXTENDING EMPATHY WORKSHOP

9.00am – 5:15pm, 12th January 2015  
Old Sessions House, Canterbury Christ Church University  
Longport, Canterbury CT1 1PL

☼ Confirmed speakers include:

**Lorraine Gamman**

(Director, Design Against Crime Research Centre, Central Saint Martins, UAL)

**Peter Wallis**


(Senior Restorative Justice Practitioner, Oxfordshire Youth Offending Team)

**Tim Chapman**

(Lecturer in Restorative Justice, University of Ulster)

**Theo Gavriellides**

(Founder and co-Director, Restorative Justice for All)



**INTELLECTUAL SCOPE** The overarching themes will be linked to knowledge exchange and introducing new perspectives on how EMPATHY might work better in the criminal justice system and how subject disciplines can learn from each other.

# Introduction to Extending Empathy

Michael Kearns

Restorative Justice Practitioner

# ‘empathy’?

- ... ‘One person comes to know the mental content of another, both emotionally and cognitively, at a particular moment in time.’
- ‘A neural matching mechanism constituted of a mirror neuron system in the brain, enabling one to place oneself in the ‘mental shoes’ of others’.
- ‘Empathy is one persons attempt to comprehend another persons experiences in a non-judgemental way.’

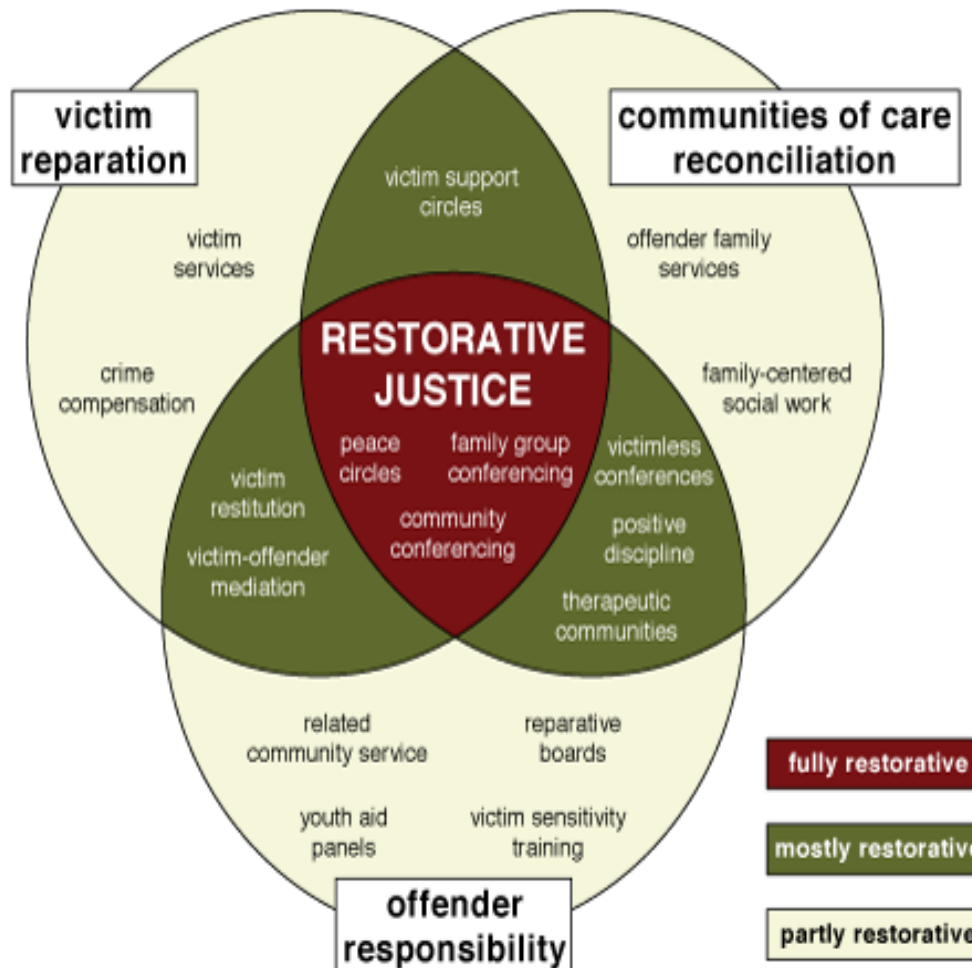
- ‘empathy enables one person to *understand* another’s experiences without joining them’.
- ‘sympathy involves *sharing or joining* with another’s pain or suffering.’

# Cognitive filter of empathy

- ‘The cognitive filter of empathy allows individuals to **disentangle** themselves from others’
- Is empathy a positive emotional competence that may help people to handle emotional interactions with others?’

# Key Concepts

- We are all born for human connection.
- Connection is why we are here.
- We define ourselves in relationships with others.
- Relationship is what gives purpose and meaning to our lives.
- We are wired for connection -neurobiological.
- Anything that breaks or threatens this connection makes us vulnerable.
- Restorative practice is the way to strengthen connections.
- It is also a way to re-establish or to rebuild connections.



(McCold/ Wachtel, 2004)

# Semiotics

- The theory of signs. From the Greek ‘semeiotikos’ meaning ‘an interpreter of signs’ . Signing is vital to all human existence because it underlies all forms of communication.
- Within semiotics anything that is used as a form of human communication is defined as a sign: gestures, facial expressions, poetry, rituals, clothes, food, marketing, art, commercials, theatre & film.



# Understanding Practice

- “If an individual does not really understand what is happening for them, or how they got themselves into that particular situation, then anything I have to offer will be of limited value”

# Continuing the dialogue

- Dialogue creates an open-minded attitude: an openness to being wrong and an openness to change.
- In dialogue, one submits one's best thinking, knowing that other people's reflections will help improve it rather than destroy it.
- Dialogue calls for temporarily suspending one's beliefs.
- In dialogue one searches for strengths in the other positions.
- Dialogue assumes that many people have pieces of the answer and that together they can put them into a workable solution.



**TOMORROW IS TOO LATE,  
YESTERDAY IS OVER**

— AND —

**NOW**

**IS EXACTLY THE RIGHT MOMENT**

— SO —

**START.**