



Community Conference Volunteer Training Manual

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Overall Goal

Upon completion of this self-paced training manual, you will understand what is expected of a Community Conference Volunteer.

On completing this training, we hope that you:

1. Learned foundational principles and values of restorative justice
2. Understand the process and objectives of the Community Conference Model
3. Developed the skills to talk about how harm impacts the broader community
4. Become more equipped to brainstorm creative ideas for direct actions people can take to repair harms to the community.

Acknowledgment

This model would not be possible without help from the following people and organizations:

- The Conflict Center
- Advo
- Dylan Patel-Qadir (Intern with Connection First)



Part 1: About Connection First

A. Mission Statement

To cultivate peace and healing through human connection. We do this with restorative practices and nonviolent communication.

B. How Connection First Formed

Volunteers from the local teen restorative diversion program, Community Connections, saw the immense need in our community to expand the work happening within that program into the broader community. These volunteers decided to form a grassroots movement called Friends of Community Connections. This group rebranded the group to Connection First, Inc. (CFI) and was approved to become a 501(c)3 non-profit organization in January 2020.

For over 4 years, Connection First advocated, met, and pitched ideas with City and County Commissioners and other elected officials to create a formal Restorative Justice Program with elements of empathetic communication skills embedded into practice. In the summer of 2023, the City of Tallahassee released a Request for Proposal for an Adult Restorative Justice Program. CFI applied and was awarded the contract in January 2024 for one year with the possibility of renewal for a second year. In November 2024, it was confirmed that the contract would be renewed for a second year starting in January 2025!

C. Initiatives

- **Restorative Justice (RJ):** Currently, CFI operates the Adult RJ Program for Leon County
 - CFI accepts diversion and plea agreement cases from prosecutors and defense attorneys, closed/post-conviction cases, or community/non-criminal harm cases.
- **Community Connections Peer Mentors**
 - This initiative provides stipends to selected graduates from the Community Connections Program to come back and serve as peer mentors. These individuals support other teens in developing empathetic communication skills within the program.

D. Difference Between RJ Conferencing and Community Conferencing

Both conferencing models are always voluntary processes and offer a free, safe, and facilitated conversation centered around accountability and healing. With RJ, however, the conference participants include the responsible person for the harm and the impacted parties, while with a Community Conference, there is NO direct impacted party participating... **This is where we call on YOU as a Community Conference Volunteer (much more on this in Part 3).**

Part 2: Why Restorative Justice?

A. Uncomfortable Truths

- The US has the **highest incarceration rate** of any independent democracy in the world.
- Each individual state in the US incarcerates **more people than most entire countries**.
- The US has a **little over 4%** of the total world's population, but **over 21%** of the total world's incarcerated population.
- The 5-year recidivism rate for people coming out of incarceration is **71% nationwide**. That means over **two-thirds of all offenders** end up reoffending.

B. RJ Principles and Values

- Restorative Justice (RJ) is a theory and practice of justice that emphasizes compassion, redemption, and rehabilitation to repair the harm someone has suffered, rather than focusing solely on punishment for those responsible. It is rooted in the belief that justice is best achieved through active participation, accountability, and collective action among those directly affected: the harmed party, the responsible party, and the broader community.
- **WATCH VIDEO:** Leon County's Restorative Justice Program (<https://www.connectionfirst.org/rj-for-leon-county>)
- **Core Principles of RJ:**
 - **Repairing Harm:** The primary focus is on identifying the harm caused by the offense and finding ways to repair it. This includes emotional, physical, and relational damage.
 - **Accountability:** RJ holds the responsible party accountable in a way that acknowledges their actions and encourages them to take meaningful steps to make amends.
 - **Inclusion:** All parties affected by the harm, responsible person, surrogate parties, and/or community members, are invited to participate in the process, ensuring their voices are heard and their needs addressed.
 - **Community Engagement:** RJ recognizes the role of the community in supporting healing and preventing future harm. It emphasizes the shared responsibility for addressing the root causes of wrongdoing.
 - **Redemption:** After responsible person fulfills the RJ requirements, their completion marks the transition from offender to that of a redeemed individual and member of society.
 - **Transformation:** Beyond resolving individual incidents, RJ seeks to transform relationships and systems to foster greater understanding and prevent future conflict or harm.
- **Core Values of RJ:**
 - **Transparency:** Honesty, openness, and some degree of curiosity on both sides is essential to justice being restorative.

