

A Restorative Response to Terrorism

Friends from across the globe were welcomed in Portland, Oregon last October for VOMA's 18th annual International Training Institute and Conference. Over 300 colleagues participated in 20 trainings and 33 workshops. Also, over the course of three days in four sessions involving approximately 50 participants, the following draft document was created....

Whereas terrorism is...

Intentionally and knowingly hurting non-combatants for the purpose of creating fear and acting outside a set of acceptable "rules" society holds.

And the root causes of terrorism are...

Grounded in a history of violence and war and based on social and economic oppression, injustice, and feelings that a set of double-standards are applied. Facilitated by opportunity and access to weapons and information on how to acquire them. Nurtured when individual or group causes are marginalized, discounted and people aren't heard.

And its perpetrators/offenders are...

Anybody who has a strong sense of passion for the political statement they are trying to make and believes that nothing else will work. Making a symbolic statement that is an expression of their life story. The person or persons that cross the line by escalating to physical violence.

And its victims are...

Anybody who has been made vulnerable to attack or has been made fearful of attack. People who can later become perpetrators.

The similarities between terrorism and interpersonal crime are...

They both cause or instill fear. They both provoke a response of retribution. There is community interest in resolution.

The differences are...

Terrorism is not the end but the means to a goal. Terrorism has a more global political, religious, economic, or ideological purpose.

VOMA believes...

People have a right to be safe.

→ All people are equally valuable and worthy of respect.

Community is created through person to person relationships and we must work locally to build global responses.

→ Acts of terrorism shouldn't be dealt with in isolation and that they reflect a component of a cycle of violence.

Solutions generated from restorative justice practices evolve from the parties, cannot be imposed, and that each party involved has a piece of the answer.

Restorative justice calls on and evokes the best of human ideals and values.

→ It inspires us to evolve into better human beings and gain a broader understanding of each others' histories, values, and beliefs.

Please Note

This is a living document — collaboratively generated by VOMA's membership — and today, every bit as timely as in October.

Your responses to this draft document are important, as they inform and guide us in VOMA's continuing work.

→ *Share your thoughts by e-mail to voma@voma.org*

Thank You!

VOMA will...

Encourage discussion and diversity of opinion.

→ Listen to our international members.

Actively support victims and communities in their healing processes.

Advocate that restorative justice practices be used for resolution of hate and bias crimes.

→ Advocate for restorative justice legislation at all levels of government.

On a global level, actively educate citizens and governments on restorative justice practices and principles.

Work to create a forum and the space for bringing globally affected parties together.

→ Connect our terrorism experience to other country's successes and failures in addressing terrorism.

Learn from other countries experiences in what works in eliminating root causes of terrorism.

Support international efforts to identify an impartial international authority to facilitate restorative justice practices and principles.

Book Review

continued from Page 6

Along with descriptions of historical antecedents and common concerns, each of these eight chapters provides concrete

theoretical discussion of restorative justice and victim offender mediation. Some have also done a good job of