

**The Critical Knowledge Gap in Evaluating Restorative Justice Practices as a  
Response to Sexual Misconduct / Sexual Violence in Post-Secondary Institutions:  
A Call to Action**

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## **Abstract**

In this professional practice paper I set out to discover whether there is data indicating Restorative Justice Practices are effective with respect to victim/survivor satisfaction and engendering systemic culture change when used as a response to incidents of Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Violence in Post-Secondary Institutions (PSIs). I discovered ample and convincing literature making a case for Restorative Justice (RJ) as a valid response to such incidents; as well as, frameworks to guide PSIs in developing this approach within their own institutions. The critical knowledge gap lies in evaluation. What is currently lacking is data on whether institutions are adopting this approach, in what circumstances, in what ways, and to what effect. I suggest this lack of data exists because it is only within the last five years that PSIs, in many Provinces in Canada but not all, have been legislated to respond to these kinds of incidents. This has driven an emergent interest in RJ specific to Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Violence within the Post-Secondary setting. Despite the promise inherent in Restorative Justice Practices, there are legitimate challenges to implementation. This paper seeks to provide some ideas to address those challenges; highlighting work I have undertaken within my own institution. My call to action is for PSIs that implement RJ Practices to do so with evaluation in mind and for researchers to focus scholarship in this area. My hope is to inspire others to strive towards infusing a restorative and relational approach in their work.

## **The Critical Knowledge Gap in Evaluating Restorative Justice Practices as a Response to Sexual Misconduct / Sexual Violence in Post-Secondary Institutions:**

### **A Call to Action**

Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Violence in Post-Secondary Institutions (PSIs) is an identified problem (Eerkes et al., 2021; Ending Violence Association BC, 2016). In response, many Provinces throughout Canada (including British Columbia) have enacted legislation requiring PSIs to implement policy and procedures articulating how they will respond to this issue (Shen, 2017; Victoria: Government of British Columbia, 2016). Despite having policy and procedures in place for 4+ years now, recent statistics (Burczycka, 2020) demonstrate this to be an ongoing problem. As Director of the Student Rights and Responsibilities Office at a regional BC University, tasked with administering the Institution's Sexual Violence and Misconduct policy and its related procedures (Kwantlen Polytechnic University, 2019), I have been actively exploring Restorative Justice (RJ) as a potential response to incidents of Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Violence. My research question was to discover whether there is data to support that restorative approaches are an effective response to incidences of Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Violence in PSI settings. By effective, I was curious to know if positive outcomes have been found in two areas: Effecting systemic culture change by fostering an environment where such incidents are less likely to occur; as well as, evidence that victim/survivors who have engaged in restorative approaches to address an incident of Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Violence are satisfied. What I found is that while a persuasive case has been made for PSI's to use RJ as a response to Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Violence, this is an emergent area of exploration and to date there is a pronounced lack of quantitative data demonstrating its actual use and by extension any quantitative measure of its effectiveness.

In reviewing the research, I have discovered ample and convincing literature on why RJ should be an approach PSIs consider adding to their repertoire of how to respond to such incidents. Furthermore, there is a growing body of recent work providing guidance on how to implement RJ in an ethical, trauma-informed way. What we don't know is whether PSIs are incorporating RJ as a response to Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Violence, how often, in what circumstances, and the outcomes if and when they do. Having only been tasked with developing a formal response to these types of incidents within the past five years; I would suggest that most PSIs are still in the early exploration to initial implementation stage of adding RJ Practices to the already well-established administrative decision-making process. Almost all the research conducted to date has been focused on making the case for adopting RJ as a valid response to incidents of this nature. Now that the case has been made, it is time to pay attention to if and how it is being implemented and the results thereof.

### **Problem Description and Analysis**

#### **Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Violence Defined: The Scope of the Problem Amidst a Complex Landscape**

Throughout this paper I use the terminology Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Violence to describe the problem institutions are expected to address. As I am based in BC, I am using the term Sexual Misconduct as defined by the Ministry of Advanced Education (2017) in their *Guide for Developing Policies and Actions* in which it was stated “the term ‘sexual misconduct’ is used in a broad sense, and includes any unwanted act – physical, verbal or psychological – carried out through sexual means or by targeting sexuality” (p. 5). I am relying on the definition of Sexual Violence as:

A subset of GBV, sexual violence, is: Any sexual act or act targeting a person's sexuality, gender identity, or gender expression, whether the act is physical or psychological in nature, that is committed, threatened, or attempted against a person without that person's consent. This includes but is not limited to sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, indecent exposure, voyeurism, sexual exploitation, degrading sexual imagery, distribution of sexual images or video of a community member without their consent, and cyber-harassment or cyberstalking of a sexual nature. (Ryerson University, 2020, as cited in Eerkes et al., 2021, pp. 9-10)

These definitions make clear the scope of possible incidents PSIs are tasked with addressing, both reactively to individual incidents and proactively to promote prevention.

