

## DISCLAIMER

However, restorative justice programs and practices may not be helpful for everyone and every situation.

- The offender may never accept responsibility for his or her actions
- The offender may or may not say what the victim hopes to hear
- The offender may not follow through with his or her obligations
- The victim must have complete say over what they want to do and should start all restorative justice activities

Also, restorative justice should not replace the traditional criminal justice system. Restorative justice practices are alternatives to parts of the criminal justice system. The criminal justice system can still provide traditional safeguards to hold the offender accountable with actions such as imprisonment.

***Restorative justice is an alternative way of thinking about and responding to crime. It emphasizes one fundamental fact: crime damages people, communities and relationships. If crime is about harm, then the justice process should emphasize repairing the harm.***

***For more information contact:  
Christian Anderson or Debbie  
Lawrence at  
763-689-3052***

## ISANTI COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT

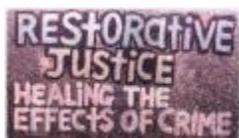
### RESTORATIVE GROUP CONFERENCING



## History

Restorative Group Conferencing is based on the principles of the Maori tribes in New Zealand. The model was transformed in Australia and became known as the Wagga Wagga Model, this was brought to the U.S. by REAL JUSTICE in 1995.

The original model from New Zealand was adopted by Anoka County in 1994. In 1995, Woodbury Police Department began the Wagga Wagga Model. This practice was introduced to Isanti County in April 2005 by the original Woodbury police officer that began using it in 1995.



## What is Restorative Group Conferencing?

A Restorative Group Conference is a face-to-face encounter between a victim(s), the offender(s), individuals who support each of them, and others who have been affected by the incident. This encounter seeks to identify, repair and prevent harm, based on restorative justice values including meaningful accountability. These conferences are incident-based, initiated in response to a crime or dispute, and behavior-based, making a clear distinction between the harmful act and the actor.

Victim participation is completely voluntary, and participation of the offender is based upon their willingness and readiness. The offender(s) must first admit guilt and then a meeting between the victim(s), offender(s), and their support groups is held.

Conferences focus on empowering the participants, looking at underlying causes and making referrals. Decisions are consensus-based and end in an agreement with which all participants can live with.

