



What is Balanced and Restorative Justice?

Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) is not a program, but rather a response to crime that allows for active participation by victim, community, and offender in the justice process. It is a values framework which recognizes that justice is best achieved by building, or re-building, relationships between crime victims, the community, and juvenile offenders.

DJJ has adopted the principles of BARJ, and the agency believes that a truly “restorative” justice system is one in which victims feel more satisfied, communities are safer, and young offenders leave us better than when they came. As a result of this commitment DJJ seeks a response to crime that embraces three basic goals, represented here by the sides of a triangle - each depending on the other for success:



1 Accountability – When a juvenile commits a crime, the offender incurs an obligation to make things right for the individual victims and the community.

#2 Competency Development – Offenders who enter the justice system should develop the personal skills to become competent, caring individuals who live crime free, productive lives.

#3 Public Safety – The justice system has a responsibility to ensure public safety and to strengthen each community’s capacity to prevent and control crime.

National BARJ Initiatives

DJJ’s efforts to embrace the principles of BARJ have led to the creation of extensive restorative practices across the agency, and as a result in 2003 the agency was selected as a model demonstration site in two national projects:

#1 BARJ Demonstration Site – The U.S. Department of Justice’s Balanced and Restorative Justice Project selected DJJ as one of only five national demonstration sites for balanced and restorative justice in the country. This status provided DJJ with three years of technical assistance, helping the agency to systematically expand our restorative justice practices statewide.

#2 Juvenile Justice Report Card Project – The American Prosecutors Research Institute (APRI) selected South Carolina as one of only four national demonstration sites in the country to develop and test a “juvenile justice report card.” This demonstration project was funded by the U.S. Congress with the intent of building a core set of juvenile justice performance measures, based upon restorative practices, for potential use nationwide. DJJ now produces a Report Card for release to the public every year.

How Does DJJ Practice BARJ?

Some examples of restorative practices that have been supported by DJJ include:

- Restitution programs
- Community service projects
- Victim impact classes and panels
- Offender apologies to victims
- Offender Re-entry initiatives
- Victim satisfaction surveys
- Teen After-School Centers
- Delinquency prevention initiatives
- Gang awareness initiatives
- Auxiliary Probation Officer Program
- Victim notification services
- Victim-Offender Dialogue services

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BARJ in Action...

The longest standing and one of the most successful restorative justice efforts DJJ has supported are Community Juvenile Arbitration Programs. In the Juvenile Arbitration Program, trained citizen volunteers sit down with an offender and his/her parent(s), the victim, and arresting officer to develop common-sense solutions that hold young offenders accountable for their crimes and, at the same time, direct them away from the formal juvenile justice system. DJJ works in collaboration with all of the state's 16 solicitors to provide arbitration programming for first-time juvenile offenders charged with committing a nonviolent crime. During FY 2009-10, 4,631 juvenile offenders were diverted from the formal juvenile justice system through Juvenile Arbitration Programs statewide.

“The Department of Juvenile Justice is firmly committed to practicing and supporting the principles of Balanced and Restorative Justice. We actively seek new and innovative ways to deal with juvenile crime to help make victims whole, restore the community’s sense of safety, and help secure the future of the youth and families we serve.”

Habitat for Humanity service projects are another example of restorative efforts at DJJ. Offenders in the community will on occasion work to repair the harm they have caused to their community by assisting with home building.



For more information on Restorative Justice Initiatives please contact:

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For additional DJJ resources please visit our website: <http://www.state.sc.us/djj/>

The South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice does not discriminate in any programs or activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age.
THE FOLLOWING OFFICES HAVE BEEN DESIGNATED TO HANDLE INQUIRIES REGARDING THE NONDISCRIMINATION POLICIES:
Title IX –Inspector General’s Office – 803-896-9595, Title II & 504 – Special Education Office – 803-896-8484