

re: accountability

12:05p EST on Sunday, 20-July-2025

anonymous anonymous at the diamond

anonymous anonymous is a mutual help support group for all folks... this group is to hold space for the community after the police violence on 7/11 in Meadville... we will share and support one another and discuss the concept of accountability.

you can learn more about anonymous anonymous online at: doublea.how

opening ~10 mins or so

- **welcome**
- **moment of silence**
- **we version of serenity prayer - if you choose**
 - grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference.
- **share-in - brief ~ 30 secs**
 - name
 - pronouns perhaps
 - description that resonates with you (simply *human* works)
 - one (1) word about how you feel
- **share more**
 - anything more you would like to share?
- **reading - anonymity & respect**

meeting ~45 mins or so

- **words**
- **article ~ What are... punitive, restorative, and transformative justice? by Brendan Birth**

closing ~5 mins or so

- **share-out**
 - same as share-in above
- **moment of silence**
- **serenity prayer - if you choose**
 - grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

some notes

- we meet for about an hour
- one person talks at a time
- please avoid cross-talk (directly addressing another person in the circle)
- facilitator(s) may keep things moving - there may be pauses and thats okay
- be mindful of shares - in content, length, language
- consider the six principles of being trauma-informed when sharing and caring in this space: safety, trustworthiness & transparency, empowerment, voice & choice, peer support, collaboration & mutuality, cultural humility

words

1. "The most difficult and urgent challenge today is that of creatively exploring new terrains of justice where the prison no longer serves as our major anchor." Angela Davis
2. "Individual accountability is not a substitute for systemic change." Jamie Arpin-Ricci
3. "The existing criminal justice model poses [three] main questions in the face of social harm: Who did it? How can we punish them? And increasingly, how can we make money from it? Creating safe and healthy communities requires a different set of questions: Who was harmed? How can we facilitate healing? How can we prevent such harm in the future?" S. Lamble
4. "Relationships are treated like Dixie cups. They are the same. They are disposable. If it does not work, drop it, throw it away, get another. Committed bonds (including marriage) cannot last when this is the prevailing logic. Most of us are unclear about what to do to protect and strengthen caring bonds when our self-centered needs are not being met." bell hooks

What are... punitive, restorative, and transformative justice? *by Brendan Birth*

For quite some time, I've heard discussions about the differences between punitive and restorative justice. However, while starting to do research on a "what is" post comparing the two, I discovered yet another type of justice that is getting talked about more: transformative justice.

All that being said, what are punitive, restorative, and transformative justice?

In summary:

- *Punitive justice* focuses on punishing the wrongdoer for the action that is wrong.
- *Restorative justice* focuses on repairing the harm of the crime instead of taking retribution.
- *Transformative justice* focuses on reforming or overhauling systems that played a part in the wrongdoing in the first place.

The difference between these three approaches to justice is stark yet important, because the differing approaches mean differing attitudes towards how various crimes and criminals are treated.

To illustrate this, I will use a hypothetical example: a kid who was bullied in a schoolyard and responded back by punching the bully. The punitive justice approach to this would involve the person who punched getting punished for the punch, as well as the bully getting punished for the bullying. For the same sort of situation, the restorative justice approach might involve a meeting in the school office involving the kids (and possibly their parents) to discuss where the bullying stemmed from, how it resulted in the punch, and how both can be addressed. A transformative justice approach in this sort of situation would involve a schoolwide (or districtwide) review of school bullying policies so as to make sure there are stronger anti-bullying protections, anti-bullying education, and making it easier for someone who gets bullied to bring it to the attention of a teacher or school staff person.

Personally, I am a fan of getting to the root cause of a problem and addressing it—as such, my approach of preference, if I had to choose one, would be transformative justice, whenever possible. Unfortunately, the will to do the sort of transformative justice required to address certain crimes is often lacking, therefore resulting in large-scale transformative justice sometimes being out of reach.

Restorative justice fails to bring that systemic transformative change, yet has become popular due to its being a way of (in some cases with the criminal justice system in the United States) addressing the issue without contributing to mass incarceration. It is the type of justice that allows for low-level drug offenders to go into treatment for drug rehab instead of entering prison without that rehab. On a related note, it must be said that transformative justice, in some cases, can get to the root cause of certain issues an individual may have, even if it doesn't get to root systemic issues.

Punitive justice, on the other hand, is the makeup of a lot of punishment in the American criminal justice system. And, at times, the criminal justice system is critiqued for being overly punitive, like in cases where criminals end up with long prison sentences for the aforementioned low-level drug offenses. Some believe that such bruising punishments can act as a deterrent to other people, yet at the same time, there are at least some types of crimes where it must be questioned whether a punitive approach is really the wisest one.