

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE: AN ADDITIONAL GAMING  
ADDICTION TREATMENT

Divine Alexa Yagumyum

Criminal Justice

June, 2021

Faculty Adviser: Dr. Christine Stevens

Essay completed in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation with Global  
Honors, University of Washington, Tacoma

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## **Introduction**

Gaming addiction is a silent but deadly addiction that is on the rise. With the current development of technology, people are using more electronic devices that the thought of gaming addiction seems like an unrealistic concept. A mental health counselor from ReStart, a gaming addiction center in Washington State, has been working with people with internet gaming addiction since the 1990s. It is not a new addiction, only an addiction that is never talked about and treated seriously.

My interview with this counselor provided information about how Korea handles people with internet gaming addiction. It was noted that there are about 17-18 gaming addiction centers where the government pays for the treatment. Therefore, anyone who has this addiction is able to receive treatment without having to stress about paying for it. It was also explained that Korea trained around 5,000 specialists in gaming addiction around four years ago. These specialists were then placed in schools, treatment facilities, and community mental health clinics. Because there is a high acknowledgement about internet gaming addiction, children are taught about healthy internet use through schools. They are also screened for gaming addiction as young as the age of 10. Knowing that gaming addiction is relevant and can create problems for people and their family leads us to ponder a preventative approach as well as treatment approaches.

There is a paucity of research done about the specific connection between restorative justice and gaming addiction. However, there has been research done showing the use of restorative justice for addiction. Riestenberg (2007) talked about the use of restorative justice circle practices in a high school in Minnesota for students who have had any type of chemical addiction. This research interviewed multiple students and staff that take part in the weekly circle practice; The research study concluded that restorative justice circles help students feel more

heard and vulnerable when sharing information with the therapists present (Riestenberg, 2007). Broadening the scope, the most restorative justice used for the majority of the people that fall into drug addiction or gambling addiction is the use of diversion courts such as drug courts. The use of restorative justice in health facilities that deal with gaming addiction specifically is very rare at the moment. This study plans to shine light on the possibility of using a restorative justice practice, such as a circle practice or a conference, to help those receive treatment that might be better suited for them.

There is a lack of research on the connection of restorative justice practices as treatments for people with addiction – which causes questionable remarks on its accuracy of effectiveness. Researching current addiction treatments and the means that people have to receive those treatments will be impactful in analyzing if restorative justice practices can help those with addictions. Receiving insight from professionals that work with either (or both) restorative justice practices and people with addictions will be necessary to understand if restorative justice practices is a feasible concept to include in addiction treatment programs. The purpose of this research project is to identify if restorative justice can serve as an additional treatment to gaming addiction in global and cultural contexts. Themes of global design and innovation, as well as health and human rights, will be included in this research study. The research questions that will be answered are:

1. Would restorative justice practices – particularly circle practices – help the treatment process for those with gaming addiction?
2. What are the costs and benefits of using restorative justice for people with gaming addiction?

3. How has restorative justice been used globally and how can we include those methods to help with gaming addiction treatment?

### **Literature Review**

Restorative justice and gaming addiction are two very different, yet currently relevant, topics to relate. Restorative justice is a concept that is rarely discussed among the general public but is talked about within the criminal justice realm as a strategy to help offenders take more accountability for their actions. There are many definitions for restorative justice depending on what it is being related to. Looking specifically through a criminal justice lens, restorative justice is, “[the] theory of justice that emphasizes repairing harm caused or revealed by criminal behavior. It is best accomplished through cooperative processes that include all stakeholders” (Van Ness & Strong, 2015). Taking this definition and making it more general, restorative justice is a theory of justice that allows reparation to happen mainly among the victims.

Looking at it through a school setting, restorative justice practices could be used to resolve the issues between a bully and the person they are bullying. These practices could be direct dialogues such as: one-on-one dialogues/mediation, a family group conferencing, or the use of circles. On the flip side, there are non-direct dialogues that could include: group dialogue processes, programs, or an accountability bank.

Restorative justice has been used in multiple sectors (i.e. educational and criminal justice) proven to provide a benefit in that sector. Schools that include restorative justice practices in replacement of suspensions, detentions, and expulsions found that less violence would happen in the school and stronger connections would be built between students and teachers (Sandwick, Hahn, & Ayoub, 2019). Restorative justice has also been used for domestic violence offenders through circle practices as a way to reduce recidivism rates while helping them take

accountability for their actions (Mills, Barocas, Butters, & Ariel, 2019). There are many benefits to restorative justice because of its “victim-focused” approach. The term “victim” simply gets translated into different terms that related to the specific sector it is being used in. For example, in a school setting, the victim could be a student; in a criminal justice setting, the victim could be an offender who has had childhood trauma. Transferring restorative justice practices to the health sector would be feasible and view people who are addicted as victims of the addiction.

