

ARROWSMITH COMMUNITY JUSTICE SOCIETY

Conference Models

Community Conference Model



Adopted: 14 Oct 2014
Revised 11 Jan 2018

Community Conferencing Referral Requirement

Offences referred include but are not limited to: theft, possession of stolen property, fraud, causing a disturbance and mischief.

Offenders of any age may be considered. Only those who admit to and accept responsibility for the offence and show a willingness to repair the harm will be considered suitable.

Most referrals come from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) to the Arrowsmith Community Justice Society (ACJS) program coordinator, but some may come from Crown Counsel if deemed suitable for the program.

Relationship between ACJS & the RCMP:

The RCMP is the referral agent used by the ACJS. There is an appointed liaison person that acts as an advisor to the Arrowsmith Community Justice Society. The RCMP does not oversee what ACJS does. ACJS cooperates with, and works independently from, the RCMP. The RCMP will refer a case to us, but it is ultimately the decision of the ACJS whether the case is appropriate or not.

The RCMP Investigating Officer Protocol

1. Attends the complaint
2. Gathers evidence
3. Seeks victim approval for going to the ACJS Program
4. Meets the offender and/or parents to explain the restorative justice process vs. the court system and leaves a participation form to be completed and returned.
5. Forwards detailed referral report to the ACJS program coordinator
6. Attends the community conference when requested.

The Referral Process

The RCMP investigate an incident. The offender(s) admit responsibility and agree to the community conference process. The investigating officer sends to the ACJS Program coordinator the incident file and makes arrangements for the signed "Agreement to Participate" form to be returned.

The Arrowsmith Community Justice program coordinator takes responsibility for action. If the case is not accepted refer to the appeal process.¹

¹ ACJS Appeal Policy

The Community Conference Process:

The coordinator identifies a team of trained volunteer facilitators. This team determines roles and responsibilities to best meet the needs of those involved. One designated to liaise with the coordinator. The conference team organizes the community conference.

In cases having a youth, aged 17 or under, a trained mentor will be appointed to the conference team.

Pre-Conference:

Conference Team Facilitator(s):

- Contact the victim to arrange a pre-conference meeting at which they:
 - review the conferencing process,
 - hear the victim's recitation of the incident,
 - encourage the victim to participate in the conference along with appropriate support (e.g. parents, relatives, close friend(s), etc)
- Contact the offender to arrange a pre-conference meeting at which they:
 - review the conferencing process
 - hear the offender's recitation of the incident,
 - remind the offender that (s)he may leave at any time but should (s)he decide to depart, the matter will be returned to the referral agent.
 - introduce the mentor role in the process.
- In cases, where the presence of the referral agent is requested, receive the officer's schedule of availability to attend the conference from the program coordinator.
- In consultation with the ACJS program coordinator and all participants, determine what community members, if any, should be invited to attend the conference. Person(s) agreed upon receive an invitation.
- Notify all participants of the conference date/time/place.

Conference Team Mentor:

- Will be contacted after pre-conference by team facilitator and advised of details of case and pre-conference.
- Meet with clients as arranged.
- Between the initial meeting with the family and the conference, the mentor will:
 - Provide guidance and encouragement to family
 - Provide information on the restorative justice process and prepare them for what to expect
 - Have knowledge on the "Rights of Youth"
 - If requested, inform the family on services available. (Contact coordinator to handle this).

Community Conference:

The community conference, facilitated by the designated member(s), evolves approximately as follows:

- Prepare seating plan prior to the conference,
- Introduce participants and review the process,
- The offender is asked to describe the incident, including relevant circumstances.
- In turn, the victim(s) (and supporters), community members, the offender (and supporters), the RCMP officer, etc are asked to describe the incident and how it affected them.
- When all participants have had a chance to speak, the facilitator(s) initiate the discussion that leads to the resolution agreement.
- When agreement is reached, the facilitator(s) restates the agreement for clarification and confirmation.
- The facilitator(s) brings closure to the conference, which includes the opportunity for any last words and an invitation to all involved to stay behind for refreshments.
- A Resolution Agreement is completed at the conference and signed by, and distributed to, the appropriate parties.

Post-Conference:

Team member(s) are designated to follow up with participants after the conference. If a mentor was appointed, they will assist the offender to complete their resolution agreement through guidance, encouragement & support.

Designated team member(s):

- Act as a positive role model for the offender
- Liaise with victim and other participants as deemed appropriate.
- Maintain contact with the offender at least through the completion of the "Resolution Agreement".
- When requested make the offender aware of appropriate community resources.
- Team members to be debriefed
- Report to the coordinator at completion of resolution