After a crime, a victim’s life is forever changed regardless of the type of crime that occurred. Often our responses to these events are to seek revenge or make the other person pay for their actions in an attempt to find justice. Rarely do those attempts meet our needs for closure or peace of mind. Another choice to these feelings is a restorative approach to justice that allows both victims and offenders a chance to hear each other out.

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| Court Justice | Restorative Justice/Mediation |
| Punitive, state-centered, impersonal | Victim centered, personal and seeks repair harm |
| Discourages offender Empathy and Responsibility | Connect offenders with the harm of their actions and helps them to take responsibility for the harm |
| Focused on punishing the offender | Focused on victim and healing |
| What laws were broken? | Who has been harmed by this event? |
| Crime is essentially a violation of the law and the state is the victim | Crime is essentially a violation of (harm to) people and relationships. Such violations result in obligations. |
| The aim of justice is to establish blame (guilt) and administer pain (punishment) | The aim of justice is to identify obligations and to promote restoration and/or healing |
| The process of justice is a conflict between adversaries in which offender is pitted against state, and rules and intentions outweigh outcomes. | The process of justice involves victims, offenders, and community in an effort to identify obligations and solutions, maximizing the exchange of information (dialogue, mutual agreement) between them. |
| Who did it? | What are the needs of all involved? |

