

Restorative justice is a rather unique humanistic approach which is used to manage the outcomes of a crime. It has been defined as an approach where the ‘parties themselves and the community [are] generally in an active relationship with statutory agencies’.<sup>1</sup> Compared with the traditional justice system where the law and the judge’s decision in a case determines the outcome and punishment for the offender, restorative justice centres on the idea of using mediation techniques. Both the victim and the offender are much more active in working through the problem together in an informal way through direct or indirect mediation with the help of a well trained mediator who ensures that the process runs smoothly. Despite the democratic nature of the system, the outcome itself can vary for a range of reasons as certain issues may arise during the process. This essay will evaluate the efficacy of Restorative Justice for both victims and offenders.

Regarding the victim, the Restorative Justice system first attempts to prioritise the victim’s need as part of its main goal. This may not be only in terms of money settlement for any damage caused but more importantly it may offer emotional support. In the mediation process, the offender and victim meet face-to-face and discuss prior events leading to the occurrence of the crime. It is considered to be more therapeutic for the victim to know the reasons why the crime occurred as this knowledge may help reduce the traumatic fear and also the anger associated with it. At the same time, victims are able to give their point of view on how the event has affected their life in terms of the damage and the trauma they have gone through. Although the outcome may be satisfactory in many cases, in certain cases some victims are still left unsatisfied. This is particularly the case for those who opt for indirect mediation.