



Otipemisiwak  
Métis Government

# RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

## *NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US* PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH (PAR)

In March 2024, the Métis Nation of Alberta received a one-year Alberta Community Justice Grant. This grant supports a province-wide (PAR) initiative to address systemic disparities and cultural relevance regarding the unique challenges Métis, First Nations, Inuit, and Racialized Communities face.

This is not just a research project. It's a dynamic and inclusive collaborative forum where supportive relationships can be formed. Rather than be subjects of study, our unique perspectives and active participation will be active participation are meant to empower and build capacity. Guided by 'Nothing About Us, Without Us' principle ensures that marginalized voices and perspectives are at the forefront to address the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action [TRC Calls to Action](#), specifically Child Welfare: 1, 3, 4, and Justice: 30, 31, 34, 38, 40, and 42.

Equally relevant is Justice Canada's Black Justice Strategy, [Black Justice Strategy Report](#) published June 2024, which proposes "big changes that require Canadians to think of justice differently, to move away from narratives of punishment to ones of accountability, reparations, and crime prevention." (p. 52)

This platform deeply respects and values your expertise. We sincerely thank all those who have attended meetings and generously shared. Through your active participation and respectful dialogue, each of you provides critical insight into overcoming barriers to developing provincial-community-based restorative justice services.

## RESTORATIVE JUSTICE ONLINE SHARING CIRCLE FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS

There are a series of 4 online Zoom focus group sharing circles. You can choose an afternoon or evening session.

**Please register by September 20** using the QR Code.



## **SESSION #1 - Intention of Restorative Justice**

Tuesday, September 24, 2024 (2 - 4:30 pm or 6 - 8:30 pm)

1. What's the intention of restorative justice from your worldview perspective?
2. What are we trying to restore when there are incidents of hurt and harm?
  - in a criminal or non-criminal context, i.e., school, workplace, child and family services
3. What traditional ways of knowing or practices were used to address incidents of hurtful/harmful behaviour, conflicts, or misconduct?
4. What culturally relevant values should or currently frame restorative justice practices?

## **SESSION #2 - Desired Outcomes**

Tuesday, October 1 (2 - 4:30 pm or 6 - 8:30 pm)

1. Share success stories: What do successful restorative justice practices look like (in any setting such as criminal justice, schools, child and family services, or workplace) from the perspective of a person harmed? How about the person responsible for the harm? (See Appendix A as a sample resource)
2. How does it benefit at-risk children/youth, their families, schools, workplaces, the community, leadership, and your nation?

## **SESSION #3 - Overcoming Challenges**

Tuesday, October 8 (2 - 4:30 pm or 6 - 8:30 pm)

1. What makes a restorative justice program successful?
2. What are some of the challenges?
3. What ideas do you have for overcoming the challenges?

## **SESSION #4 – Program Requirements and Self-Care**

Tuesday, October 15 (2 - 4:30 pm or 6 - 8:30 pm)

1. What requirements are needed to support your restorative justice program or develop one to achieve desired outcomes?
2. In your role, what self-care do you do/need for your wellness and safety (cultural, mental, spiritual, physical, emotional)?

## APPENDIX A

This sample illustration is adapted from the Restorative Engagement Program Recommendations Report published by the Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada March 2024, Gayle Desmeules.

**From the perspective of a person experiencing harm**, restorative justice services are easily accessible, user-friendly, voluntary, timely, confidential, culturally appropriate, and tailored to meet their unique needs as described in the following:

- **Safety**: attend to their psychological, emotional, physical, cultural, spiritual, and financial concerns.
- **Reprisal** – not subject to any form of retaliation, such as stigma or alienation.
- **Empowerment** – the ability to make decisions about the type of support and resolution services that are accommodating, adaptable, and flexible.
- **Voice** – have a voice, feel heard, and share their lived experience.
- **Validation** – an acknowledgment that the injury or hardship suffered was unfair and underserved, e.g., receiving a personal or official apology.
- **Restitution** – compensation for loss or damages.
- **Consequences** – the person/authority responsible receives appropriate consequences.
- **Fair Process** – a procedurally fair (omnipartial) resolution process, get emotional closure and able to move forward feeling the issue is resolved.
- **Prevention** – feel they are contributing toward meaningful, concrete interpersonal and, if relevant, systemic changes to prevent similar recurring harm.
- **Recovery** – heal from the emotional and psychological injury.
- **Dignity** – self-esteem and self-confidence restored.
- **Restoration** – restore levels of trust and reclaim healthy relationships within one’s family, community, workplace, or school environment.