Despite the scope being the same for all PSIs, there are dramatic differences between each institution. In BC alone, there are 30 PSIs (Post-Secondary BC, n.d.). The legislation gave PSIs the autonomy to develop policy and procedures that reflected their own institutional realities. As such, it is important to note that some PSIs have one staff person or only a small team supporting this as just a part of their overall portfolio whereas other institutions instated stand-alone offices whose sole portfolio is dedicated to providing support and delivering sexualized violence prevention. There is also variation in size and geography amongst institutions, from small to mid to large sized campus communities in rural or city-based locations. Some institutions have residence and some don't; some have higher international vs. domestic student populations; some have fraternities and sororities while others don't; some offer graduate studies whereas others only offer undergraduate programming and some have a higher proportion of online programming to in-person learning. Also, some PSIs wrote their policies limited to addressing Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Violence experienced by students

whereas others address incidents experienced by students and employees. This incredibly diverse landscape adds to the complexity of this problem as BC PSIs are not resourced equally to address a problem with this broad a scope.

### **The Dilemma PSIs Face in Responding to Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Violence**

PSIs face a dilemma in being tasked to address incidents of Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Violence on a number of fronts. Jonassen (2011) described dilemmas as “complex, social situations with conflicting perspectives [and] the situation is so complex and unpredictable, that a single best solution can never be known” (p. 99). Within the scope and landscape already described, PSIs bear the burden of meeting the needs of individuals and community in what are often complex cases shrouded in privacy and confidentiality. For those doing the work, it can feel like a no-win situation in that “there typically is no solution that will ever be acceptable to a significant portion of the people affected by the problem” (Jonassen, 2011, p. 99); and, the institution often pays a heavy price both financially and reputationally when they get it wrong. In cases where an incident becomes public knowledge, community expectations about how the institution should be responding may be at odds with what the victim/survivor wants or expects. In trying to meet the needs of a victim/survivor to a specific incident, the needs of the community may remain unmet; one of those needs being a call for systemic culture change. A dilemma implies there is no one best solution to the problem and the growing interest in RJ as an option to the administrative decision-making process signals an appetite by those working to administer these policies to find alternative ways to best support those impacted by individual incidents while fostering culture change. A mighty ask of those, who in some instances may be only one or two people, tasked with supporting their entire PSI community in this regard.

In being legislated to have policy indicating how incidents of Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Violence will be addressed, PSIs are expected to respond to such incidents in a fair and appropriate manner; balancing the rights of the victim/survivor, perpetrator and campus community (Ending Violence Association BC, 2016). RJ is a framework for addressing and preventing harm by orienting justice responses around the needs of the victim/survivor, the person who caused harm, and the community (Oudshoorn, Jackett & Amstutz, 2015). Therefore, RJ is an approach that may aid PSIs in meeting their obligations and live up to expectations in addressing the scope of this problem. Giles-Mitson (2021) asserted “campus sexual harm is a widespread problem that demands approaches that focus on prevention, alongside those that respond to specific incidents of harm” (p. 1); and, proponents of RJ contend this approach has the capacity to be both a reactive response to such incidents and a proactive approach fostering culture change (Coker, 2017; Giles-Mitson, 2021; Kaplan, 2017; McMahon et al., 2018).

## **Literature Review**

### **A Word About Restorative Justice (RJ)**

Zehr (2015) explained Restorative Justice (RJ) as “an approach to achieving justice that involves, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offense or harm to collectively identify and address harms, needs, and obligations in order to heal and put things as right as possible” (p. 48). Guided by three essential questions: 1. Who has been harmed; 2. What are their needs; and, 3. Whose obligations are these; a balance is struck between empowering victim/survivors in articulating their harms and needs and their participation in defining the obligations to them with supporting those who caused harm in taking accountability and meeting their obligations (Zehr, 2015). Asking additional guiding questions such as what were the underlying causes, who else has a stake in this situation, and what is the appropriate process to

involve stake-holders provides the impetus for this approach to meaningfully involve the community (Zehr, 2015). These guiding questions are “restorative justice in a nutshell” (Zehr, 2015, p. 51) and provide the flexibility to be applied to a wide range of situations.

