Restorative Justice and Family Violence

*Restorative Justice and Family Violence* addresses one of the most controversial topics in restorative justice: its potential for dealing with conflicts within families. Most restorative justice programs specifically exclude family violence as an appropriate offence to be dealt with this way. This book focuses on the issues in family violence that may warrant special caution about restorative justice, in particular, feminist and Indigenous concerns. At the same time it looks for ways of designing a place for restorative interventions that respond to these concerns. Further, *Restorative Justice and Family Violence* asks whether there are ways that restorative processes can contribute to reducing and preventing family violence, to healing its survivors and to confronting the wellsprings of this violence.

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This collection is the product of a Canberra conference in 2000 sponsored by the Reshaping Australian Institutions Project of the Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University. We wish to thank all staff of the ANU Centre for Restorative Justice for their hard work in making the conference a success.

Another special element of the success of the conference was the work of Loretta Kelly in organizing a roundtable discussion of Aboriginal restorative justice facilitators to canvass their experience of restorative justice and family violence before the conference proper began. These Aboriginal leaders took part in an informal session of the conference where they acted as a panel and talked about their experiences. Participants saw this as a positive feature of the constructive engagement at the conference. Donna Coker suggested at the end of the conference that this lesson in conference design for bringing communities of thought together with different perspectives on an intransigent problem might have been taken further. Battered women’s movement participants, restorative justice advocates and Aboriginal peoples might each have met and planned ways of communicating their experience for the other participants to absorb before the conference proper, and of course before the publication emanating from those exchanges. While our effort to encapsulate all that was learned from the conference in this volume is a flawed one, it is a better book for the exchanges that occurred. On behalf of all the authors, we thank all the other participants for the many ways they enriched our attempts to grapple with the issues, including some moving and powerful personal testimonies.

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