- **Accountability:** The responsible person for harm has an obligation to **acknowledge and accept responsibility** for what happened and harm caused. The community members have an obligation **to be engaged and participate** in the restorative process. **RJ would not be appropriate unless a person is taking accountability for their actions.**
- **Respect:** All human beings **have inherent and equal value**, regardless of their actions, race, class, gender, age, beliefs, sexual orientation or status in society. Respect includes **listening with an open mind, speaking without judgment, and mutual consideration.**
- **Participation:** All present in a restorative justice meeting are those affected by the crime/harm/wrongdoing. **Everyone** is valuable and has something to contribute.
- **Wholeness:** RJ recognizes that restoration has the capacity to reach further than the persons involved. A truly restorative process **inspires healing and change** for all parties to strengthen the community.
- **Common Humanity:** All human beings are fallible and vulnerable. The restorative process recognizes and allows everyone to **discover their common humanity**. Empathy and mutual concern are characteristics of humility.
- **Interconnectedness:** All human beings are **uniquely bonded** by their shared experience of harm in the community. Therefore, society mutually shares the responsibility to create and sustain healthy communities and opportunities to repair harm.

QUESTION 1: In one sentence, how would you describe the theory of restorative justice?

QUESTION 2: What RJ values most resonate with you in your own life?

C. Comparing Retributive and Restorative Justice

It can be helpful to contrast the assumptions and questions that traditional Western institutional, legal and disciplinary systems hold compared to Restorative Principles, a distinction first summarized by Howard Zehr (Changing Lenses, 1990).

<u>Retributive Emphasis:</u>	<u>Restorative Emphasis:</u>
Rights	Needs
Facts	Feelings
Knowledge	Experience
Addresses Law/Rules	Addresses Harm
Individual	Community
Excluding	Including
Rule of Law	Personal Respect
Autonomy	Inter-Connectedness
Indoctrination	Learning
Adversarial	Equity
Stability	Change
Outcomes	Processes
Academic Theories	Indigenous Practice

RETRIBUTIVE DISCIPLINE

What rule was broken?
Who did it?
What do they deserve?

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Who was harmed?
What are their needs?
Who is obligated to respond?

Violations are against the institution

Violations are against real people

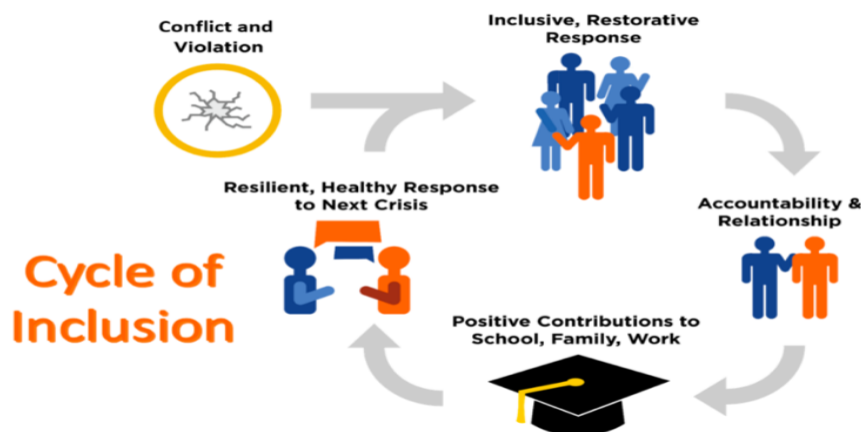
D. The Paradigm Shift: Restorative

A paradigm shift from our current punitive response to conflict toward a restorative and inclusive process involves rethinking how society addresses wrongdoing and harm in society. Instead of focusing solely on punishment, the restorative approach emphasizes repairing relationships, understanding the underlying causes of conflict, and fostering accountability among those involved. This shift prioritizes healing for both impacted and responsible parties, rehabilitation for responsible parties, and reintegration into the community, ensuring that all voices are heard and valued, regardless of their role in the conflict. In challenging the retributive justice system, it promotes dialogue, empathy, mutual respect, and the inclusion of diverse perspectives, aiming for long-term reconciliation and a more equitable societal response to harm.

