

STARS Project

Newsletter Issue 1



STARS: Striving Towards A Restorative Society

SPRING – SUMMER 2020

We are excited to bring you to the first issue of the STARS project newsletter to give readers an overview of all the goings-on over the past 6 months; this includes some programme highlights, updates and news. Keep an eye out for our next edition which will be released in the New Year.



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CRJI and NIA are both government accredited restorative projects who work under the guidelines of an agreed protocol. CRJI and NIA are grassroots organisations who advocate restorative justice responses as a mechanism for peacebuilding and conflict transformation. Both charities have been working within local communities for over 20 years and offer a wide range of restorative services by trained specialised practitioners for further information visit our websites:

<https://www.crjiireland.org/>

<http://www.alternativesrj.org/>

All our work is underpinned by high standards of practice deriving from extensive research and evaluation, and has enabled us to help individuals to address harm, support reparation and community reintegration, assist in the development of meaningful relationships between the wider community and the criminal justice system and aid transformational change.



What is Restorative Justice?

Restorative justice offers a victim the opportunity to communicate with a perpetrator. This provides a space for victims to seek answers through questioning, explaining how the crime has affected them and their families, as well as receiving assurance from the offender that they have learned from their mistakes.

Creating a safe environment to promote conversation and highlight grievances helps the victim process the actions of an event and help process the harm that has occurred. Restorative justice also provides an opportunity for the wrong doer to reflect on the impact of their crime or action which leads to a significant drop in the potential of the individual reoffending.

Why Does Restorative Justice Work?

Restorative Justice is an integral part of constructive and safe communication between victims and perpetrators of crime. Giving victims an opportunity to seek answers for events that have caused them trauma is an important part of many individual's healing process. In the traditional criminal justice system, many victims feel contempt and confusion over how their own trauma has been handled. Restorative justice provides a much needed space for them to have their voices heard.

The impact of restorative justice isn't just important for victims but is crucial for offenders as well. They are confronted with the volume of their actions and allow them to understand the consequences of their crimes. Restorative justice provides closure, lessens Post Traumatic Stress symptoms in victims, reduces repeat offending, among many other positive factors.



CRJI Central @CRJICentral · 12 Jun

Weekend challenge set for hub families to prepare a cooked meal with ingredients provided for under £5 to win a stay at home pamper pack!! All delivered by our Outer West Belfast Family Support Worker @drjohntopping @CommunitiesNI @BelfastTrust



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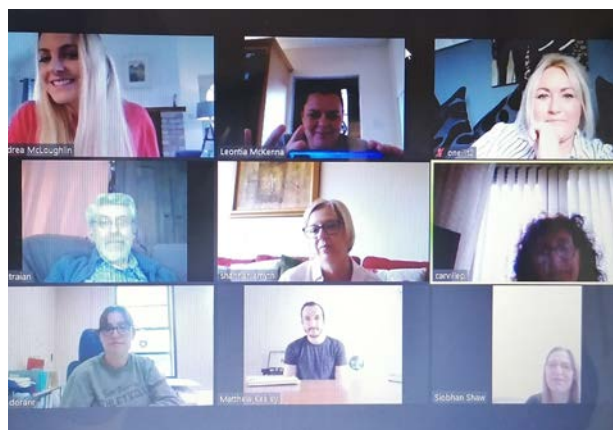
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At a time when I felt most isolated and most worried, CRJI were there and really helped

How has COVID-19 Impacted Restorative Justice?

THE COVID-19 pandemic has been detrimental for most individuals, businesses, and communities in the North of Ireland. It has been particularly taxing on the most vulnerable in society who have been left to struggle fiscally, mentally, and physically with the loss of work and lack of clarity on laws surrounding COVID-19 measures. Despite this, CRJI has been delivering consistent and unwavering support to local communities and developing innovative and creative ways to service the growing needs of the most vulnerable in society. Some of these responses have been attained through the hard work and dedication of the staff and volunteers of CRJI serving their communities with the help of other equally committed organisations.



Some of the incredible work that this group of individuals have contributed towards has been the production and distribution of food parcels, creating and dispensing PPE, providing emotional and practical support to those in need, as well as arranging medication drop offs. Regardless of the terrible impact of COVID-19, CRJI has continued to serve the community.

