

WHAT IS THE HARM?  
USING RESTORATIVE JUSTICE TO ADDRESS ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF  
DENVER

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# WHAT WE'LL TALK ABOUT TODAY

Introduction

Student Conduct and Academic Integrity at DU

What is Restorative Justice?

Restorative Justice at DU

Applications and Illustrations

Conclusion and Questions

# ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

- Located in Denver, Colorado USA
- Private, approximately 11,000 Students (6000 graduate, 5000 undergraduate).
- Office of Student Conduct upholds the university's Honor Code
- '15-'16 Academic Year:
  - 1341 *total* cases
  - 92 *academic misconduct* cases

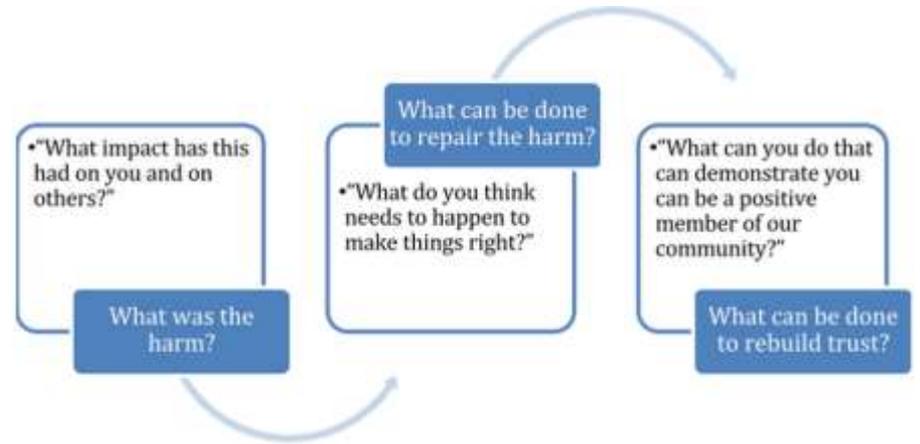


# STUDENT CONDUCT AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AT DU

- Faculty members hold initial conversations with alleged students when they suspect that a violation has occurred.
- Faculty members are then asked to file a report with Student Conduct. The faculty member determines the academic outcomes, Student Conduct determines university outcomes.
- University Outcomes can include a Warning, Probation, Deferred Suspension, Suspension or Dismissal.
- Academic Outcomes include grade or academic program outcomes.

# WHAT IS RESTORATIVE JUSTICE?

- A collaborative decision making process
- Focus on victim or harm as well as a focus on the offender
- Outcomes are intended to address impact and repair harm
- Students must accept responsibility for their actions
- Voluntary for everyone involved



# PRINCIPLES OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

- Active accountability
- Repairing harm
- Rebuilding trust
- Inclusive decision making



# A RESTORATIVE JUSTICE CONFERENCE

- Facilitated dialogue process
- Generally two facilitators
- Learn what happened from the respondent and complainant perspectives
- Identify impacts
- Identify outcomes that:
  - Address impacts
  - Restore trust in the student

# RESTORATIVE JUSTICE AT DU

- Restorative Justice conferences have occurred at DU for approximately six years.
- 16 RJ Conferences in AY 2015-2016
- Any incident where a student has taken responsibility and wants to pursue RJ is eligible for this process

# APPLYING RJ TO CASES OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

- Traditional Restorative Justice Conferences
- “Mini RJ’s” that include only the faculty member and student.
- Impacted parties can include:
  - Faculty
  - Other students
  - Family or friends
  - Members representing other communities to which the student belongs

# EXAMPLE #1: JAKE

Jake's professor noticed a submitted paper that was markedly different than previous versions, and a Turnitin score identified 30% of the paper as copied from a paper submitted the previous term. The professor confronted Jake, who denied the allegations. A report was submitted to Student Conduct. Eventually Jake accepted responsibility. He is on the golf team, and was traveling at the time the paper was due. He asked a friend of his if he could reference her paper, which he copied (and reworded parts), and submitted the paper as his own.

- Who was impacted by Jake's actions?
- In what ways?
- What can Jake do to repair the harm caused?

## EXAMPLE #2: JULIE

During an online summer biostatistics course, the professor identified two students with similar (incorrect) answers on their final exam. Students were allowed to collaborate on work up to the final exam, but not on the final exam. Both students initially denied the allegations. Julie eventually took responsibility and a report submitted to Student Conduct. Julie shared that she works approximately 50 hours a week to fund her education, and is planning to study abroad, leaving in a few weeks. Julie was extremely upset about what had happened, disappointing herself and her family.

- Who was impacted by Julie's actions?
- In what ways?
- What can Julie do to repair the harm caused?

# LESSONS LEARNED

- Restorative Justice is not a “silver bullet.” The process itself must consider a student’s own development, and attempt to meet them where they are.
- Although the rate of recidivism is low, re-violation does occur.
- Outcomes from the RJ process generally require individual initiative. Students who do not follow up on their own outcomes or commitments can ultimately further negatively impact their communities.

# SUCCESSSES

- Overall recidivism rates for RJ are lower than through the traditional process
- Feedback from students and community members who have gone through RJ have provided positive feedback on the process and their involvement
- Student outcomes (for the most part) have been well received and reviewed by community partners - hopefully fulfilling legitimate community needs.

QUESTIONS?

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