Our conditioned responses to conflict	RESTORATIVE
Focus on person who caused harm	Gives all parties a voice
Punishes rule-breaking	Identifies motivation and impact of action
Doesn't teach alternative behavior	Teaches alternative behavior
Focused on punishment	Repairs damage done
Can shift offender into victim role	Builds empathy
Focus on rules	Focus on relationships
Blame	Problem-solving

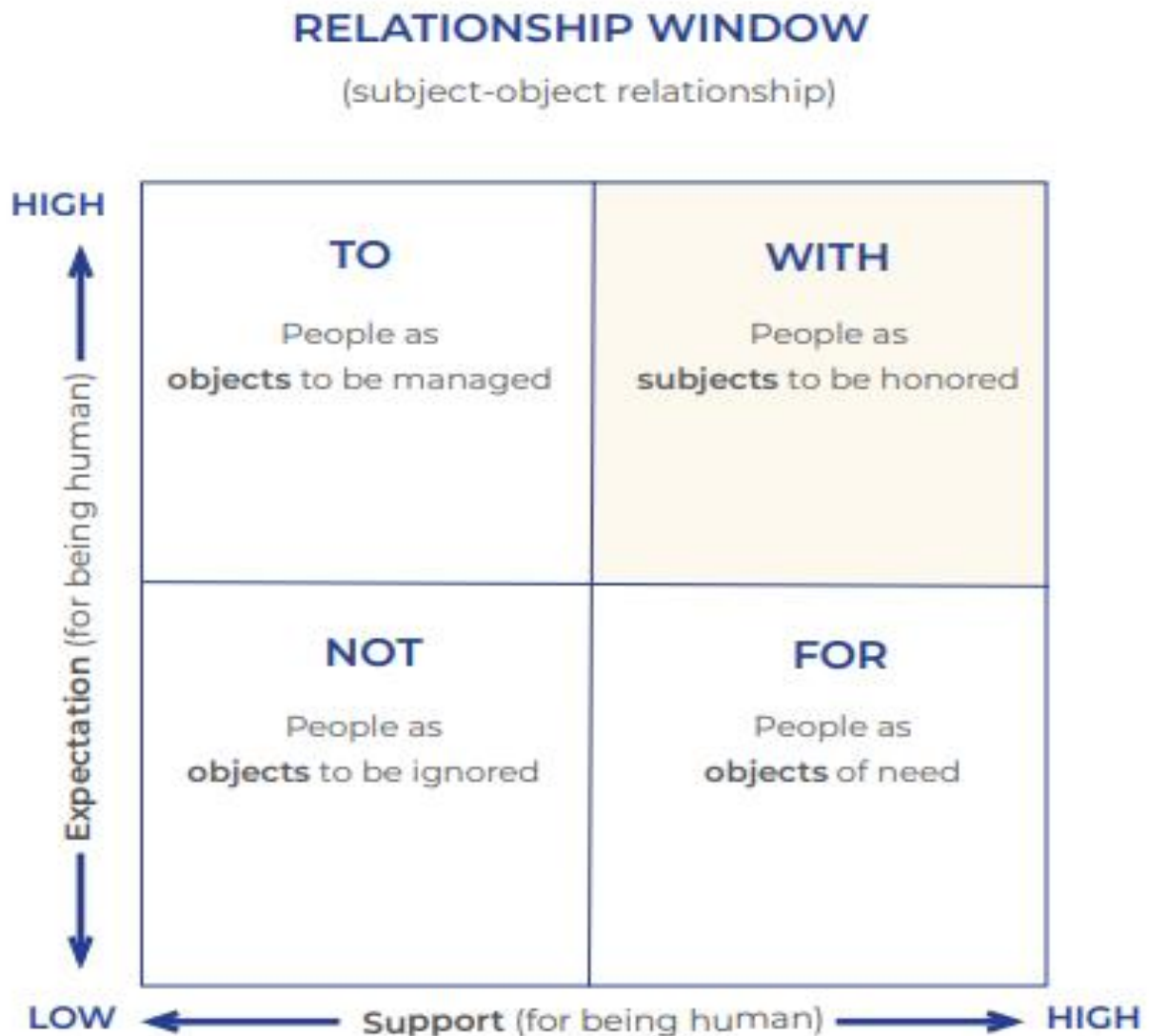
E. Cycle of Inclusion

The spiral of exclusion can be reversed through RJ. After harm is caused, seeking inclusive and restorative responses increases accountability and strengthens relationships through increased communication and trust. By emphasizing inclusion, we ensure that all parties feel respected and heard, making it easier to listen and learn from others.



