

NOMS Grant Funded Restorative Justice Capacity Building Programme; The Ten Key Messages from experience so far

	Message	Who needs to hear it	What they need to do
1	Partnership approaches work best. Much of what needs to be done to develop and sustain RJ requires the co-operation of other agencies to gather the necessary information and ensure safe and effective delivery without gaps or duplication.	Senior Managers and Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form an effective partnership which is often best done under the auspices of existing partnership arrangements such as the LCJB or Community Safety Partnership • Ensure that the members have sufficient authority to make things happen and to resolve blockages quickly
2	Face to face RJ has the most impact. Evidence shows that victims are most satisfied and reoffending is most reduced by face to face RJ meetings.	All staff including Senior Managers, Managers, Facilitators, Offender Managers and the participants themselves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and reflective practice enables staff to develop the key skills to approach victims and offenders in order to give potential participants the confidence to meet • Give RJ Facilitators and referral staff opportunities for practice discussions in order to develop and build best practice • Ensure effective quality assurance of practice and staff supervision
3	Create dedicated staff resource if you can. Select and prepare staff for RJ training on the basis of interest, aptitude and availability for the RJ role.	Senior Managers and Implementation Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid creating roles where RJ demands and other demands will clash and RJ will lose • Give dedicated time if you can't create a dedicated role • Allocate a realistic time allowance for casework and related activity • RJ Facilitators should not facilitate conferences involving any participants for whom they have statutory responsibility • The most effective way of finding facilitators is through an expression of interest process • Make sure that potential facilitators recognise the commitment involved before they embark on the training • Facilitators benefit from support in developing their confidence in working with victims
4	Develop RJ awareness amongst relevant staff groups. Ensure everybody from the senior managers to the gate or admin staff have an appropriate level of RJ knowledge. Eg. Gate/admin staff may be the victim's first point of contact when they arrive for the conference.	Senior Managers, Implementation Managers, and RJ Facilitators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training can be through staff briefings, team meetings, whole and half-day staff training events, use of intranet, staff-bulletins, posters, e-mail, etc. • Share good news stories and case studies
5	Have simple clear processes in place before you start	Implementation Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make referral, casework and admin processes simple and clear • Monitor the effectiveness of your processes and use this information to make improvements
6	Don't wait for referrals. Wait for referrals and you'll wait a long time. Give your facilitators licence to extract eligible	Senior Managers and Implementation Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your databases contain dozens - often hundreds - of eligible cases. You need to plan for working through them, to both identify suitable existing

	cases and assess for suitability themselves.		cases and create a flow of new ones
7	Don't reject eligible cases without an interview to assess suitability.	Managers, sources of referrals and RJ Facilitators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't require victim empathy before inclusion, it's the conference that changes the offender • Only reject cases where there is clear evidence based on research (eg.psychopathy/severe personality disorders) or the views expressed by the offender suggest that they wish to harm the victim through the process, or where there is a fundamental disagreement about key facts • NOMS Better Outcomes through Victim-Offender Conferencing provides guidance on targeting http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/about/noms/better-outcomes-through-victim-offender-conferencing.pdf
8	Don't over estimate risk. Have simple risk assessment processes in place. Victims who want to meet the offender do not expect them to be charming and considerate.	Manager who allocates cases and RJ Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess likelihood of harm - The worst outcome may be that the offender/victim walks out or is insensitive • Ask the victim what they want – be guided by their wishes, expectations and vulnerability • Don't think for the victim, offer choices • Where RJ has started and risk assessment indicates a conference would be unsafe, or participants choose not to meet, it is good practice to explore alternative forms of communication
9	Don't steal the conflict. RJ is a process which allows the victim and the offender to achieve a resolution for themselves which is not dominated by the needs of the professional and the 'system'.	All staff including Senior Managers, Managers, Facilitators, Offender Managers and the participants themselves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower the participants by effective needs assessment and preparation • Invite others affected to take part • Create a physical and emotional atmosphere which puts the participants at the centre of the process • Avoid intervention and interruption • Facilitate helpful outcome agreements and support the implementation of these agreements
10	RJ is equally for the restoration of both victim and offender. There is a risk that RJ is seen as something we do for offenders and use victims in the process. Impartiality and the public perception of impartiality are important for public confidence.	All staff including Senior Managers, Managers, Facilitators, Offender Managers and the participants themselves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convey clear messages about RJ as a fair process which seeks fair outcomes. • Facilitators should actively listen to the victims needs and explore what the victim can get from RJ for themselves