**From the perspective of the person/formal authority responsible**, restorative justice services are easily accessible, user-friendly, voluntary, timely, confidential, culturally appropriate, and tailored to meet their unique needs, as follows:

- **Fair process** – a procedurally fair (omnipartial) resolution process.
- **An opportunity to make it right** – such as expressing genuine remorse and apologizing for their actions, benefiting themselves and other involved parties (promoting healing and reconciliation).
- **Healing, learning, and growth** – to better understand the impacts to facilitate their recovery.
- **A timely resolution.** – a swift and timely process for resolution so the issue or stress levels don’t escalate, affecting things like mental health, school/job performance, or public safety.
- **A way to put the incident behind them** – the ability to make significant and appropriate amends, gain emotional closure, and move forward, feeling the relationship is repaired, and the issue is resolved.
- **Address root issues** – share extenuating circumstances, reach a common understanding of root issues to make concrete changes (i.e., recovery from unresolved childhood/inter-generational trauma), and access support on an individual, community, or systems level to prevent recurrence.
- **Reprisal** – not subject to any form of retaliation, such as stigma or alienation.
- **Institutional trust** – restore reputation and confidence in formal authorities: criminal justice system, police, child and family services, workplace, and schools.
- **Safer community** – build safer, more caring, connected communities, live by traditional values.

# FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Steering Committee meetings and membership is open to anyone interested in restorative justice to share their perspective from the lens of Metis, First Nations, Inuit, and Racialized Communities at any stage in this project. Contact the Chair if you'd like to join the Steering Committee, or for more information, you can reach out to the following Team members who've signed up to date:

**Gayle Desmeules** – Committee Chair, Otipemisiwak Métis Government, Métis Nation of Alberta, Cell 780-646-2183 [gdesmeules@metis.org](mailto:gdesmeules@metis.org) [www.albertametis.com](http://www.albertametis.com)

**Sharon Bourque** – Director of Justice, Otipemisiwak Métis Government, Métis Nation of Alberta; Cell 780-999-1911 [sbourque@metis.org](mailto:sbourque@metis.org) [www.albertametis.com](http://www.albertametis.com)

**Gloria Brathwaite** – Racialized Community Restorative Justice Practitioner, Fort Saskatchewan, 587-938-5621 [glor.brath@gmail.com](mailto:glor.brath@gmail.com)

**Cora Martin** – Youth Representative, Otipemisiwak Métis Government Metis Nation of Alberta, True Dialogue Restorative Justice Practitioner, Calgary, [cora@truedialogue.ca](mailto:cora@truedialogue.ca) [www.truedialogue.ca](http://www.truedialogue.ca) Cell 780-614-8430

**Jordan Broadhead** - Community and Program Liaison, Community Safety Initiatives – Justice Supports, Strategy, Support, and Integrated Initiatives, Alberta Justice, Cell: (780) 625-2618  
[Jordan.Broadhead@gov.ab.ca](mailto:Jordan.Broadhead@gov.ab.ca)

**Debbie Ladouceur**, Buffalo Lake Metis Settlement, Community Justice Coordinator,  
[dladouceur@blmetis.ca](mailto:dladouceur@blmetis.ca) Cell. 1-780-519-1057

**Shareef Yellowhorn** – Piikani First Nations Peacemaker, Resolution Health Support Worker (IRS Claimants/Boarding Schools), Native Counselling Services of Alberta, [shareef-yellowhorn@ncsa.ca](mailto:shareef-yellowhorn@ncsa.ca)  
Cell. 1-403-818-9351 (Treaty 7 Territory)

**Blaine Raine** - Restorative Justice Advisor, Ermineskin Cree Nation, B. 780-585-3741 Ext 308,  
Cell. 780-335-4109 [blaine@erminekin.ca](mailto:blaine@erminekin.ca) (Treaty 6 Territory)

**Stacey Harrison** – Executive Director, Saddle Lake Boys and Girls Club, and Restorative Justice Program  
[s.harrison@slbgc.org](mailto:s.harrison@slbgc.org) C. 780.614-1801

**Elder Bryan Yellowhorn** – Piikani First Nations Peacemaker, Child and Family Services Chair,  
[bryanyellowhorn@hotmail.com](mailto:bryanyellowhorn@hotmail.com) Cell. 403-929-3846 (Blackfoot Confederacy, Treaty 7 Territory)

**Elder Sarah Skwarchuk**, Peacemaker, Otipemisiwak Métis Government Métis Nation of Alberta,  
[skwarchuk@shaw.ca](mailto:skwarchuk@shaw.ca) Cell. 1-780-975-9191

# Participatory Action Research Project

## NEXT STEPS

**ARJA Conference** – We encourage you to attend a Steering Committee focus group session at the Alberta Restorative Justice Conference [www.arja.ca](http://www.arja.ca) November 21-22, 2024.

- What we learned from the four online sessions will be shared for further discussion and input. Relevant findings from the Alberta Community Justice Indigenous Engagement Strategy will also be shared so that, as a collective, we can reflect on the themes that surfaced instrumental in shaping a Provincial Restorative Justice Program.

**Write the “What We Heard Summary Report”** – Convene sharing circle discussions in January 2025 at the discretion of the Steering Committee for further feedback.

**Distribute “What We Heard Summary Report”** - March 2025 using different media.

**Continuance** - Engage in action items that surface from the theme areas at the discretion of Stakeholders and Steering Committee members.