F. Building Relationships and Respecting Others

And to bring it all together, RJ is centered on recognizing people as **subjects** to be honored and respected, rather than objects to be managed or ignored. The Relationship Window diagram illustrates the importance of how we view all individuals who participate in RJ. At Connection First, we strive to operate in the **WITH** box, as responsible parties, harmed parties and community members alike have inherent value and dignity through open dialogue and respect. The matrix highlights that RJ seeks to elevate human dignity, ensure mutual respect, and encourage collaboration in healing, focusing on people's roles **as active participants** rather than **passive objects**.





QUESTION 1: In what ways does focusing on repairing relationships rather than punishment benefit both impacted and responsible parties?

QUESTION 2: Do you believe every conflict or violation is suited for restorative justice? Why or why not?

QUESTION 3: True or False: A Restorative Justice Conference can still be facilitated even if the responsible person for harm is not taking accountability.

QUESTION 4: How might the concept of honoring people as subjects, rather than objects, inform your own approach to activism or social justice work?

Part 3: The Community Conference Model

A. What is the Community Conference Model?

The Community Conference Model applies traditional RJ principles while incorporating trained community conference volunteers into the RJ process in specific scenarios. **These scenarios include:**

- **No direct impacted party is involved:** In cases where there is no identifiable or available impacted party, CFI can conduct RJ conferences with the responsible party and trained community conference volunteers. Examples of such cases include:
 - Traffic-related offenses (e.g., speeding, reckless driving)
 - Theft from large businesses
 - Disorderly conduct (e.g., public intoxication, loud/unreasonable noises, inciting physical altercations)
 - Loitering
- **An impacted party declines to participate in the RJ process¹:** While seeking input from the impacted party remains a top priority, RJ always prioritizes their voice and needs. If the impacted party chooses not to engage directly in the RJ process but consents to the responsible party participating, their voice can still be incorporated in the following ways:
 - Providing an impact statement
 - Offering suggestions for RJ agreements to repair harm
 - Having a surrogate represent their perspective
 - Contributing through any other reasonable means they prefer
- **Volunteer Participation is Deemed Beneficial:**
 - In some cases, even when the direct impacted party is present, CFI may determine that including a trained volunteer in the RJ process is appropriate and beneficial to fostering a supportive and productive dialogue. A volunteer can offer an additional perspective, or support the involved parties in sharing their own.

¹ Even if an impacted party declines to participate in the ways outlined in the above bullet points, they must still agree to the responsible person participating in this program. CFI can then proceed with the Community Conference model, pending agreement from both attorneys if it is an open criminal case.

B. Our Stance of the Use of “Victim” and “Offender” Language

CFI places great importance on avoiding labeling language, such as "victim" and "offender," for two key reasons:

1. **Recognizing Individuality:** CFI believes that every person is more than their worst action, mistake, or experience. Instead of defining individuals by what happened or their role in an incident, CFI strives to see them as whole people.
2. **Impact of Labels:** According to Labeling Theory, labels often stick with individuals and can shape how they are perceived and how they see themselves. CFI aims to empower individuals by recognizing their humanity first and foremost.

To reflect this approach, CFI uses the following terms:

- **Person who caused harm or responsible party** (instead of "offender")
- **Person who was impacted by harm or impacted party** (instead of "victim")

C. Defining Community Conference Volunteers

- May be connected to the incident by:
 1. Geography or location involved in the incident (i.e. work, neighborhood)
 2. Relationship with the person who was harmed or the person who caused harm (i.e. family member, friend, another neighbor)
 3. Similar experience of harm or familiarity with the harm's impact
- May not be directly affected by the incident but is able to provide the bigger picture of the overall effect upon the community and population groups within the community

D. Roles of Community Conference Volunteers

- **In General:**
 - Speak to how the community is affected by incident/behavior
 - Take part in holding the person who caused harm accountable
 - Identify resources to contribute to contract agreement
- **With the Impacted Party:**
 - If you are acting as a surrogate impacted party on behalf of the impacted party, talk to the facilitators to see if this person is open to meeting with you so you can better understand the impact of the harm caused and strategies that they might suggest for repairing harm so that you can advocate for these things in the conference
- **With the Responsible Party:**
 - Support responsible person by looking at the behavior, not the individual
 - Help people who caused harm to understand the broader consequences of their conduct (how it affects their community)
- **With the Community at Large:**