STARS is funded by TEO and managed by Co-operation Ireland. STARS is delivered regionally in the following areas:

• **Carrick and Larne**

(with a focus on Northland & Castlemara and Antiville & Kilwaughter)

• **Derry/ Londonderry**

(with a focus on Brandywell & Creggan)

• **North Down**

(with a focus on Kilcooley & Rathgill)

• **Lurgan/ Craigavon**

(with a focus on Drumgask & Kilwilkie)

• **East Belfast**

(with a focus on The Mount & Ballymacarrett)

• **North Belfast**

(with a focus on New Lodge & Greater Ardoyne)

• **Shankill**

(with a focus on Upper & Lower including Woodvale)

• **West Belfast**

(with a focus on Lower Falls, Twinbrook, Poleglass, Upper Springfield, Turf Lodge & Ballymurphy)

The STARS initiative aims to build the capacity of individuals and groups to affect positive change for themselves and their communities, through raising awareness of restorative practices and interventions.

STARS offers 1;1 mentoring support, restorative training and a programme of activities which ultimately aspires to increase the use of restorative practices within these areas.

Recruitment

CRJI and NIA have exceeded targets and engaged over 250 participants regionally from a wide range of community and statutory organisations, such as:

Old Library Trust
Dove House
Community Trust
Our Space/ Our Streets
HURT
Local residents
Cúnamh
SEARCH Youth Group
Pink Ladies
Destined
Traix and Creggan
Neighbourhood Partnership
Bogside and Brandywell Initiative
Bogside and Brandywell Health Forum
SureStart
Bytes
Connswater Homes

Ulster Tower
St Community Development Association
Youth Initiatives
Lagan Village
East Belfast Community Development Association
REACH
ACT
EBCDA
Youth Initiatives
NLCA
Shalom
Woodville Historical Society•
North Lurgan Women's Group
Education Authority
Craigavon Cowboys
Tides

PSNI
Ashton Centre
St Vincent De Paul
Bytes Project
NIACRO
Start 360
EA Youth Clubs
EWOs and Schools
North Belfast
Interface Network
Cliftonville
Community
Regeneration Forum
Mindskills Training
Lighthouse
Consensus
Impact Training
Lower Shankill
Community Association
Open Door Project - Twaddell
Ardoyne Shankill

Communities in Transition (TASCIT)
Living Hope Church
GAA / GACS
Upper Springfield
Development Trust
Glor Na Mona
Feile (Belfast)
Ark Housing
Extern
Barnardos
Simon Community
Rathgill Community Association
SeaChange
HSCT
Holywood Family Trust
The Link
Orange Order
Street Pastors



**Andrea
McLoughlin**
STARS
Coordinator

Andrea has over 12 years experience in the community youth work field and is passionate about restorative practices. She completed her Community Youth Work degree and Masters in Restorative Practice at the University of Ulster.

"I'm very excited to be part of the STARS project, I believe it is a great opportunity to widen the scope and use of restorative practices in the local communities. I'm delighted that I get to work with such a wide range of people within this role, engagement has been promising and I'm looking forward to seeing how this learning will translate and how STARS participants will begin applying a restorative approach to their work and life".

Andrea loves- spending time with family and friends, reading, travelling, films and her dogs

Favourite food- pasta

Music I like- A real eclectic mix but at the top of my list probably Lumineers



**Leontia
McKenna**
CRJI STARS Project
Lead

Leontia has been working with CRJI for almost a decade and has over 20 years experience working within the community sector. Leontia is from West Belfast, has a partner, three children and two dogs. Leontia has a range of qualifications including Level 4 Professional Certificate in Early Intervention work, Level 3 Diploma Victims, Survivors & Witnesses, Level 3 Assessor training for Early Intervention work and Level 3 Award in Understanding the Principles of Restorative Practice.

"This new role has been somewhat of a challenge; I started in the middle of the pandemic! I've definitely been pushed outside my comfort zone- for example co facilitating training, to planning and speaking on podcasts Although challenging it has been refreshing and rewarding. These experiences have given me a great sense of satisfaction and provided me professional growth"

Leontia loves: cooking, gin, films, the ocean and being near the water

Favourite foods: Sunday Roast but also love Indian and Italian dishes

Music I like- Everything! From Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen to Fleetwood Mac to Beyonce, Pink and Taylor Swift



Karen Maitland
STARS NIA
Project Lead

Karen has been involved in youth and community work for the past 15 years, starting first as a volunteer in Greater Shankill Alternatives and then as the youth support worker for East Belfast Alternatives in a paid capacity from 2007. In 2010 she began working with adult offenders referred by the Probation Board for Northern Ireland

both within a community and prison setting, working on offence and victim focused work. Currently she is the STARS Project Lead for N. I. Alternatives.

"The STARS project is a fantastic opportunity to work with communities at a grass roots level, supporting groups and individuals to develop their skills and passion in a restorative way which in turn provides a platform for more profound and sustainable change."

Karen likes: swimming, walking and being strange!!!!

Favourite film: Drop Dead Fred



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