



ESTABLISHING A RECONCILIATION PROGRAM AT YOUR FAMILY JUSTICE/MULTI-AGENCY CENTER

The Family Justice Center framework has a history of community partners and law enforcement working together within communities

Information and advice in this guide is provided in part by the National Network for Safe Communities (NNSC) based at John Jay College in New York, NY. Their expertise on how to use reconciliation to repair institutional harm has been incorporated into this guide to better inform staff at Family Justice and Multi-Agency Centers on utilizing reconciliation to increase police efficacy, build trust and open lines of communication between the community and local law enforcement agencies.

RECONCILIATION seeks to increase police efficacy by building trust and opening the lines of communication between the community and local law enforcement agencies. It is a method of facilitating frank engagements between harmed communities, law enforcement, and other institutions by providing space to address grievances, misconceptions and historical tensions, and reset relationships. Reconciliation is a way for people who have been excluded from systems to be included in the reform process.

THE FAMILY JUSTICE/MULTI-AGENCY CENTER FRAMEWORK is a great place for communities to begin the conversation on reconciliation because the framework has a tried-and-true history of community partners and law enforcement working together to address violence and abuse within communities. Reconciliation starts with law enforcement leaders acknowledging historic harm to communities and looking for ways to ensure these harms do not continue. Reconciliation is not about blame, but about the acknowledgement of past harm, a commitment to change the culture in law enforcement and improve their relationship with the community. Reconciliation requires law enforcement to take the first step in acknowledging past harm.

STEPS TO ESTABLISH YOUR RECONCILIATION PROGRAM:

- 1 PROVIDE A COMMON FRAMEWORK:** Make sure your staff and partners all have a clear understanding of what reconciliation is. [Watch our webinar "Unpacking the Framework: How to Use Reconciliation to Repair Institutional Harm."](#)
- 2 START WITH YOUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS:** Schedule a meeting at your Center with your community partners to start the conversation. What sort of issues are current, hot topics in your community? What are the different partners seeing and hearing from their clients about harm and mistreatment from law enforcement agencies/officers or other systems-based agencies?
- 3 CHECK IN WITH SURVIVORS/VICTIMS:** Conduct survivor focus groups to learn more about what they are experiencing. What do survivors have to say about the criminal justice system and/or law enforcement interactions? [Focus Group Toolkit \(2017\)](#)
- 4 HAVE A CONVERSATION WITH THE COMMUNITY:** Check in with your community leaders. What issues have they seen? What do they want addressed? Make sure the meeting is held in a safe place where all feel welcome. If you are asking people to volunteer their time, make the meeting comfortable and provide refreshments, childcare, and easy parking.
- 5 RECRUIT KEY LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS:** Find out who the stakeholders are in your community. Because every community is different, stakeholders could be law enforcement leaders/officers, victims of police brutality or excessive force, victims of crime, community members, local students, parents, etc. Share the vision and mission of your reconciliation program to recruit potential partners in the community.
- 6 OBTAIN BUY-IN:** In order to start an effective reconciliation program, your community partners must all be willing participants. If they are not onboard, find out why and determine how you can get them to engage in the reconciliation process. Reconciliation only works when you have buy-in from your key community partners in a Family Justice/Multi-Agency Center.
- 7 CHECK IN WITH EXPERTS:** Once you have buy-in from key partners, it is important to reach out to local and national experts to help your reconciliation program be successful and sustainable.
- 8 SET GOALS FOR IMPLEMENTATION:** Work with your community partners to set goals for implementation. During the implementation of the reconciliation phase, it is important to determine goals, create a scope of work (not too broad, nor too narrow), and determine your budget and potential funding sources, if applicable.
- 9 ESTABLISH STRONG LEADERSHIP:** Once you have established your willing partners, ensure strong leadership for the program and develop a robust and consistent communication strategy.
- 10 LAUNCH!** And reach out to the Family Justice Center Alliance with questions or needed support at info@allianceforhope.com