RYCNC - Statement of Ethical Principles for Restorative Justice Practitioners

Adopted by RYCNC on 9-18-20

Restorative Justice is a practice-based profession that facilitates social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective and personal responsibility, and respect for diversities are central to Restorative Justice. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, Restorative Justice engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing.

Principles:

1. **Recognition of the Inherent Dignity of Humanity**

Restorative Justice practitioners recognize and respect the inherent dignity and worth of all human beings in attitude, word, and deed. We respect all persons, but we challenge beliefs and actions of those persons who devalue or stigmatize themselves or other persons.

2. **Promoting Human Rights**

Restorative Justice practitioners embrace and promote the fundamental and inalienable rights of all human beings. Restorative Justice is based on respect for the inherent worth, dignity of all people and the individual and social /civil rights that follow from this. Practitioners often work with people to find an appropriate balance between competing human rights.

3. **Promoting Social Justice**

Restorative Justice practitioners have a responsibility to engage people in achieving social justice, in relation to society generally, and in relation to the people with whom they work. This means:

3.1 Challenging Discrimination and Institutional Oppression

Restorative Justice practitioners promote social justice in relation to society generally and to the people with whom they work.

Restorative Justice practitioners challenge discrimination, which includes but is not limited to age, capacity, civil status, class, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, nationality (or lack thereof), opinions, other physical characteristics, physical or mental abilities, political beliefs, poverty, race, relationship status, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, spiritual beliefs, or family structure.

3.2 Respect for Diversity

Restorative Justice practitioners work toward strengthening inclusive communities that respect the ethnic and cultural diversity of societies, taking account of individual, family, group, and community differences.

3.3 Access to Equitable Resources

Restorative Justice practitioners advocate and work toward access and the equitable distribution of resources and wealth.

3.4 Challenging Unjust Policies and Practices

Restorative Justice practitioners work to bring to the attention of their employers, policymakers, politicians, and the public situations in which policies and resources are inadequate or in which policies and practices are oppressive, unfair, or harmful. In doing so, practitioners must not be penalized.

Restorative Justice practitioners must be aware of situations that might threaten their own safety and security, and they must make judicious choices in such circumstances. Practitioners are not compelled to act when it would put themselves at risk.

3.5 Building Solidarity

Restorative Justice practitioners actively work in communities and with their colleagues, within and outside of the profession, to build networks of solidarity to work toward transformational change and inclusive and responsible societies.

4. **Promoting the Right to Self-Determination**

Restorative Justice practitioners respect and promote people's rights to make their own choices and decisions, provided this does not threaten the rights and legitimate interests of others.

5. **Promoting the Right to Participation**

Restorative Justice practitioners work toward building the self-esteem and capabilities of people, promoting their full involvement and participation in all aspects of decisions and actions that affect their lives.

6. **Respect for Confidentiality and Privacy**

6.1 Restorative Justice practitioners respect and work in accordance with people's rights to confidentiality and privacy unless there is risk of harm to the self or to others or other statutory restrictions.

6.2 Restorative Justice practitioners inform the people with whom they engage about such limits to confidentiality and privacy.

7. **Treating People as Whole Persons**

Restorative Justice practitioners recognize the biological, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions of people's lives and understand and treat all people as whole persons. Such recognition is used to formulate holistic assessments and interventions with the full participation of people, organizations, and communities with whom practitioners engage.

8. **Ethical Use of Technology and Social Media**

8.1 The ethical principles in this Statement apply to all contexts of Restorative Justice practice, education, and research, whether it involves direct face-to-face contact or through use of digital technology and social media.

8.2 Restorative Justice practitioners must recognize that the use of digital technology and social media may pose threats to the practice of many ethical standards including but not limited to privacy and confidentiality, conflicts of interest, competence, and documentation and must obtain the necessary knowledge and skills to guard against unethical practice when using technology.

9. **Professional Integrity**

9.1 It is the responsibility of national associations and organizations to develop and regularly update their own codes of ethics or ethical guidelines, to be consistent with this Statement, considering local situations. It is also the responsibility of national organizations to Restorative Justice practitioners and schools and trainers of Restorative Justice about this Statement of Ethical Principles and their own ethical guidelines. Practitioners should act in accordance with the current ethical code or guidelines in their areas.

9.2 Restorative Justice practitioners must hold the required qualifications and develop and maintain the required skills and competencies to do their job.

9.3 Restorative Justice practitioners support peace and nonviolence. Practitioners may work alongside judicial systems for humanitarian purposes and work toward peacebuilding and reconstruction. Practitioners operating within peacekeeping context must always support the dignity and agency of people as their primary focus. Practitioners must not allow their knowledge and skills to be used for inhumane purposes.

9.4 Restorative Justice practitioners must act with integrity. This includes not abusing their positions of power and relationships of trust with people that they engage with; they recognize the boundaries between personal and professional life and do not abuse their positions for personal material benefit or gain.

9.5 Restorative Justice practitioners recognize that the giving and receiving of small gifts is a part of the social work and cultural experience in some cultures and countries. In such situations, this should be referenced in the country's code of ethics.

9.6 Restorative Justice practitioners have a duty to take the necessary steps to care for themselves professionally and personally in the workplace, in their private lives and in society.

9.7 Restorative Justice practitioners acknowledge that they are accountable for their actions to the people they work with; their colleagues; their employers; their professional associations; and local, national, and international laws and conventions and that these accountabilities may conflict, which must be negotiated to minimize harm to all persons. Decisions should always be informed by empirical evidence; practice wisdom; and ethical, legal, and cultural considerations. Practitioners must be prepared to be transparent about the reasons for their decisions.

9.8 Practitioners and their employing bodies work to create conditions in their workplace environments and in their communities, where the principles of this Statement and those of their own national codes are discussed, evaluated, and upheld. Practitioners and their employing bodies foster and engage in debate to facilitate ethically informed decisions.

Adapted from: **Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles, International Federation of Social Workers**