RJ is principle-based work. Llewellyn (2018) stated that “restorative justice offers a common and predictable set of principles to guide practices and processes; it is not one fixed model or practice” (p. 4). As such, there is tremendous opportunity to adapt to match the situation at hand. An adaptation of note is in terminology. As RJ expanded beyond the criminal justice system to be used in education (specifically the K-12 system) and organizations; terminology such as restorative practices and restorative approaches gained favour (Zehr, 2015). The International Institute for Restorative Practices (iirp) distinguishes between the term’s restorative practices and restorative justice; viewing restorative justice as a subset of restorative practices (Wachtel, 2016). The distinction, as defined by iirp, is that RJ is reactive, a response to wrongdoing after it occurs versus restorative practices – which may be the same processes – but occur within the community before wrongdoing occurs (Wachtel, 2016). Utilizing these practices as part of how everyone regularly engages is a way to build relationships and a sense of community with the goal to prevent conflict and wrongdoing in the first place (Wachtel, 2016). To complicate matters further, the nomenclature continues to evolve and in the recent Courage to Act project which developed a national framework to prevent and address gender-based violence in Canadian PSIs, the generic term “Non-Punitive Accountability” (NPA) was intentionally chosen in acknowledgement of the different accountability models of restorative justice, transformative justice and community accountability they drew from (Eerkes et al., 2021).

Finally, Zehr (2015) posited the idea of a restorative system, where restorative justice practices are on a continuum, spanning those that are fully restorative when they involve a direct



encounter between those harmed and those causing harm; to partially restorative where there are no direct encounters yet restorative options may be provided to the victim/survivor or the person who caused harm; to non-restorative (the administrative decision-making process). And, there are additional points along that continuum that may be considered “mostly restorative” or “potentially restorative” (Zehr, 2015, p. 70). In PSIs, RJ is not meant to replace a traditional administrative decision-making process; rather, to compliment it by utilizing what Karp (2015) described as a sanctioning pyramid where RJ may be the base-level intervention but recognizing that it does not always work and so the intervention can progressively shift to being less restorative along the continuum by moving up the pyramid to the administrative decision-making process as needed.

As such, for the remainder of this paper I am purposefully using the terminology RJ Practices when talking about its use in PSIs to reflect the continuum of response options available to match what the situation may require to address harms, needs and obligations within the PSI context. I am still considering whether to adopt the term non-punitive accountability into my lexicon as one of the challenges institutions face in adopting RJ practices is educating the community in what this is. It is not clear to me at this time whether it is easier to educate the community on a new term that is a blend of accountability models or if leaving the word justice out creates further problems because “justice viewed restoratively is fundamentally about just relations” (Llewellyn, 2018, p. 3). The term non-punitive accountability may appear weighted in support of those who caused harm while neglecting the victim-survivor and/or the community’s need for justice.

## **The Case for RJ as a Response to Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Violence in PSIs**

RJ as a response to sexual assault has been controversial because it has been argued that sexual assault is a power-based crime and the RJ process may be manipulated by the perpetrators to maintain control over their victims (Ending Violence Association BC). Also, Coker (2017) stated “some feminists have expressed reservations about the use of RJ in gender violence cases” (p.151). In addition to power-based and crime-logic concerns, additional apprehension may stem from a confusion about the difference between RJ and mediation. RJ and mediation are not interchangeable terms and although RJ and mediation share some features; such as, the use of trained facilitators and similar terminology; there are also important distinctions which includes the person that caused harm taking accountability for that harm (Barone, 2018; Karp et al., 2016; Koss et al., 2014). Being clear about what RJ is, and is not, is essential to gain buy-in for this approach.

Based on my literature review, there is compelling qualitative data in the form of narrative storytelling that RJ practices can be a powerfully effective response to Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Violence for some individuals (Ackerman & Levenson, 2019; Fairbank, 2020; Lepp, 2018). The positive outcomes these individuals have chosen to share may not be a generalizable result; nonetheless, each story serves as an inspiring case study that instills a sense of hope in this approach. Some research has also considered the applicability of applying RJ in cases of sexual assault and how it is delivered. The findings, although limited, are encouraging in that positive attitudes towards RJ, particularly by the victim-survivor, have been reported (Burns & Sinko, 2021; Koss, 2014; Llewellyn et al., 2015; McGlynn et al., 2012; Wager, 2012).

