

**Three ways in which  
volunteers use restorative  
processes and mediation to  
reduce crime and conflict....**

**....and help communities  
to live better together**

**Criminal justice looks  
to the past.....**

**..... restorative justice looks to  
the future**

# Circles of Support and Accountability for Sex Offenders



## **Circles of Support and Accountability**

**The US Department of Justice is funding a Circles pilot project in Durham, North Carolina.**

**By mid-summer this year there will be six core members, with 30 volunteers. All four of the current core members have jobs and proper accommodation**

# **Circles of Support and Accountability**

- The Circles are made up of volunteers from the community

## Circles of Support and Accountability

**Volunteers *support* the sex offender (the core member) to settle into the community.**

**Volunteers hold the core member *accountable* to keep the terms of a covenant about his behaviour and parole conditions**

# Circles of Support and Accountability

**The inner circle of volunteers  
is supported by an outer circle  
of professionals to help with  
any problems.**

## **Circles of Support and Accountability**

**The circles of 4-5 volunteers  
are available 24 hours a day,  
7 days a week, for the core  
member**

## **Circles of Support and Accountability**

**Circles are used in**

**Canada, UK, Belgium,  
Netherlands, Bulgaria,  
Hungary, Latvia, Spain, USA**

## **Circles of Support and Accountability**

**Success rate of 80%**  
**in stopping these high risk  
offenders causing more  
victims**

# **Circles of Support and Accountability**

**Circles are so effective  
because the offenders feel  
personally valued**

**People in the community are  
giving up their free time to  
be with them socially**

# Pre-trial mediation

## **Pre-trial mediation**

**Volunteers are licensed by the North Carolina State, USA, to provide pre-trial mediation in the district criminal courts.**

# **Not-for-profit mediation organizations manage the volunteers**



**Carolina Dispute Settlement Services**

## **Pre-trial mediations**

**Prosecutors or Judges, at their discretion, recommend cases for mediation.**

**On trial days, mediators sit in the courtroom waiting for cases to be referred.**

## **Pre-trial mediations**

**Mediations are held in interview rooms at the entrance to the courtroom.**

**Holding mediations in the courthouse helps make both parties in the case feel safe**

## Pre-trial mediation

The mediation agreements are confidential to the parties and mediation service. They do **NOT** need the approval of the judge or the prosecutor

## **Pre-trial mediation**

**The mediator can agree up  
\$15,000 reparations for the  
injured party.**

**The maximum that I have agreed  
is \$6,000 for medical expenses  
and loss of pay**

## Pre-trial mediation

Mother and daughter, both taken into custody for assault, agreed that the daughter (who has a baby) will do the washing up by 8pm. Both to recognize signs of upset in the other when the mother becomes silent or the daughter plays loud music.

## Pre-trial mediation

**Two women, who had been friends, fought in a bar. A wanted B in prison.**

B agreed to pay the \$750 medical expenses of A, A to pay B \$75 for broken necklace. They would go together to alcohol rehabilitation classes. They hugged as they left the mediation room.

## **Pre-trial mediation**

**When the alleged offender and victim reach agreement, the charge against the offender is dismissed by the prosecutor**

**If the agreement is not kept, the victim can go back to the prosecutor and ask for a trial.**

## Pre-trial mediation

**85%**

**of pre-trial mediation cases  
result in a signed agreement.**

# **Community mediation**



Southampton

England

## **Community mediation**

- Southampton City Council has a 6 year contract with NFS Mediation to settle conflicts and anti-social behaviour problems between their housing tenants

## **Community mediation**

**14,000 households  
visited in 12 years**

**Target:**

**90% of the complaints do not come back  
to the housing office within six months:**

**NFS Mediation achieve: 93%**

## Community mediation

In 40% of cases, the police had already been involved

And in half of those cases, a neighbour had been found guilty of a criminal offence.....

....and that neighbour was still a problem

## Community Mediation

- NFS Mediation staff sees households within 10 days of getting referral.
- Staff listen, without judging, to both sides.
- Parties agree details of staff report. Decision made about mediation.

## Community mediation

**English family had problems about noise levels with their Asian neighbours. They had lived next to each other for 18 years. They had not spoken to each other about it, even though the English family used ear plugs to go to sleep.**

**After reaching agreement, the men shook hands and the women kissed. The English woman, an English teacher, had her offer accepted to help the Asian wife with learning English.**

## Community mediation

- The cost of the service is included, with their agreement, in the rent of the tenants.
- The amount for each household is about **\$0.60** a month.

## **Volunteer Training**

- All three projects give between 3-6 days training for their volunteers.
- Continuous support and supervision is provided

## **Mediating**

**My target is to achieve  
agreement in nine out of every  
ten cases.**

**My greatest satisfaction:  
watching people in conflict go  
from verbal abuse to hugs and  
handshakes.**

## What I have learnt

**Communities need to re-learn the skills of being good neighbours**

**Volunteers bring humanity to justice**

**Restorative methods can be used effectively wherever there is conflict in society at any level**

## **What volunteers can show others**

**“Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness:  
and bearing one with another,  
and forgiving one another,  
and not laying accusation one against another;  
but praying one for another,  
and helping one another up with a tender hand”**

*Isaac Penington  
English Quaker  
1667*

**United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice**  
Qatar, April 2015

Presentation by Nicholas McGeorge,  
Friends World Committee for Consultation (Quakers)  
[nicholas.mcgeorge04@gmail.com](mailto:nicholas.mcgeorge04@gmail.com)