- Participate in a process that ultimately builds community competency and problem-solving, which brings a community together
- Share responsibility for dealing with community issues

E. Roles of Community Conference Volunteers

- **Before the Conference:** Community Conference Volunteers prepare for the conference by:
 - Speaking with the facilitator(s)
 - Brainstorming ways to address harms to the larger community
 - Preparing ideas for how the responsible person can repair harms, which may include contacting organizations about volunteering and learning their timeline, eligibility, and application process
 - Being prepared to assist with contract item suggestions to repair harm
 - Preparing ideas with the facilitators on how the responsible party can be supported in their integration/reintegration to the community
- **During the Conference (for volunteers):**
 - Welcome others to the conference by making conversation (This can help put people at ease)
 - Introduce themselves as members of the community (not by job title, profession, or expertise)
 - Are sensitive to cultural, socio-economic, racial, gender-identity, and generational differences and respond appropriately
 - Follow norms and speak in turn, deferring to the facilitator
 - Speak clearly and briefly about the impact of the incident on the whole community
 - Assist facilitators by staying focused on the process
 - Recognize strengths of person who caused harm and connect those strengths to relevant opportunities to repair harms
- **After the Conference (for volunteers):**
 - Stay 15-30 minutes after conference to debrief and **fill out post-conference survey**
 - Keep any personal information revealed during the conference confidential

QUESTION 2: How would you define your role as a community conference volunteer? As a surrogate impacted party?

F. Identifying Harms to the Community

In a Community Conference, the Community Conference Volunteer's perspective can be impactful and surprising to people directly involved in an incident. The community is both a secondary harmed party in the conference and someone for responsible parties to relate to and with whom they may feel connection. After people directly involved in the incident have spoken about the harms they have experienced, the facilitators will turn to the Community Members to speak about harms to the community.

These harms must be...

- ✓ Something the person can repair
- ✓ Described with "I" and affective statements
- ✓ As clear and brief as possible

In order to help you identify impacts and harms to the community, think about these broad areas of impact:

- Physical
- Financial
- Reputation
- Emotional
- Property
- Relationship

Once you've identified some types of harm, you are encouraged to think about how to speak about them at the conference. There are three main modes through which a community member can speak about how a crime, conflict or other incident harms the community.

A. Case Scenarios: Community Impacts

***Scenario 1:** A person broke into five cars in one neighborhood overnight, breaking car windows and stealing random items and petty cash from the cars.*

Using the above case, please read the following impacts/harm on the community based on the above scenario.

IMPACTS/HARM ON COMMUNITY: “When something like this happens, I know that it’s going to affect how people view our neighborhood. Housing prices might fall when people hear about it and decide not to move here. I want our neighborhood to be a safe and friendly place, and things like this affect that possibility. Plus, there’s likely to be more vigilance by police in the area now, which can have a negative impact on some of our neighbors. ”

“When something like this happens, people become more scared and less trusting of each other. I myself feel more nervous to walk around at night after a break-in has happened and am more vigilant about locking my doors and not leaving anything in my car. I really just don’t feel safe anymore, and I feel nervous to be kind to people for fear of being taken advantage of.”

“I had my car broken into a few years ago, and some things that were really important to me were stolen and the windshield was broken. I couldn’t drive my car until it was fixed, which affected my ability to get to work and to take my children to school, and had to pay for repairing the damage, which I really couldn’t afford at the time. In addition, the things in the car had sentimental and material value to me, and I still sometimes feel anger and sadness about it. I wonder how my children were affected by seeing this happen and worry about how it could cause them to distrust people in our neighborhood.”

Now, using concepts and values from **section B, E, or F from Part 2**, if you were one of the car owners affected, what are some feelings you would have? Then, what needs would you need met in order to feel a sense of justice, safety, and closure?

Scenario 2 (Practice Scenario): A driver crashed into a parked car, causing significant damage. Instead of stopping, they sped away. However, security cameras in the area captured their license plate, and law enforcement later identified them. The owner of the damaged car was left with costly repairs and was without transportation for several days.

Using concepts and values from **section B, E, and F from Part 2**, please identify ways the community might be impacted by what happened.