Furthermore, a rapidly growing body of literature in the forms of papers, guides and reports have been written to make the case for RJ Practices as a viable response to incidences of

Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Violence both in general and specific to the PSI setting (Barone, 2018; Boutilier & Wells, 2018; Coker, 2016; Eerkes et al., 2021; Karp et al., 2016; Kaplan, 2017; Llewellyn, et al., 2015; Martin, 2018; Restorative Initiatives for Sexual Violence Working Group, 2018; Zinsstag, et al., 2018). These works have moved beyond just making a case for RJ Practices to providing guidance on how to implement this approach in an ethical, trauma-informed way.

A commonality in all the PSI policies and procedures is language that states the important objectives of being both trauma-informed and victim/survivor-centered. In *Guidelines for an Effective Response* (Ending Violence Association BC, 2016) it is advised that being trauma-informed promotes empowerment and recovery while minimizing re-traumatization and that a victim/survivor-centered approach is grounded in the needs of the victim/survivor. Therefore, the three essential guiding questions of RJ (who has been harmed; what are their needs; and, whose obligations are these) may be the most effective way to meet these two objectives. At its heart, RJ is about relationships (Llewellyn, 2018; Zehr, 2015) and because many incidents of Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Violence have a relational aspect to them, this may be a more satisfying option to offer victim/survivors. The alternative being the administrative decision-making approach that in some ways resembles the judicial process that has been deemed to have essentially failed victim/survivors (Karp et al., 2016; Koss et al., 2014; Naylor, 2010).

As such, I would argue that a convincing case has been made for PSIs to strongly consider at least offering RJ Practices as a potential response to campus Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Violence. Going back to my initial research question, which was to discover whether there is data to support the effectiveness of such an approach in PSI settings, I have discovered a pointed lack of study in this area (Kaplan, 2017; Gang et. al. 2019). The first gap I

identified when conducting my initial literature review for another course was a lack of information about whether PSIs even allow for RJ or Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in their policies and procedures. I conducted a policy scan of 23 PSIs in British Columbia and found only 7 institutions who explicitly state some form of restorative option in their SVM policy and/or procedures (Jordan, 2020). It is important to note that 9 institutions link their SVM policy to other policies, like Student Conduct, to address incidents; therefore, a more extensive policy scan needs to be conducted to determine if RJ or ADR are options in those policies (Jordan, 2020). A next step is for research to be conducted on institutions using RJ practices in order to learn more about their implementation process and ultimately, designing evaluative measures to gauge stakeholder satisfaction. This professional practice paper is a call to action for researchers to attend to this knowledge gap and for PSIs that implement RJ practices to do so with evaluation in mind.

### **The Limits and Challenges of RJ**

RJ Practices within PSIs have their limits and may not be appropriate for very serious Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Violence cases and conversely, RJ Practices are very time-intensive and may not be the best use of resources for minor cases (Goldblum, 2009, p. 149). Another limitation that Busby and Birenbaum (2020) identified is “a serious disincentive to respondent participation... they cannot be promised that admissions made in the course of an alternative process will never be used against the in any other legal process, and in particular, will not be ordered produced to the Crown in any parallel or subsequent criminal proceeding” (p. 104). As such, the person responsible for causing harm may be willing to take responsibility and even participate in a restorative process but choose not to as a defensive measure in any current or potential future litigation. This limits the potential response to partially restorative practices as

per the RJ Continuum (Zehr, 2015). When might RJ be most applicable? Goldblum (2009) posited that RJ in post-secondary may more effectively address “normative violations”, when community standards or social justice norms have been violated and there has been an impact to the community (p. 149).

In doing this work in my own institution, I have noted a number of challenges to consider when adding RJ Practices as a potential response to incidents. One is that many are not familiar with the principles of RJ and may have no idea what RJ Practices may look like. Educating the institution about this approach, as well as individuals coming forward for support, is an essential component for this to be an effective response and it takes time. For the Practitioner, RJ Practices require knowledge, training and opportunities for skill development. There is also the very real consideration of whether there is resource capacity to deliver on the promise of RJ Practices; there are time constraints and every process has to have an end-point. A related issue is the one of emergent and evolving needs. Since RJ is rooted in the needs of the victim/survivor it is important to recognize that new needs may emerge during the process or evolve over time that may impact the timeline. One must also be cognizant that a restorative intervention is meant to address a particular incident, it is not designed to address all needs a victim/survivor has nor is it designed to address past harms. Having honest and open dialogue with those involved in the restorative process is essential in a sincere effort to align expectations with what can realistically be delivered. In the discussion and recommendations section, I’ll provide further suggestions which may address some of the other challenges I mentioned.

