

Justice and Community Safety Directorate

Information for Victims

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Restorative justice (RJ) is a process that provides a structured and safe environment for information to be exchanged between the people most affected by an offence - you and your supporters (i.e. your family and friends) and the offender and their supporters (i.e. their family and friends).

A convenor from the Restorative Justice Unit (RJU) assists you and other participants by preparing you for an exchange of information and facilitating that exchange. RJ can happen either face-to-face or indirectly by third party mediation, taped recordings or letter exchanges. These exchanges are called conferences.

You and the other participants involved will decide on what type of conference will be best for everyone - face-to-face or indirect. Whichever method of RJ is undertaken by the participants involved, it always addresses three fundamental questions:

- What happened?
- How were people affected?
- What needs to be done to make things better?

RJ is a process that allows you to:

- gain an understanding of the circumstances of the offence;
- have a voice in describing the impact of the offence; and
- identify what needs to be done to make up for what has happened to you.

RJ, particularly in the ACT, gives you a voice. It means that you are listened to and supported. You are given opportunities to engage with other significant people in your life to discuss the affects of the offence. Having family and significant others hear about and understand the impact of the offence is of great value to victims. RJ processes can empower you to regain your confidence, optimism and sense of safety. It also provides you with information to help you understand the offence.

Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw your consent to participate at anytime during your involvement, up to and including a conference.

For further information about what happens when a matter is referred to RJ and what happens during a conference see [referral process](#).