IMPACTS/HARM ON COMMUNITY:

Using concepts from **sections C and D from Part 2**, how can could restorative justice principles help address those needs while also considering the harm done to the broader community?

Part 4: Stages of the Community Conference Process

A. Referral

- Cases are referred to our program by community members, community agencies or organizations, and the State Attorney and Public Defenders. Anyone can make a referral to our program by visiting our website and clicking on the pop-up that appears: [Start Your RJ Referral](#).
- If Connection First believes a case is appropriate to include volunteers, we will email you as a Community Conference Volunteer .

B. Preparation (Pre-Conference)

- All parties are prepared individually to ensure they are ready for the RJ process. This means separate meetings with responsible parties and community conference volunteers.
- Two RJ Facilitators are assigned to each case and will help all parties process what happened, what are the perceived root causes, who was impacted and how, and what can be done to repair the harm caused and prevent something like that from happening again.

C. Facilitated Meeting (Community Conference)

- In a safe and structured setting, those harmed and those responsible engage in a facilitated dialogue with program staff to discuss the harm, its impact, and ways to make amends.
- The conference usually lasts anywhere from 1 to 4 hours, but some cases take longer, depending on the severity of harm and needs of the individuals.
- Structure of the conference:
 - Facilitators guide introductions and lay the ground rules and norms (disclose the purpose of the Community Conference Model)
 - The conference typically begins with the person who caused harm sharing what happened. They talk about what they did, what were the perceived root causes of what happened, who they believe was impacted and how. The next step is for you, as the Community Conference Volunteer, to offer how that harm either affected you in a similar way in the past or affected the community at large (or both).
 - After all harm has been identified and reviewed, the focus moves to repairing the harm. See next section for more information.

D. Restorative Contract Agreements

- The Restorative Contract Agreements are created using the SMART analogy (specific, measurable, achievable, relatable, and timely). These are items co-developed by those participating in the conference that the person who caused harm is willing to complete to repair the harm as much as possible.
 - **S: Specific** – Clearly defined goal or action that can be met or taken.
 - **M: Measurable** – Outcomes or steps that can be quantified or evaluated to ensure accountability.
 - **A: Achievable** – Goals or actions that are realistic and attainable, considering the resources and abilities of the parties involved.
 - **R: Related** – Actions that are directly related to addressing the harm caused and repairing relationships.
 - **T: Timely** – Deadlines for completing tasks or fulfilling the terms of the contract, ensuring that progress is timely and efficient. A RJ facilitator monitors cases for the duration of the time it takes to complete the contract.
- The facilitators will check in with the person who caused harm to ensure they are progressing with their contract and able to complete their items.
- If this is a diversion case and the person who caused harm follows through with all they are requested to complete, the case will be dismissed. If the contract is not completed, the case will be sent back to the State Attorney's Office (for open criminal cases).

AVOID

Agreements centered around punishment, “discipline”, or “consequences”, and contract items that involve public shaming, such as speaking in front of an audience.



QUESTION 1: After reading and learning about Community Conferencing, why do or don't you want to be a Community Conference Volunteer?

QUESTION 2: What are your goals as a Community Conference Volunteer?

QUESTION 3: What are your questions for us? Do you have any concerns or comments you want to mention at this time?

Please sign the below Confidentiality Agreement and Code of Ethics documents next. Then, email this completed packet back to us at office@connectionfirst.org and we will be in touch with you about your responses to the self-paced training. Thank you!



Confidentiality Agreement for Community Conference Volunteers

Connection First requests that you sign this Confidentiality Agreement prior to participating as a Community Conference Volunteer. All participants in the conference are asked to keep confidential names and identifying information of those directly involved.

Through this agreement, CFI is acknowledging that the principles of Restorative Justice—repair of harm to persons harmed, reconciliation of relationships, reintegration into the community, responsibility for actions, and respect for all participants—are paramount to these conferences. Hence, a confidential environment is necessary to promote these principles between all parties involved.

Specifically for the person who caused harm, the State Attorney's Office for the 2nd Judicial Circuit protects anything said during the restorative process if it's a diversion case and anything said in the conference can't be used against that person in a future criminal proceeding. Conduct that occurs during any part of the restorative justice process that results in a chargeable offense is not protected.

Your identity will also be confidential - meaning we will not share your name or contact information with anyone outside of the Restorative Justice Conference.

