



National Association of Community and Restorative Justice

January 2019

NACRJ Positioning Statement on Historical Harm

NACRJ recognizes that experiences of trans-generational historical harm in the American experience are deep, affecting the lived experience of people, groups, communities, institutions and systems. Such harm has affected how Americans respond to and understand conflict, crime and injustice. Historical harm lives both in the past and the present as it shapes how all people and groups respond to harm and conflict through their participation, perpetration, victimization, tolerance and/or inaction. NACRJ advocates that deep healing and genuine change can only emerge through recognition, acknowledgement and repair of the current trauma that results from unaddressed historical harm. We believe that such historical harm must be transformed before any true “justice” can be achieved. NACRJ believes that...

1. Unaddressed and unhealed historical harm is a root factor underlying most social problems that confront us today (e.g., crime, victimization, mass incarceration, poverty, racism, ethnocentrism, gender bias, homophobia, and social injustice).
2. Historical harm continues to affect all people, especially historically marginalized communities.
3. Historical racial harms and other social injustices lead to the dehumanization of people, the destruction of the environment, and it emphasizes zero-sum adversarial responses to conflict that are rooted in unjust and biased versions of history.

Therefore, NACRJ will...

1. Work toward inclusive communities where all people are treated with equal respect, dignity and opportunity.
2. Articulate a vision of how such historical harm can be addressed (TRC, dialogue processes, etc.) and advocate for local, statewide and national policies that promote safe, just, equitable and sustainable living conditions for all people.
3. Promote restorative responses to address the impact of current and historical social barriers through dialogue, healing and social change.
4. Develop a platform for addressing historical harm through an anti-racist lens, including anti-racism, implicit bias and cultural competence training.
5. Provide resources to access education and training on these historical issues.
6. Provide a place where strategies to repair such harm may be discussed and developed.
7. Make the general public aware of historical harm, how it continues to impact people, groups, and their communities today; and, how to repair those harms.
8. Make the impacts of historical harm on current systems of justice, education and government apparent so that persistent and destructive impacts are understood and foster dialogue about how to change these practices.
9. Make the impact of other types of harm (e.g., generational trauma, child abuse and neglect) apparent and their role in perpetuating the cycle of harm understood so that constructive interventions can be developed.
10. Create website pages that acknowledge the range and diversity of historical harm, how the impacts have flowed through time, how that history has shaped society today and what can be done to address these issues.
11. Conduct webinars and organized training opportunities to foster understanding of these issues from a restorative perspective focused creating safe, just, equitable and sustainable society and communities.