

Chester County Juvenile Probation

Balance and Restorative Justice

What is Balanced and Restorative Justice?

The Chester County Juvenile Probation Office operates on the principles of *Balanced and Restorative Justice*. Restorative Justice emphasizes repairing the harm done to victims and communities. Offenders become accountable to victims and the community by assuming responsibility for their actions and repairing the harm they caused. Juveniles should leave the juvenile justice system with skills that will enable them to become productive members of the community and avoid further contact with law enforcement. While addressing these goals, the juvenile justice system ensures that communities are safe by supervising juvenile offenders according to the juvenile's level of risk for re-offending. The "balanced approach" requires that the juvenile justice system give balanced attention to juvenile offenders, crime victims and the community.

The Balanced and Restorative Justice model includes:

Accountability - When a crime is committed a loss occurs. The purpose of **Accountability** is to restore the losses suffered by the victim and the community. The role of the Juvenile Justice System is to support restorative efforts.

Community Protection - **Community Protection** is defined by the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC) as "a state of affairs in which citizens live in peace, relative harmony, and mutual respect, and citizens and community groups feel empowered to prevent and control crime." A balanced approach is built on community involvement, where citizens play an active role in the prevention and control of juvenile crime.

Competency Development - **Competency** is defined by JCJC as "the capacity to do something well that others value." A balanced approach increases the ability of juvenile offenders to contribute productively to their communities, and the communities' acceptance of them. Youth are engaged in productive activities involving work, community service, and community activity. They are helped in developing anger management, decision-making, and conflict resolution skills. This leads them to a better sense of belonging, usefulness, independence, and self-control.

Who is involved in Balanced and Restorative Justice?

The four key players involved; the offender, the victim, the community and the Juvenile Justice System.

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What the goals of Balanced and Restorative Justice?

Accountability

- ❖ Offenders learn that crime has consequences.
- ❖ Victims' losses are restored to the extent possible.
- ❖ Victims regard the Juvenile Justice System as fair and responsive to their needs.

Community Protection

- ❖ The community is actively involved in prevention and intervention activities.
- ❖ Offenders are subject to a level of supervision consistent with the risks they present.
- ❖ Recidivism is reduced, especially while the offender is under the supervision of the Juvenile Justice System.
- ❖ Offenders are involved in structured, productive activities that tend to increase citizens' feelings of safety and confidence.
- ❖ Offenders develop the internal controls necessary to remain crime-free.
- ❖ The most serious or chronic offenders are incapacitated.

Competency Development

- ❖ Offenders develop important life skills.
- ❖ Offenders develop increased sense of self-esteem and worth.
- ❖ Offenders have positive interactions with adult role models.
- ❖ Offenders perform work valued by the community.