

Animal Victims and Restorative Justice

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Disclaimers

There may be some mildly graphic images and/or content

I am not a Restorative Justice Practitioner

Scope

Overview of Restorative Justice



Roadmap

- Define restorative justice
- Discuss the ideas and origins behind restorative justice
- Why intervening in crimes against animals is so important
- What restorative justice could look like in animal crimes
- The potential impact of restorative justice on animal victims



What is Restorative Justice?

- Different definitions, especially based on the context it's used (ex: how it's defined/used in a school setting may be different than how it's defined/used in the criminal justice system)
- Within the same context, definitions may also differ (I know, very confusing!)
- *Restorative justice is a process where offenders take responsibility for their actions, understand the harm they have caused to the victim, repair the damage caused, and—as much as possible—restore the well-being of the victim. This is all done while centering the victim's experiences and pain.*



Restorative Justice: A Brief History

- Restorative justice isn't a new concept. It's been around for many years!
- In many cultures, it continues to be the dominant form of conflict resolution
- Typically, we see it used in the juvenile court system



Ideas Behind Restorative Justice

- Accountability
- Providing opportunities for dialogue
- Encouraging collaboration
- Addressing harm
- Reducing recidivism



Some Goals of Restorative Justice

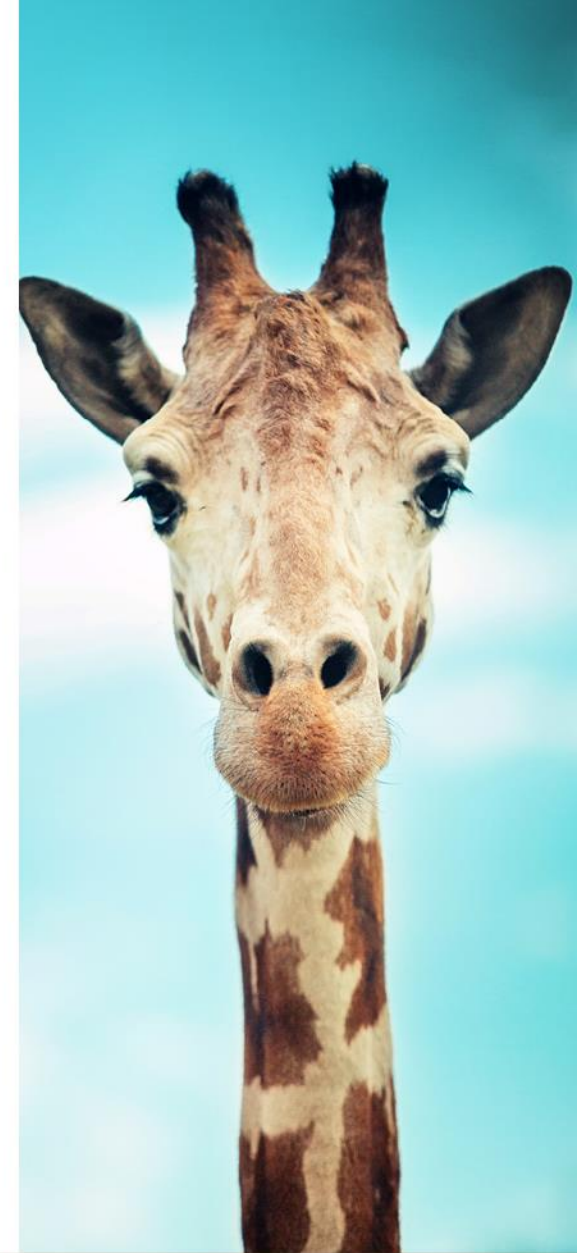
- Accountability
- Understanding the harm caused
- Rehabilitation
- Reducing recidivism



Restorative Justice Models

What does it look like?

- Three models are used most frequently (again, there may be other models)
 - Victim-Offender Dialogues
 - Family Group Conferences
 - Talking Circles
- Some restorative justice programs pull different parts from these models
- Whichever model is used, all develop a plan that focuses on ways to repair harm, increase rehabilitation, and prevent recidivism
- Typically, the victim has final say in the plan





Why Intervening in Animal Maltreatment is Important

- Often, underlying issues need to be addressed
- Likely not the only deviant behavior occurring
- Crimes against animals are serious
- Animals deserve to be recognized as victims





Important to note:

- Restorative justice may not be appropriate in every case or for every offender
- No two cases are the same



Important to note:

- Restorative justice may not translate perfectly – it won't be without its challenges
- It's imperative that the animal victim not be re-victimized



Case Example

What could restorative justice look like in animal crimes?



Not based on an actual case



Potential Impacts for Animals

- Animals = victims
- Their suffering and pain are recognized



Additional Resources

- [*Animals as Crime Victims: Development of a New Legal Status*](#)
- [*Psychology and Sentencing: Mental Health Evaluations for Animal Cruelty Offenders*](#) (Animal Legal Defense Fund Webinar)
- *The Little Book of Restorative Justice* by Howard Zehr
- *Changing Lenses: Restorative Justice for Our Times* by Howard Zehr



Thank you!

For more information, please
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