




# North Shore Restorative Justice Society (NSRJ)

Restorative Justice in Education Initiative (RJEI)  
Delegation at the North Vancouver School District  
Board of Education's Standing Committee Meeting  
*November 10, 2020*





We honour the Elders and Knowledge Holders, past, present and future, and acknowledge with gratitude that our work takes place in communities situated on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the Skwxwú7mesh Uxwumixw (Squamish), Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tseil-Waututh) and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) First Nations.

# About Us: North Shore Restorative Justice Society

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## Summary:

- Community based non-profit since 1997 (gained charity status in 2010)
- Volunteer-based organization with 40+ active volunteers
- Active Board of Directors
- Seven staff
- Offices located at North Vancouver RCMP & West Vancouver Police Department
- Funding sources include municipal, grants, fundraising

## Initiatives:

- **Restorative Response Program** - police diversion program
- **Restorative Justice in Education Initiative**- strengths-based educational and relational approach
- **Community Dialogue Series**
- **Youth Speak-Out Series**
- **NEW! The Youth Justice Lab**





# What is Restorative Justice?

# RJ Recognized in the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*



(Applies to persons younger than 18 years old)

1. Alternative measures ...“often the **most appropriate** and effective way to address youth crime” (s.4(a))
2. s.6(1) A police officer **SHALL**, before starting judicial proceedings consider whether it would be sufficient to:
  - Take no further action
  - Warn the young person / administer a caution
  - Refer to a program that may assist the youth not to commit offences = NSRJ!

# Restorative Approach



An alternative approach to CRIME, HARM, and CONFLICT

- Traditional:

What rule or law has been broken?  
Who did it?  
What punishment do they deserve?

- Restorative:

Who has been harmed?  
What are their needs?  
How can we heal the harm?

# Restorative Justice in Education Initiative (RJEI)

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- Started in 2013 as a preventative initiative in response to high numbers of youth files referred to our Restorative Response Program
- Facilitation of weekly Circles in two elementary schools and one alternative high school
- Use of a social-emotional framework and relational approach
- Collaborate with teachers, school staff, administrators, education assistants, and parents
- Pro-D to build capacity for conflict resolution and use of a restorative approach to education









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# Impact of Our Work

- A. Promoting connection and empowerment through being heard
- B. Developing social-emotional competencies
- C. Promoting equity, diversity and inclusion through perspective-taking
- D. Revealing students' individual characteristics and complexities of interpersonal dynamics

# What Do People Think of Restorative Justice and Circles?



“Restorative justice is a method that allows positive relationships to be developed. Relationships are essential for students to have a strong sense of belonging.” - **Brad Baker, District Principal Indigenous Education & Safe and Caring School**

“I really liked learning about other people and being able to find topics where we had the same point of view. Circles really made a lot of personal connections for me and I feel I got to know some people better.” - **Grade 6 Student**

“I enjoyed everything about Circle. It was great to learn new things about myself and open up and talk about things I wouldn't normally.” - **Grade 11 Student**

“Being able to participate, rather than lead. It humanizes staff and increases holistic connections with my students.” - **Grade 12 Teacher**

“There is no words for how much this helped me understand where people are coming from and learn a lot about them.” - **Grade 4 Student**

"Sharing and hearing all voices. I learned how to be a better listener. I learned what my students' homes look like." - **Grade 4 Teacher**

"[Circle] is a safe space." - **Grade 4 Student**

# Beyond Circles



Restorative Justice in Education is about “facilitating learning communities that nurture the capacity of people to engage with one and other and their environment in a manner that supports and respects the inherent dignity and worth of all” (Evans & Vaandering, 2016).

Source: Evans & Vaandering (2016)

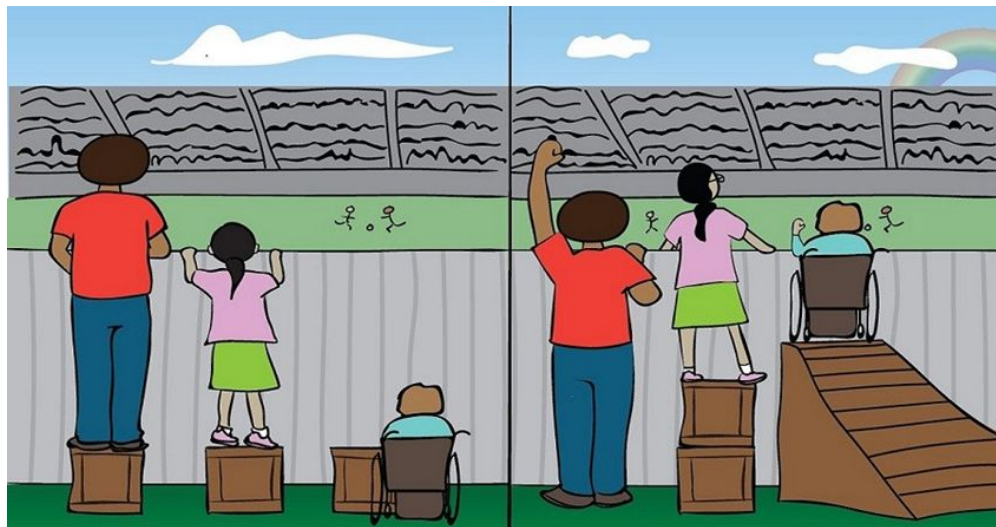
# Justice and Equity Guide Our Work

## → Justice

Reciprocal pursuit of what each person needs for their individual and collective well-being.

