

When we started on this pillar, I did not know what to expect because I have never heard of restorative justice before we started this pillar. When I thought about the term justice my mind would immediately turn to thinking about justice when it comes to the court room and giving criminals a certain amount of time whether that be life imprisonment or just a couple years of imprisonment depending on the severity of the crime and that would be the end of that. With the pillar of restorative justice though I realized that there can be more that can come from giving someone justice than just giving them a lifetime of imprisonment.

They can instead be giving the chance to redeem themselves and pay for their actions in a different way. When we watched the video on the prisoner who broke into another man's home and how he is going through restorative justice it opened my eyes because that was the first time, I saw any sort of process that gives criminals a second chance. It was also interesting to see how each individual reacted at first the homeowner and the intruder. The intruder's first thoughts when going to sit down and have a conversation with the homeowner was filled with negative outcomes. He was thinking about how he does not want to be doing this he is just going to try to butter up the homeowner and talk his way out of the meeting. However, he reluctantly went to the meeting and sat down with the homeowner, and it started out how one would expect the intruder tries to talk his way out saying sentences like "it has been a while since we last have seen each other". This caused the homeowner to start yelling at the intruder, and this would trigger something inside him to feel guilty about what he did, and he started to feel sorry that he wish he did not have to do that. However, he had to because he had to provide for himself, but he was selfish in his actions and for the first time he is finding his actions wrong, so he wants to try to fix it. When the homeowner saw these feelings start to pour from his home's intruder he calmed down and felt guilty for yelling and screaming at him, but he could not help it because he just became so enraged that he couldn't help but express his emotions.

Once this feeling of guilt took over everyone their conversations became more civilized, and the intruder was telling the homeowner why he did what he did, and that he feels guilty about it and he knows

that he can never take back that action that he did, but what he can do is try to do his best to put things right. It was interesting to see how little remorse the criminal had before they walked into the room, but then the good person that was in him broke out once he heard the feelings of the homeowner, and those are feelings that he caused. It makes me think about how if every single criminal should be given the chance to go through restorative justice program because what about the criminals that are serial killers, and murderers or even criminals who have kidnapped people whether they are adults or children. Why should these types of criminals get the chance to redeem themselves after what they did to the innocent people of the world. What rules or guidelines are they going to have to put down to make sure that they are truly trying to change, and not just sneak there way into getting time off their sentence to get out of prison earlier so they can get back to doing what they were thrown in prison for.

The fact of that matter is, restorative justice does not care what they did. It is in place to give everybody a chance to repair the damage they done, and to come out of it a better human. One could even come out of it and want to go back into the restorative justice program because they want to help others or to spread the practice of restorative justice to more prisons or juvenile detentions centers. Restorative justice does not have to just pertain to prisons, it can also be used in school systems. Like In the video example we watched we on the restorative justice system in action at Sullivan high school showed how the principles, staff, and teachers all collaborated to figure out why their students were not showing signs of improvement when they would be getting either suspended or some other types of negative punishments. It was because the problem was never being solved it was instead just being shoved off to the side without taking time to come up with a solution. However, now teachers, principals, and other staff are taking the time to keep their students in class and give them a chance to talk it out with them, so they can see how their students are really feeling. I feel like this is very similar to our circle of process that we go through during our class because we can tell our emotions out loud without being afraid of what might happen. We can just freely speak our minds to get everything that is weighing heavy on our chest off so we can lighten the burden of being a stressed college student. This should be common in

many schools starting off in high school because that is when students start to feel the pressure from school.

An article that we read titled “From Cop to Servant: Paying Penance to the Needy” is about a veteran cop who had a change of heart while he was serving. He stated that when he took the oath of a cop to protect and serve all the citizens in his city he found that he was not completing this task because he would go to arrest someone, and then they would be in jail for a few years. After that they would get released and roaming around the city again endangering the citizens. “They were not being rehabilitated, they were not getting better, it wouldn’t be long before they re-offended and the cycle would continue.”, said retired policeman Thaddeus Hicks. So because of that he has turned his efforts to the restorative justice program where he sees that criminals are now held accountable by their actions along with the positive influence that families and the communities around can have on them.

The restorative justice pillar was eye opening to me in the sense that it showed me a new way we can be dealing with criminals that have made a mistake. It accomplishes this by giving them a chance to hold themselves accountable for their actions and try to better themselves in the long run coming away from it. I feel like it is a good thing to have people in everyday life do as well by using the circle of process because it will aid them in their journey by letting them vent of anger, sadness, stress, and many other emotions that we humans have built up within ourselves.