

## *What is Exploring Justice?*



**“Justice isn’t really talked about in law school.”**

Nathan Jurowski, law student and co-founder of Exploring Justice.

While justice is the basic purpose of our criminal justice system, those on opposite sides of the law often have different perceptions of justice and how it is achieved.

**What does justice look like?**

**When do crime victims/survivors feel justice is being served?**

**Do criminal justice professionals feel they are achieving justice?**

The Exploring Justice project provides a unique opportunity for law students and offenders to engage in discussion in a respectful setting and explore the concept of justice. Participants are joined at each week’s session by a guest speaker to further stimulate discussion and gain a broader perspective of justice among criminal justice professionals.

## *Who are the participants?*

### **Students**

Participation is open to currently enrolled law students attending one of Minnesota’s four premier law schools: Hamline School of Law, University of St. Thomas School of Law, William Mitchell College of Law and University of Minnesota Law School. Student participation is coordinated through the Minnesota Justice Foundation—MJF who credits all student participants with pro bono volunteer hours.

### **Offenders**

Offender participants include offenders of various crimes currently serving time in Minnesota Correctional Facilities. Offenders must meet certain criteria in order to participate:

- Six months clear of major discipline
- Mandates completed or in progress
- Accept responsibility for their crime
- Successful completion of application and interview process

### **Guest Speakers**



Each week features a guest speaker who discusses their perspective of justice. Previous guest speakers included a Victim/Witness Advocate, Prosecutor, State

Public Defender, District Court Judge, Crime Victim, Former Offender, and Restorative Justice

## *How does it work?*

Law students and offenders meet for two– three hours once a week for twelve weeks. The participants meet in a safe and secure room inside a correctional facility where the offender participants are housed. Each session is initiated by the reading of a victim’s story by one of the participants and the sessions are facilitated by two trained facilitators.

### **Circle Process**

Exploring Justice utilizes the circle process to ensure every voice is heard and to facilitate a respectful dialogue among participants. Participants are seated in a circle and a talking piece is passed from person to person. Participants are able to speak only when they hold the talking piece and are encouraged to listen deeply when others have the talking piece. Participants define the values and guidelines for their circle which provides a sense of ownership and enables a respectful environment for everyone to listen and be heard.



## Comments from past Participants

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“My understanding of the impact of crime on victims, community, society, offenders, and the offender’s family makes me think twice about what I have done to so many people.”

Offender Participant

“Having only one meaning of justice and only one way of achieving justice denigrates the human experience.” Student Participant

“The responsibility owed for the well being of one’s neighbor is something I take away from the Exploring Justice project....Being a part of the Restorative Justice project has been one of the most positive experiences that I have had in 21 years in prison.” Offender Participant

“The effects of a crime are deep and expansive, and one simple act can clearly resonate over time and space.” Student Participant



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## Exploring Justice

An opportunity for dialogue between  
offenders and law students

