

**\*\*NOTE: Do not copy and paste word for word what is said anywhere on the website unless you indicate it is a direct quote by using quotation marks and providing page numbers (or minutes if it is a webinar or paragraphs if there is no page number). Writing what they say word for word without crediting the author is plagiarism.\*\***

Satara Brown

Professor Pugh

Midterm: Social Action Report

1. Write a paragraph of the mission of the organization. Some questions to consider are: what are the organization's goals? What do they do? (1 paragraph) (8 points)
  - a. Make sure in this answer that you hyperlink to the agency/organization. ([Hidden Water](#) is a local organization that.....)

The [Restorative Justice Initiative](#) mission is to strengthen the community by focusing on healing rather than punishment. The Restorative Justice Initiative focuses on New Yorkers in ensuring that no one experiences injustice whether you are the one who "committed the crime" or are the person who experienced effects of the crime committed. The Restorative Justice Initiative looks at the community as a whole including the criminal justice system, schools and the community.

2. Pick a 1) review an archived webinar, 2) a live virtual event, 3) listen to a podcast episode (if they have one) or 4) read a resource document or report (any type of written document regarding the organization's research/advocacy, etc) and write a short paragraph summary (1 paragraph) on what it was about (8 points)
  - a. Make sure you hyperlink to the resource/webinar/podcast you listened to/reviewed/watched (E.g., I read the report entitled [Love with Accountability](#))
  - b. If you choose a report/written document:
    - i. If what you choose is 5 pages or longer, read 3-4 pages of it, and indicate which pages you read.
    - ii. Do NOT include one page factsheets (or several factsheets).

I reviewed the [Restorative Justice Panel](#) that was a diverse panel of six. The panelist ranged from criminal justice professionals, to individuals who were formally incarcerated, to a man and his wife who lost a loved one to violence. The panel was hosted by John Jay College of Criminal Justice and the Restorative Justice Initiative that focused on reimagining the justice system. The discussion was dedicated on how restorative justice should be the practice that we follow and how we view crime and restoring the community. There was an emphasis on the restorative approach to repairing harm and the process of the different circles. Circles can be used in restorative justice practice and transformative justice practices in the community, within the schools, and within the legal system. Panelist who were incarcerated expressed the benefits of healing the circle process provided them. The Kim family, who experienced trauma through the killing of Mr. Kim's father expressed how he benefited from the circle as a victim.

3. Relate what you learned from the webinar, event, podcast, or resource document or report from #2 back to course material. Make 4 separate connections. Make these connections explicit, do not expect me to know what connection you're making. Write answers in four bullet points. (16 points total, 4 points per connection)

- a. DO NOT MAKE CONNECTIONS TO THE WEBSITE IN GENERAL. The connections you make should be based on the resource you read/watched/reviewed/listened to from #2.

From what I reviewed for #2, I made several connections to class:

- Connection 1: Larry Williams connected how restorative justice is not a new practice and how these practices were used prior to colonialism in which colonialism is the ideology that one group is superior to another. This made a connection to class as we learned how the criminal justice system came about after slavery was "abolished" when, the criminal justice legally began to oppress those of color.
  - Connection 2: Larry Williams also spoke about institutional oppression and how people of color and those who are fighting for their freedom are overcharged and enter plea deals that are unjust. Larry also mentioned the few of the internalization in specific relation to the privileged, the police officers who kill people of color knowing that they will not receive the same experience within the criminal justice system as a person of color would.
  - Connection 3: Vivianne also made note of internalization and how there are individuals working within the criminal justice system and in police departments that understand the ideologies of the oppressed and privileged and want to break these barriers. She also touched on how it is important to have these discussions with these individuals the break down the current dominate structure that exists (colonialism).
  - Connection 4: Larry spoke about the importance of healing in paying reparations which we spoke about in class how victims of the Holocaust received reparations, but people of color did not receive reparations for slavery. While the criminal justice system is the new age slavery, we know of cases where individuals are awarded settlements when they are falsely incarcerated but there are so many individuals who have been incarcerated and lost so many years of their lives that do not receive reparations. Shailly spoke about how we are dehumanized and how restorative justice is a practice that humanizes everyone involved. I think these are two good points that were made because I am now changing my view of reparations and how Larry mentioned, reparations is a way to admit that racism exists and is a way to repair the harm that was committed to those who were enslaved whether through traditional slavery and/or incarceration.
4. Indicate what you thought about the webinar/podcast/resource document. Tell me what you liked, what you think could be improved, and provide some suggestions on how they could have improved it. Your suggestions could be based on the content itself, delivery or presentation. (1 paragraph) (5 points)