## Discussion and Recommendations

### The Power of One

For those interested in adding RJ Practices as an option for victim/survivors and reflecting on the problem that there may be only one or two people tasked with doing this work in their PSI, an important first step is to educate oneself about RJ in general and more specifically about RJ in the PSI setting. The University of San Diego's Center for RJ has published *A Bibliography of Restorative Justice Publications Focused on Higher Education* and *A List of Some Great RJ Books* (University of San Diego: School of Leadership and Education Sciences: Restorative Justice, n.d.). There are also trainings, workshops, and certificate programs; as well as, annual Symposium and Conferences. Finding out what agencies may be delivering restorative justice programming in your Community and whether there is an Association in your Province are other ways to learn more. As an example, RJ ABC has published *RJ Milestones and Resource Guide* (Restorative Justice Association of British Columbia, n.d.); and, nation-wide CRJC has published links to *Resources* (Canadian Restorative Justice Consortium, n.d.). The Correctional Service of Canada has also published *Resources* about RJ across Canada (Government of Canada: Correctional Service Canada, n.d.); and, Tomporowski et al. (2010-2011) published an article about the origins and evolution of RJ in Canada.

As previously discussed, RJ is values-based work; grounded in the values of respect, responsibility and relationship (Zehr, 2015). In doing this work, I would suggest that it is important to ask oneself if one's own values align and whether this is an approach that rings true. If it is, then another individual action one can take is to strive to live restoratively. Zehr (2015) suggested ten ways to live restoratively which included taking one's own relationships seriously,

being accountable for one's own actions, treating others respectfully, viewing conflict as opportunity, engaging in dialogue and so forth (p. 96). I would argue living in such a way naturally infuses how one engages in doing this work.

Another way to look at this is through what has become a parable for Restorative Justice work, based on the Haida Manga book and artwork of Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas *Flight of the Hummingbird* (Auchter, 2013). In the story, the little hummingbird tries to extinguish a raging forest fire by putting one drop of water on it at a time. When the other forest-dwelling animals ask the hummingbird what they are doing, the hummingbird's response is "I'm doing what I can" (Auchter, 2013, 1:43). By applying a restorative and relational approach in how one works with students and colleagues, one not only builds relationships, but role models a way of being that can increase knowledge and understanding of RJ in the PSI environment.

The challenge then becomes having the locus of RJ rooted within individuals. Therefore, individuals doing this work must also educate their PSI about Restorative Justice, and advocate for restorative approaches in response to harms. By championing this approach in response to harms, systemic change can happen one person and one case at a time; and, contribute to developing and supporting a sustainable institutional culture rooted in the values of living restoratively.

### **A Relational University**

Again, at its core, RJ is about relationships (Llewellyn, 2018; Zehr, 2015). Llewellyn (2018) described restorative justice as a relational approach to justice:

Relationship matters to the way we understand justice and the issues at stake, as well as how we respond. This relational view extends beyond interpersonal relationships to relations at the level of groups, of institutions, of systems, and of society. (p. 3)

PSIs are communities and relationships are an integral part of community. If we agree the primary role of a PSI is to educate, then restorative responses to harms may satisfy the goals of education and student development while simultaneously responding to student needs and strengthening the campus community (Kaplan, 2017; McMahon et al., 2018).

The question then becomes, how is a relational university fostered? Pointer (2017) posited that beyond using restorative approaches to reactively respond to wrong-doing, a relational university is fostered when the experience of connection that is present in such approaches are experienced proactively – and not only as a response to an incident. For example circle processes, which can be used as a restorative response to an incident, can also be regularly used in many facets of university life. Team meetings between colleagues can be conducted as a circle as can classroom discussions. With regards to circle processes, Pranis (2005) described “the value framework is the same for all Circles. Circles assume a universal human wish to be connected to others in a good way” (p. 24). Building on the idea of peace circles, a StudyCircle Model of Restorative Communication promoted resolving conflict among student peers restoratively (Bussu et al., 2018). Similarly, Giles-Mitson (2021) found that Sustained Restorative Dialogue showed promise as a way to address cultural norms regarding campus sexual harm. These are examples of how various RJ Practices are used proactively rather than reactively to change culture.

