



**Restorative Justice
Case Study Sensitive & Complex
Sarah Le Good**

Offence Details

- Male age 16.
- GBH Section 20

The victim is child X's stepfather. Child X was initially out of the house and is said to have responded to a call from his younger sister telling him their stepfather had hit her and was being rough with their younger baby brother (approx. 15 months at the time). Child X is said to have gone home, kicked open the front door, picked up a knife from the garage and confronted his stepfather about this. A 'fight' ensued, and stepfather was stabbed in the thigh. Child X fled the scene and was arrested the following day.

Background:

- *Child X is the oldest of four children, the youngest being 18 months. He had been living with his mother, stepfather and family and has indicated that his brothers and sister are very important to him. Records from Social Care state that there has been significant conflict within the family home due to Child X not responding to parental boundaries. Child X has had difficulties in his upbringing and has experienced trauma. Following this incident Mum informed YOS that Child X will **not** be able to return to the family home for the foreseeable future. She also confirmed that there are no other family members that Child X could be accommodated with, therefore a placement was found elsewhere for Child X that could meet his current needs and manage any risk he posed appropriately.*



- Child X social and emotional experiences growing up are relevant to this offence. It is also, in YOS's view, linked with Child X lifestyle and acceptability of certain behaviours (ie a willingness to use a weapon).
- Child X has experienced instability and trauma during his childhood as his mother has had a number of different partners. Child X birth father displayed violence towards his mother and Child X as a baby. He has also witnessed different males in his mother's life being aggressive towards her and, at times, applying physical chastisement to him.
- When there are signs of trauma and aggression within the family home children can develop insecure attachment, which impacts on how they interact within relationships generally as well as their behaviour generally.

Restorative Justice



‘Restorative justice brings those harmed by crime or conflict and those responsible for the harm into communication, enabling everyone affected by a particular incident to play a part in repairing the harm and finding a positive way forward’. (Restorative Justice Council, <https://restorativejustice.org.uk>, accessed 21/02/22)



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During interview Child X attitude towards the offence was one of remorse. He spoke of not remembering exactly what happened and that it was never his intention to harm his stepfather. Child X said he regrets his actions and would like to be able to somehow repair the harm caused to his stepfather and his family generally.

RJ Process

Restorative Justice is a voluntary intervention.

Restorative justice conferences, where a victim meets their offender, are led by a facilitator who supports and prepares the people taking part and makes sure that the process is safe.

Child X, victim and Mum all gave their consent to take part. Four preparation sessions took place prior to the meeting to ensure, participants safety, there was no revictimization and understanding of the process.



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RJ Outcomes

- Child X was able to communicate to his victim his remorse, give an apology, and explain his thoughts and feelings leading up to the offence, during and after. The victim was able to communicate in the same way, as well as explaining the impact of the offence. Discussion also took place around who else had been affected.
- The victim said he accepted child X's apology and had a better understanding as to why child X reacted in the way he did.
- Child X stated that with hindsight he is now able to consider the actions he could have taken on the day in question. He said if only he had spoken to his sister to confirm exactly what had happened or had contacted his mother he would have been able to calm down.

RJ Outcomes

This meeting facilitated child X being able to visit the family home going forward without stepdad having to leave. Child X's Mum and siblings came into the meeting at end, this was important for them to see that a positive outcome had been reached and the relationship was being repaired.