

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE



Canada's justice system suffers from high incarceration and recidivism rates. Principles of restorative justice, when applied properly, have the potential to reduce incarceration and recidivism rates, while providing additional benefits for communities.

Restorative justice principles take a holistic view of justice and provide a comprehensive vision of a justice system where communities are governed by the rule of law, where offenders take responsibility for their actions, and where peace can be promoted through the healing of broken relationships. Restorative justice prioritizes victims, humanizes offenders, and cultivates community engagement, while still promoting responsibility and accountability for offenders.

The principles of restorative justice are based on various historical and biblical principles. Restitution, for example, is a biblical principle that has application in Canada's existing *Criminal Code* and involves paying back a debt to an offended party.

Although restorative justice principles exist in Canadian law, they are not used enough. There are multiple ways these principles could be appropriately applied in the sentencing process, in incarceration, and in the reintegration of offenders into our communities. Proper application will have a positive impact by reducing recidivism rates and the costs of incarceration and improving victim satisfaction and efficiency within the justice system.

ARPA Canada's recommendations focus on ensuring better knowledge and application of restorative justice principles in the justice system. This can be done by making greater use of alternatives to incarceration, encouraging active involvement of non-governmental institutions and organizations in the justice system, and actively studying recidivism data.

For more information about this topic, please refer to our related policy report document. This report can be found on our website at <https://arpacanada.ca/publication/restorative-justice-2/>