

Trauma-Informed Juvenile Justice in the United States

By Judah Oudshoorn

Instructor's Manual
Compiled by Lee Slinger

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Chapter 1

A Framework for Trauma-Informed Juvenile Justice

Suggested in-class activities:

1. In small groups (or as a class), imagine a basic scenario in which a crime has been committed. Using Howard Zehr's set of questions from pages 17 and 18, analyze the crime and assign an imagined resolution for each type of justice. As a class, discuss the differences in possible outcomes.
2. With a large sheet of paper (or on the board), draw a diagram which connects a youth that has committed a crime with all the individuals, organizations, and institutions that might be involved. Draw connections between the individuals and organizations, indicating how various groups are related to the offender, the victim, and the broader community.
3. As a class, discuss Figure 1.1 ("Trauma-Informed Juvenile Justice as a Living Organism"). What are the differences between the various parts of the tree (practices, theories, worldview, values)? Why are the "values" represented as the roots? In practice, how would this structure inform how you address juvenile justice?
4. Assign small groups one of the core values of trauma-informed juvenile justice (critical thinking, human dignity, participation, peace, a holistic approach to addressing crime, and social change). Have them define the value, give an example, explain its significance to juvenile justice, and formulate a discussion question for the class on that value. Have each group present their findings. Encourage students to share notes.

Suggested assignments:

1. Write a 500- to 600-word reflection on what you think "justice" means, specifically in the context of juvenile criminal offenders. In your reflection, consider your personal experiences that have influenced how you understand "justice," as well as what other sources of information or knowledge have shaped what you believe is just.
2. Using newspaper, magazine, or scholarly articles, find an example of restorative justice in practice. The example should ideally be from the United States, but you can draw from other countries. Write a three- to four-page paper that presents the case and explains, using information in this chapter, how it is representative of restorative justice.

Additional resources:

Blog

- Zehr Institute For Restorative Justice.
<http://emu.edu/now/restorative-justice/>
A restorative justice blog kept by Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Web Article

- Molly Rowan Leach (2013). Restorative Justice Is on the Rise. *The Huffington Post*.
Retrieved from:
<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/molly-rowan-leach/restorative-justice-is-on-b-3612022.html>
A web article on the use and benefits of restorative justice in the US, with a focus on results obtained in Colorado, Massachusetts, and Florida.