

## Restorative Justice Community Conferencing Model

### Why Connection First Proposed this Model

Impacted parties (victims) participation has been one of the most significant barriers to implementing Restorative Justice (RJ) within Connection First's programs, particularly in nonviolent misdemeanor cases. Many impacted parties are reluctant to dedicate time to the RJ process involving harms of lower stakes. After meeting with the Denver District Attorney's RJ Diversion Program, we learned that Denver handles 120 RJ diversion cases per year (76% misdemeanors and 24% felonies), with a 9% impacted party participation rate in RJ conferences. Despite this, Denver maintains a recidivism rate of 3.7% for misdemeanors and 7% for felonies over five years. Additionally, they report high levels of impacted party satisfaction. This model has been widely adopted across the country with similar outcomes. Given this success, CFI has proposed implementing a similar model locally.

### What is the RJ Community Conferencing Model?

This model allows for trained community member volunteers to participate in the RJ process *in lieu of* a direct impacted party.

### This Applies in Two Scenarios:

1. When no direct impacted party is involved:

In these instances, CFI can conduct RJ conferences with the responsible party and trained community member volunteers. Examples of such cases include, but are not limited to:

- Traffic-related offenses (e.g., speeding, reckless driving, DUI)
- Theft from large businesses
- Disorderly conduct
- Loitering

2. When an impacted party declines to participate in the RJ process\*:

Seeking input from them still remains a priority. RJ always prioritizes impacted party voice and their needs. If they opt to not engage in any part of the RJ process, but want their voice to be heard in other ways, this model is right for them and can be incorporated in various ways, such as:

- Impact statements
- Suggestions for the RJ agreements to repair harm
- Surrogate sitting in on their behalf
- Any other reasonable means they wish to contribute

**\*Even if an impacted party declines to participate in the ways outlined in the above bullet points, CFI can proceed with the community conferencing model process, pending agreement from both attorneys.**

**Questions? Contact [janelle@connectionfirst.org](mailto:janelle@connectionfirst.org).**



**Our mission is to cultivate peace and healing through human connection.  
We do this with restorative practices and nonviolent communication.**

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