

## MAKE AMENDS & RESTORATIVE JUSTICE FAQ's

### MISCONCEPTIONS OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

#### Q. Is RJ only suitable for low-level crime?

A. No, RJ can be applied to many different crime types including those of a sensitive and complex nature. Our team work on a large range of cases involving various crimes from shop lifting, criminal damage, and burglary through to violent crimes, crimes of a sexual nature, harassment, manslaughter, domestic violence and death by dangerous driving. Make Amends also have two dedicated serious and violent crime workers who work with families and young people. We also have an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) who works on our team. Risk assessments are completed throughout the process, especially for complex cases and those involving domestic violence.

#### Q. Is RJ just the same as community resolution?

A. Often, it's thought that RJ is community resolution, but this is in fact, not correct. Community resolutions are an out of court disposal which the police can use to deal with anti-social behaviour and low-level crime. They can resolve minor offences through a formal agreement between the parties involved as opposed to progression through the traditional criminal justice system. Primarily aimed at first time offenders there must be an admission of guilt.

RJ used to be an add on to community resolutions which was only being used for minor offences for example theft which had to be under £50. RJ was deemed not suitable for serious crime and domestic abuse. However, this is no longer the case and RJ is used across many crime types from low level to serious and violent crimes. RJ is much more than just a community resolution, it addresses the needs of those involved.

(Credit to [West Midlands Police](#) for their community resolution explanation.)

#### Q. Is RJ only for victims of crime?

A. No. RJ is the process of bringing together people who have been harmed with those responsible for the harm, to find a positive way forward. It can provide a means of closure and enable the victim to move on. RJ also provides an opportunity for those who caused the harm to face the consequences of their actions, recognise the impact that it has had upon others and where possible make amends. In this way RJ has the potential to help rehabilitate offenders and enable them to stop offending.

#### Q. Will RJ mean a lighter sentence or easier consequence for someone who caused the harm?

A. No. RJ can be used alongside any criminal justice or non-criminal justice process. It cannot be used with to achieve gaining a lighter sentence. If a harmer is serving a sentence and completes RJ whilst in custody, this can be seen favourably but doesn't impact a reduction in sentence. Those who caused the harm still has to face the consequences of their actions as per the criminal justice system if it's a reported crime.



**Q. Isn't RJ just a form of CBT, counselling or mediation?**

**A.** No, RJ isn't CBT, counselling or mediation. RJ involves identifying a harmer and harmed party, bringing them together in communication to discuss what took place. RJ often results in an agreement being made between the parties at the end of the process which includes reparation or a positive action. This is different to CBT, counselling and mediation. Our Practitioners will often though make referrals to providers offering other forms of support in order to provide as much as possible to the parties involved to be able to heal and move on from the incident.

**Q. Is RJ PTSD treatment?**

**A.** Make Amends is a trauma informed organisation and recognise that PTSD can be a result of being a victim of crime or conflict. RJ can be used as a process for someone with PTSD to help come to terms with what happened and enable them to move on, however the timing of the RJ work needs to be carefully considered so a victim's trauma isn't re-triggered. Make Amends would assess the suitability of the referral and take a multi-agency approach to support the parties involved.

