

Case Study: Restorative Justice

Preparing to meet

Bob and his friends assaulted two men walking home. Bob was 18 years old at the time of the offence and received a prison sentence for actual bodily harm.

The assaulted men, Scott and Peter, wanted to meet with Bob and explain the impact of the offence on their lives. They wanted to know what the offender had learnt from the experience and hoped that if Bob heard what they had to say, he might change. Scott made several enquiries about restorative justice and he was referred to Calm Mediation by the Police.

The RJ facilitators had two preparation meetings with Scott and Peter, to hear how they had been affected by the offence and to explain how restorative justice works. Two preparation meetings also took place with Bob, at the prison, to clarify who was requesting to meet with him and discuss what happened on the night of the offence. Bob agreed to meet both the victims and a restorative conference took place 10 months after the referral.

The Restorative Conference

The Restorative Conference was attended by Scott, Peter, Bob and Bob's supporter, who was a prison volunteer. The meeting was run by two Calm Mediation facilitators, in the Prison.

Scott and Peter got the opportunity to be heard. There was an honest discussion about what happened on the night of the offence. Scott and Peter asked Bob what could stop him from re-offending, and about his plans after he was released from prison. They hoped he wouldn't assault other people. Scott and Peter said to Bob that he could make a fresh start in life, if he chose, and have a brighter future.

Bob said that he was truly sorry for hurting them, and that they had done nothing to provoke the attack. Bob answered all Scott and Peter's questions and spoke about his plans to work in the family business after his release. He was going to make several changes in his life and did not want to return to prison. He told Scott and Peter that meeting them had made a big impact on him, much more so than some of the courses he had done in prison.

(Participants names have been changed.)