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The Community Healing Circle Process

THE BASICS

1. We will co-create a community-driven process grounded in the principles and practices of restorative justice and nonviolent communication. The process is applicable to any issue where there is sincere interest in healing the harm and can also be used proactively to avoid harm in the first place.
2. The 5 Rs of restorative justice— Respect, Responsibility, Relationship, Repair, and Reintegration—provide a framework that addresses the harm fully, encourages accountability, and fosters restoration without blame, shame, and punishment.
3. We will create the conditions that bring out the best in people, while keeping the process uncompromisingly honest and real. Addressing the underlying root causes, as well as the immediate harm, distinguishes our work and adds integrity.
4. We will come together across divisions to strengthen the community and bring about fundamental changes in thinking, behavior, and relationships.
5. Since our efforts are aimed at deep level healing and transformation, we will build the processes needed for ongoing dialogue and relationship-building.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

- * *The vast majority of today's social justice advocacy isn't healing specific harms, addressing root causes, or leading to fundamental systems change.*
- * *The principles and practices of restorative justice are too good, too transformational, to be limited to the justice system.*
- * *The most challenging issues can be addressed while communities are strengthened.*

** A restorative approach brings out the truth of interrelatedness—the deep source of peace and justice.*

PREPARATION PHASE

We will clearly identify the issue and build a community leadership team to guide the process. That team will determine who needs to be involved (stakeholders and facilitators) and direct outreach efforts. Stakeholder groups will decide who will represent their interests in the circle/s.

Our goal is to have those responsible for the harm actively participating in the entire process—an atmosphere of respect and healing dramatically increases the chances of this happening.

We will present the restorative goals, methods, and ground rules in a consistent way.

The full process unfolds organically and we will move forward knowing that there is no guaranteed outcome.

CIRCLE PROCESS

Once the stage is set, the first circle will focus on hearing the full extent of the harm—no speculation, just people speaking from their own experience. Once the harm is fully exposed we will address who/what is responsible for the harm.

Once responsibility has been fully taken the process moves to healing/repairing the harm in the best way possible. This includes good faith efforts to change the underlying beliefs and systems so the harm will not happen again.

The result (if successful) is agreements, timelines, and accountability.

IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

We will assure accountability and get feedback into how well the process is working and adjust as necessary.

Let's show the world a way out of violence!

ACTIVE PEACE, LLC