By signing this form, you are acknowledging the importance of confidentiality to the Community Conference. Additionally, you acknowledge that you have read, understand, and agree to make every effort to maintain the confidential nature of these processes.

Should this Confidentiality Agreement be ignored by a participant, CFI will not be held responsible for the action of any individual. Violation of this request will be considered in determining participation in future Community Conferences.

Participant (Printed) _____

Signature: _____ Date _____

Code of Ethics Policy for Community Conference Volunteers

Purpose:

The purpose of the Code of Ethics is to establish a set of guidelines and principles that govern the behavior of Community Conference volunteers specifically within the context of Restorative Justice conferences. These guidelines ensure that all actions are conducted with integrity, transparency, and respect, thereby preserving the trust and confidence of those we serve and the communities we engage with.

Scope:

This Code of Ethics applies to all individuals associated with CFI, including board members, employees, interns, and volunteers within the Community Conferencing Model.

1. Integrity and Accountability

- Uphold the mission, values, and principles of CFI, in all actions and decisions.
- Act honestly, ethically, and responsibly in interactions with stakeholders, clients, and the public.
- Report any conflicts of interest and abstain from decisions where personal or financial interests could influence objectivity.

2. Respect and Dignity

- Treat all individuals with respect, compassion, and dignity, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, socio-economic status, or other identities/characteristics.
- Promote an environment free of discrimination, harassment, and bias, encouraging diverse perspectives and inclusivity.

3. Confidentiality

- Maintain the confidentiality of sensitive information pertaining to clients, stakeholders, and organizational matters, unless legally obligated to disclose.
- Protect personal and organizational information from unauthorized access or disclosure.

4. Professionalism



- Conduct oneself in a manner that reflects the organization and the work we do.
- Avoid behavior that may harm the reputation or credibility of CFI.

5. Transparency and Stewardship

- Ensure transparency in organizational operations, financial management, and decision-making processes.
- Responsibly steward the organization's resources, making decisions in the best interest of the organization and its mission.

6. Compliance

- Adhere to all applicable laws, regulations, and policies governing the organization's operations.
- Ensure activities align with the values and principles of restorative justice and nonviolent communication.

7. Ethical Use of Power

- Promote shared power and collaborative consent decision-making that reflects the voices of those impacted by our work.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date Signed: _____

Florida Criminal Legal System Cheat Sheet

Glossary

- **Defendant:** Person accused of committing a crime.
- **State Attorney (SA):** State Attorney Jack Campbell is the lawyer elected in the 2nd Judicial Circuit who serves as the prosecutor for the state in criminal cases. The State Attorney brings charges against a defendant.
- **Assistant State Attorney (ASA):** The prosecutor assigned to represent the State and bring charges against a defendant.
- **Defense Attorney:** Lawyer who represents a person accused of a crime.
 - **Public Defender (PD):** Public Defender Jessica Yeary is the lawyer elected in the 2nd Judicial Circuit.
 - **Assistant Public Defender (APD):** The defense attorney who represents indigent defendants/clients who cannot afford a lawyer. In Florida, eligibility for an APD is based on financial need.
 - **Conflict Counsel:** Appointed when there is a conflict of interest preventing the Public Defender from representing a defendant (ie multiple co-defendants).
 - **Private Defense Counsel:** Lawyer hired and paid for by the defendant.
- **Conviction:** Receiving a verdict of guilty at trial or pleading guilty to a criminal charge. A conviction places a criminal charge on the person's record.
- **Restitution:** Payment for the pecuniary loss suffered by the victim, caused by the defendant's conduct. CFI does not oversee restitution. The State does. CFI *might* be able to help negotiate reduced recidivism as a condition of diversion, but it is not guaranteed.

Basic Court Process

- **Arrest:**
 - A person arrested must appear before a judge within 24 hours for a first appearance, where bond is set. If eligible, a person may post bond and be released while the case is pending. In some cases, the defendant may receive a notice to appear instead of being arrested.
 - Types of bonds:
 - **Recognizance Bond (ROR):** Defendant signs an agreement to appear in court; no money required.
 - **Cash Bond:** Defendant pays the full bond amount in cash to secure release.
 - **Surety Bond:** Defendant pays a percentage of the bond to a bondsman, who covers the remaining amount (non-refundable).
 - **Pretrial Supervision:** The court may order supervision, which can include conditions like random drug testing, electronic monitoring, or maintaining employment.
 - **Failure to Appear (FTA):** If a defendant misses a court date, the bond is forfeited, a warrant is issued, and a new bond may be set upon arrest.
- **Charges:** The State Attorney's Office decides whether to charge the defendant and determines the specific charges.