## → Equity

Everyone gets what they need to experience well-being.

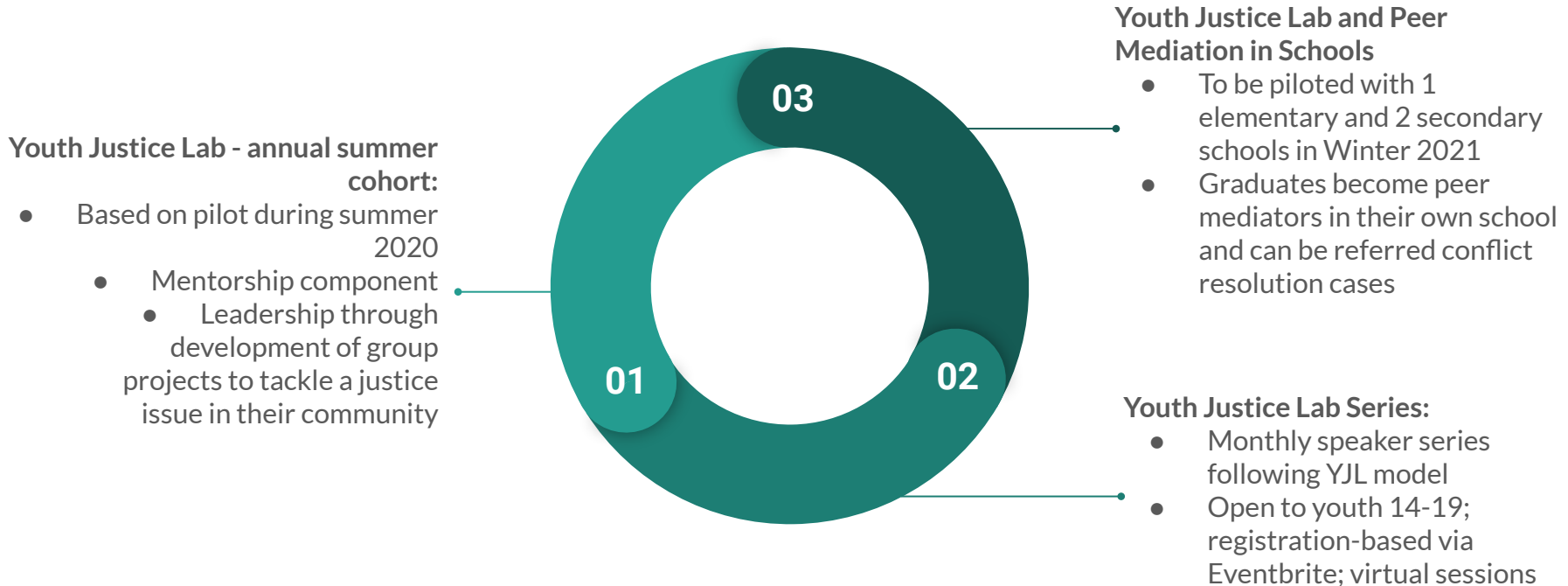


# Youth Justice Lab Pilot - Summer 2020



- 15 youth from the North Shore joined us for this pilot cohort
- Youth joined virtual sessions and heard from guest speakers about Restorative Justice, Decolonization, racial disparities, intergenerational activism, art and justice, and a lot more
- 9 mentors joined the YJL and supported and guided the development of youth projects and each group.
- Graduation and Gathering welcomed 40 people including YJL participants, their mentors, NSRJ Staff and Board, and community members.
- Youth presented their excellent projects at the graduation. Examples of projects presented were: (1) a peer mental health support program, (2) a proposal for decolonizing public schools, and (3) a short film tackling the stigma of poverty.

# RJEI New Ventures Based on YJL Successes





# Professional Development - A 4-Part Series



We offer a 4-part series training to school staff, teachers, education assistants, and administrators which include the following sessions:

- 1) Restorative Justice in Education: Using Circles in the Classroom
- 2) Holding a Restorative Conversation: Active and Empathetic Listening, Restorative Questions, and Affective Statements
- 3) A Fundamental Alignment: Restorative Justice, SEL, and Trauma-Informed Practices
- 4) Going Full Circle: An Equity-Based and Anti-Oppressive Restorative Practice

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# Takeaway



- Our aim is to strengthen our partnership with the NVSD.
- We foresee opportunities to further collaborate together for weekly Circles, the Youth Justice Lab, peer mediation, and supporting school staff professional growth, as well as engaging parents in our communities.
- Our work includes building capacity both as a preventative approach to education and also as a targeted response to conflict and harm using a broad definition of harm.



# Thank you for your attention!

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