Within my role in my own PSI I am striving to foster a relational university. I have supported my team in engaging in extensive learning about RJ and our office utilizes RJ Practices in addressing situations and we continue to evolve and enhance our practice when incidents are referred to us. Consequently, our small department is becoming a role model at our institution in this approach. Moreover, I partnered with a colleague to launch the Restorative



Justice – Post-Secondary Collective (RJ-PSEC) in British Columbia in June 2020. This is the first collective we know of that is specific to PSI's in Canada. We put a call out to our contacts inviting those interested in RJ, regardless of whether faculty or administration or staff, to gather. Representatives in various departments and disciplines from up to 18 BC institutions now regularly meet about 3-4 times per year to explore what RJ philosophy and practice is already occurring at each institution, what the hope is for the future of RJ at each institution and what needs a group like this could address in expanding RJ at PSIs. Sub-groups called 'Restorative Justice Principles in Academic Integrity' and 'Restorative Justice Responses to Sexualized Violence and Misconduct' were also formed. RJ-PSEC's work to date has culminated in a *WordPress Site* (Restorative Justice & Post-Secondary Collective, n.d.) which serves as a centralized national repository for RJ information and resources specifically focused on the Post Secondary environment.

An off-shoot of RJ-PSEC, we also brought together like-minded colleagues interested in RJ within our own institution to form the RJ-KPU group in November 2020. The purpose of this group mirrors RJ-PSEC; to connect, support and share with each other. This group developed the *RJ-Inventory-within-the-Post-Secondary Environment tool* (RJ-KPU, n.d.) which is designed to introduce RJ principles and guide conversation within departments that are interested in enhancing their own restorative and relational work. We are learning that restorative and relational practices are not new – what is new is viewing the work already being done from this lens; identifying it as such and then actively working to expand on working in this way. This strategy of forming collectives of RJ enthusiasts is intended to support one another in championing RJ within our own institution and ultimately shifting the locus of RJ from being rooted within the individual and expanding it to the broader campus community.

## **Additional Recommendations to Counter the Challenges of RJ**

In addition to the earlier recommendations of making self-commitments to continuous learning and living restoratively; and, leveraging the support, energy and creativity of banding together with like-minded individuals; my other recommendations include breaking down what may seem to be an overwhelming prospect into manageable chunks. If the institution's policy and procedures do not have language that allows for RJ Practices then it may be difficult to offer this as an option. Having language in policy and procedure that RJ Processes are an option makes explicit and transparent that this approach is supported by the institution. It is an important signal about an institutional culture of responding relationally and restoratively to community harms. Start to advocate for this language in policy.

When incidents are referred, think about them from the perspective of the six guiding questions (Zehr, 2015):

1. Who was harmed?
2. What are their needs?
3. What obligations does this create and who is responsible to meet these?
4. What are the underlying causes?
5. Who else are stakeholders?
6. How do we involve those stakeholders?

Thinking about an incident from this perspective can guide the response. Use these guiding questions to frame, summarize and communicate about an incident. Let this language permeate the emails sent and letters written. Remember the RJ Continuum (Zehr, 2015) and the Sanctioning Pyramid (Karp, 2015) as this kind of flexibility empowers one to adjust to the uniqueness of each situation while having the confidence that the traditional administrative

process is still there to turn to should the use of RJ Practices not be a good fit or is not working as hoped. Consider partnering with external RJ programs to handle more complex cases that may extend beyond the institution's capacity. Be realistic about current skill levels and resource limitations and start small. Lastly, do not ignore self-care. This is time-intensive and emotionally demanding work. Endeavour to also be restorative with oneself in order to be so for others.

### **Conclusion**

I set out to discover whether there is data to support the effective use of RJ Practices in addressing incidences of Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Violence in PSIs; effective in terms of victim/survivor satisfaction and fostering culture change. What I learned is there is a critical knowledge gap in this area likely due to this being an emergent area of interest in the PSI setting. This emergent need derived as a result of legislation being enacted requiring PSIs to respond to such incidents. Based on my review of the literature I argued that, to date, the focus has been on building a persuasive case for RJ to be incorporated as an option in how PSIs respond to Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Violence. Furthermore, within the last five years, the literature has expanded to provide guidance on how to do RJ in the PSI setting specific to incidents of this nature. What we don't know is whether PSIs are incorporating RJ Practices as a response to Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Violence, how often, in what circumstances, and the outcomes if and when they do. My call to action is for PSIs that implement RJ Practices to do so with evaluation in mind and for researchers to conduct studies in this area. Finally, I proposed recommendations that may address some of the challenges of implementing RJ Practices. My sincere hope is to inspire interest in and a passion for working restoratively and relationally because I firmly believe that positive change can start with just one person.

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