- **Arraignment:** The defendant is formally advised of the charges and may enter a plea (e.g., guilty, not guilty, or no contest).
- **Plea Negotiations:**
 - A process where the defense and prosecution discuss possible resolutions, such as reduced charges or sentencing agreements.
- **Trial:** If a defendant pleads not guilty and goes to trial, they may have either a bench trial (judge-only) or a jury trial (six jurors for misdemeanors, twelve for felonies). A verdict of not guilty results in acquittal and eligibility for record sealing.

Court Types in Florida

- **County Court:** Handles misdemeanors, traffic violations, and ordinance violations. Sentences may include up to one year in county jail.
 - **Misdemeanors:**
 - **First-Degree Misdemeanor:** Punishable by up to 1 year in jail and/or a \$1,000 fine (e.g., battery, DUI).
 - **Second-Degree Misdemeanor:** Punishable by up to 60 days in jail and/or a \$500 fine (e.g., disorderly conduct, driving with a suspended license).
- **Circuit Court:** Handles felonies, family law cases, and appeals from County Court. Felonies carry sentences ranging from probation to life imprisonment or the death penalty.
 - **Felony Classes:**
 - **Capital Felony:** Punishable by death or life imprisonment (e.g., first-degree murder).
 - **First-Degree Felony:** Punishable by up to 30 years in prison or life in specific cases (e.g., armed robbery).
 - **Second-Degree Felony:** Punishable by up to 15 years in prison (e.g., aggravated battery).
 - **Third-Degree Felony:** Punishable by up to 5 years in prison (e.g., grand theft over \$750 but less than \$20,000).

Possible Case & Sentencing Outcomes

- **Dismissal:** The State Attorney may drop charges due to insufficient evidence or other factors.
- **Deferred Prosecution Agreement (DPA):** Defendants may be offered a pretrial diversion program. Meeting specific conditions leads to successful completion, which results in case dismissal and potential record sealing.
- **Adjudication Withheld:** A defendant pleads guilty or no contest but avoids a formal conviction. Probation is often required.

Additional Resources

- [Restorative justice - crime as a violation of relationships](#)
- [RJ Article](#)
- [Connection First Media](#)

Additional Resources: Implicit Bias & Inclusivity*

Books:

- *Thinking, Fast and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman, 2011.
- *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo, 2018.
- *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racisms and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America*. By Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, 2017.
- *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice* by Paul Kivel, 2017.

Articles

- *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color* by Kimberle Williams Crenshaw. *Stanford Law Review* 43.6 (1991): 1241-299.
- *The Good, the bad, and the ugly of implicit bias*, by Cheryl Pritlove, Clara Juando-Prats, Kari Ala-leppilampi, and Janet A. Parsons. February 9, 2019.
- *White Supremacy Culture* by Tema Okum
<http://www.dismantlingracism.org/uploads/4/3/5/7/43579015/whitesupcul13.pdf>
- *Stereotyping, Bias, and Prejudice in Conflict Resolution* by Kenneth Cloke
<https://www.scmmediation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Ken-Cloke-Prejudice-Module-SCMA.pdf>
- *Implicit Biases and People with Disabilities* by the American Bar Association Commission on Disability Rights. https://www.americanbar.org/groups/diversity/disability-rights/resources/implicit_bias/
- Payne, A. A., & Welch, K. (2015). Restorative Justice in Schools: The Influence of Race on Restorative Discipline. *Youth & Society*, 47(4), 539–564.

Other

- Understanding and Using Gender Expansive Pronouns: <https://www.mypronouns.org>
- Harvard implicit-association test (IAT):
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>
- TED Talk by Verna Myers:
https://www.ted.com/talks/verna_myers_how_to_overcome_our_biases_walk_boldly_to_ward_them?language=en
- UCSF Office of Diversity and Outreach Resource guide:
<https://diversity.ucsf.edu/resources/unconscious-bias>
- TED Radio Hour: Confronting Racism. <https://www.npr.org/programs/ted-radio-hour/707189471/confronting-racism>

***Credit: Restorative Denver's Conflict Center**