



Healing and Justice

Experiences of healing and justice are both critical to spiritual, psychological and physical recovery from abuse—not to mention that healing and justice are core teachings and practices of Jesus. Most victims/survivors of clergy sexual abuse report that without justice, there is no healing. Yet even if one achieves some measure of justice, society’s traditional justice systems typically pass over the healing needs of victims.

Restorative Justice

Restorative Justice differs from traditional justice models in that it is victim-centered and enables all those affected by a harm to seek ways to repair the harm and restore relationships, including accountability for those responsible. Restorative Justice is rooted in the patterns of indigenous peoples around the world, but it is becoming more prevalent as traditional justice systems fall short of the needs of victims.

Restorative Justice Models

Two models are especially relevant to the needs of those seeking healing from the harm of sexual abuse and/or related hierarchical malfeasance. One is called a *Restorative Justice Conference* and is most useful when those injured seek healing regarding a shared incident of abuse and/or malfeasance.

Another is called a *Healing Circle* and is most useful when those injured do not share a common incident but seek healing regarding similar patterns of abuse and/or malfeasance.

VOTF calls its version of a Healing Circle *Broken Vessels*.