I liked that there was a diverse group of panelists. I really liked that there was a panelist from the District Attorney's office. This was interesting to me because it gives me hope that maybe one day our criminal justice system will transform fully to more restorative practices. It was also good

to know how the Judge in the Bronx is focused on restorative practice. I also liked how the ripple effect of harm was discussed and how importance was made that the person who committed the crime is a part of the circles that occur. I would have liked to hear more from Amary, Larry and Eli who were formally incarcerated. I think that it would have been helpful if the panelist who were formally incarcerated were provide with some speaking tips prior to the panel so that some of them could have been more concise with their responses. Not in the sense that I believe the panelist should be coached but I believe there's better way to effectively communicate their experiences.

5. Based on what you read about the organization and the resource you reviewed, how does this institute/organization frame the issue of restorative and/or transformative justice? If it is not explicitly framed, how does this organization and resource you reviewed embody RJ and/or TJ principles? (1 paragraph) (5 points)

This organization frames the issue of restorative and/or transformative justice in looking at why the crime occurred instead of looking at it from a perspective of how someone should be punished for the crime. The organization frames the issue of transformative justice in terms of the school to prison pipeline and breaking those barriers within the schools which effects the communities. By allowing youth to engage in circles and actually become circle leaders is very important in transformative justice and dismantling the practice of colonialism whereas everyone is looked at as an equal. The organization does not explicitly state that colonialism is an issue when we speak about the justice system, the practices that the organization supports (restorative and transformative justice) in improving school cultural, our perception of crime, relationships and why people commit crimes.

6. Based on what you read about the organization and the resource you reviewed, did they frame the issues of interpersonal, state violence, harm, etc. in line with the critical criminology approach we've discussed in class (e.g., power over, crimes of the powerful, global elite, etc)? If yes, how? If not, how do you know? (1 paragraph) (5 points)

Prior to the start of the panel, Hilary spoke about what restorative justice is and what restorative justice is not. I think this was important because she spoke about how restorative justice focuses on interpersonal issues of those who "commit crimes" and how individuals that commit crime have faced oppression throughout their lives and are victims themselves. Mr. Lee touched on this as well when expressing how he changed his mind frame from wanting "the book thrown" at the person who killed his father to understanding that the individual who killed his father was a victim himself in our society. Larry, spoke about state violence and the lack of accountability. Larry mentioned how attorneys (public defenders and 18B attorneys) offer their client plea deals that are unjust and how the attorneys lack the proper resources to advocate for those who are going through the criminal justice system. Larry made a good analogy of how individuals are overcharged.

7. Write a professional email as if you were trying to volunteer, get an internship, or get a referral from that organization/agency/institute (1 paragraph) (5 points)

Good morning,

My name is Satara Brown and I am a graduate student of the Criminology and Justice program at St. John's University. I also am the Founder of a non-profit organization, Rebuilding Our Children and Community Inc. I had the opportunity to listen to the Restorative Justice Panel held on October 16, 2020 and am very interested in learning of any volunteer opportunities with your organization. As a student of the Master's program and the Founder of a non-profit organization that serves at risk youth, I am interested in learning more about organizations that focus on restorative and transformative practices.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you,  
Satara Brown  
845-857-9265

8. Reflect on this assignment. Some questions to consider: Did you like learning about what this organization is doing? This assignment is also meant to show you that there are tons of think tanks, institutes, non-profit, activist, and academic organizations that are out there. Does it give you any desire to search for additional organizations for your own career interests? What was the most difficult part of this assignment and why? Do you have any suggestions on how I can improve this assignment in the future? Any other comments? (1 paragraph) (8 points)

I am very interested in the work that the Restorative Justice Initiative is doing. I am particularly interested in the work of this organization as my nonprofit has recently received gun violence prevention funding through New York State to provide programming to youth. My organization decided to take a transformative justice approach and provide circles twice a week to youth who are at risk. The work of the Restorative Justice Initiative reinforces the important work that the staff of my organization is doing and shows that these practices should be adopted more often. Hearing from panelist who were formally incarcerated really showed the power of circles any why they are needed. This panel was very inspiring and gives me the desire to search for other organizations who are doing similar work. I was happy to hear that when circles were done in schools, the schools improved. I am hopeful that this could be a practice adopted in my local school district although it may take some time for the school district to get on board. I do not think that there was anything difficult about this assignment because we were provided with the material and given specific questions to answer.