

Hello. Thank you for your time and consideration of the proposals. I apologize I cannot make it in person. I appreciate the opportunity to address the following staff questions.

With appreciation,

Lorrie Hurckes Dwyer, Executive Director, Dane County TimeBank.

Would you be sending new staff to Conference? We have 3 staff members on our restorative justice team, two Youth Court Coordinators and myself. We facilitate youth court and restorative processes at four Madison High Schools, Verona High School, and two community based sites in Madison. Our Youth Court Coordinators are young professionals who first got involved with our project as high school students participating as jurors in our youth court project. They have the unique perspective of engaging in this work as youth prior to going off to college, coming back, and beginning their careers. Through this conference, we are aiming to deepen our current team's knowledge, skills, and development. We will increase our understanding of the practice and how it's being implemented and applied in various contexts across the country. Restorative Justice is both an art and a science and is quickly a growing field. As restorative practices grow and the implementation of restorative work expands both locally and nationally, ongoing development and learning is critical. As practitioners working with youth, families, community members, school staff, initiative stakeholders, and other community partners, investing in professional development and learning opportunities ensures we continue this work using best practices and with efficacy as restorative justice initiatives continue to expand and be relied upon locally.

What new skills/information are you hoping to bring back to share with other RJ partners?

We're hoping to learn three things. 1. How others across the country are using restorative practices in a holistic way, from prevention to crisis response, in schools and in the community. We'll learn how it looks to bring everyone involved into the process so we all can be accountable to each other, heal, and move forward positively when something happens. 2. We'll learn how others are utilizing restorative practices to address racial bias and racism at an individual and systemic level, including what their processes look like and what their results have been. 3. We're hoping to learn more about challenging the power dynamics within restorative justice. Power dynamics play an important and often unacknowledged role in restorative processes. At the societal level, variables such as race, gender, age, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status interact to create explicit and implicit biases towards members of some groups. At the restorative system level, unquestioned paradigms around the roles of victims, offenders, gatekeepers, and facilitators may contribute to inequitable access and procedures. Finally, at the restorative process level, facilitation and practices that limit participation and ownership may contribute to participant disempowerment. When power dynamics within these three levels interact and influence each other, they result in less restorative processes and outcomes for all. We want to ensure we're not inadvertently mirroring and exacerbating existing power dynamics or creating new artificial power hierarchies that were not previously present through these processes and systems.