Restorative justice has a focus on healing those who were harmed and understanding the means to attend to their needs. With that focus in mind, it can be used in various sectors in one’s life. Understanding the flexibility of restorative justice and how it can be part of different sectors (i.e. the criminal justice sector and the educational sector) makes it easier to understand how it can be connected to gaming addictions. Because of how effective restorative justice has been for offenders in the criminal justice system, there have been studies about using these practices in the healthcare sector.

A study done in a mental health facility included the use of a restorative justice practice called family group conferencing (FGC) to try to make their psychiatric patients feel more included. FGCs happen when family and friends of the offender (or in this study, the patients) as well as the nurses, come together to talk about how the patient is feeling and how they could feel better. Within this study, it was found that the patients that went through FGC were more likely to feel more included and heard when it came to sharing their thoughts and feelings (Meijer, Schout, De Jong, & Abma, 2017). Restorative justice can help people with health problems in regards to their own psychological mindset which can help them go through treatment in a more positive pathway.

Gaming addiction is a new addiction. It is also known as internet addiction, internet gaming addiction, and gaming disorder. Globally, gaming addiction is starting to be seen as a health issue that needs to be treated. The continuous use of digital engagement causes alterations in one's social functioning and their physical or psychological health (*Gaming disorder*, 2018). Some characteristics of gaming addiction are: "impaired control over gaming, increasing priority given to gaming over other activities to the extent that gaming takes precedence over other interests and daily activities, and continuation or escalation of gaming despite the occurrence of negative consequences" (*Gaming disorder*, 2018). Identifying gaming addiction as an addiction causes one to wonder if there is a specific kind of treatment that can be used.

Restorative justice is a practice that is typically used in the criminal justice system. It is a victim-centered practice that has a goal of restoring the harm that was caused by helping victims receive their needs and by keeping offenders accountable for their actions (Cullen and Jonson, 2017). However, it can also be used in other places such as the health sector as a way to help people improve the benefits of their treatment. Orzack, Voluse, Wolf, & Hennen, (2006) looked into the use of group therapy treatments as a way to reduce internet-enabled sexual behavior (IESB). For 16 weeks, the men were using motivational interviewing interventions, cognitive-behavioral therapy, and a program called "Readiness to Change". Though it was found that the men's use of IESB did not exponentially decrease, the group therapy sessions "increased members' quality of life and decreased the severity of their depressive symptoms" (Orzack, Voluse, Wolf, & Hennen, 2006). Using a restorative justice practice that requires the participation of many people, like a circle practice, does not seem like it can be the main treatment given. However, it could be used as an additional treatment to patients as a way to motivate them to continue receiving treatment services.

## **Restorative Justice Practices**

It is important to discuss the kinds of restorative justice practices and how it can be used for people with gaming addiction. Because restorative justice is a criminal justice concept, I will translate the terms to relate more closely to this study. For example, one of the many restorative justice practices is the victim-offender dialogue. I will change the name of this practice to, “one-on-one mediation” because it is more closely related to the study.

In the criminal justice system, a victim-offender dialogue (also known as victim offender conferencing) would happen with the victim, offender, and 1-2 facilitators. These facilitators must be trained to handle any kind of restorative justice practices. However, it does not matter how long the training was for that person or what the training model was (Amstutz, 2015). Once people are trained to be restorative justice facilitators, they are able to facilitate and create restorative justice practices.

### ***One-on-One Mediation***

The victim has to initiate the dialogue and has the right to ask the questions they want answered from their offender. In a one-on-one mediation, the person with the addiction would meet with a restorative justice practitioner to discuss the harms that were caused by their addiction. In this case, the “offender” is the addiction and the “victim” is the person with the addiction. The restorative justice practitioner would help the person with internet gaming addiction talk about the harms that were caused and help identify what their needs are. Even if the restorative justice practitioner cannot serve those needs right at that moment, or are not professionally capable of serving those needs, they could find resources and other ways that can help attend to those needs. One of the restorative justice practitioners that was interviewed discussed how impactful restorative justice can be to rebuild relationships. They could also

explain ways to rebuild relationships that may have been broken because of the addiction. By having at least one person to genuinely talk to, the person with the gaming addiction could understand and attend to their needs faster.

### ***Circle Practices***

Another kind of restorative justice practice is the use of circle practices. A circle practice is usually done with people who are experiencing a similar harm or have committed similar harms (Pranis, 2015). For example, Alcohol Anonymous groups consist of people who have all been addicted alcohol. Though they have all had an alcohol addiction, their personal experiences with their addictions will differ from one to another. This group uses circle practices by bringing people together who can better understand each other's' struggles and needs. There is a similar practice that can be done for those with gaming addiction.

One of the people I was able to interview works in a gaming addiction center that has various programs for people to take part in. They specifically hold weekly circles for those with gaming addiction. Usually, this group goes through a gaming addiction treatment program together and attends the circle conferences together. Knowing that one of the symptoms of gaming addiction is social anxiety, the use of circle practices can seem a bit nerve-racking at first. But because this group goes through the same program together, they start to relearn social skills and queues that can help them once the program is finished.

### ***Family Group Conferencing (FGC)***

A third restorative justice practice is the concept of family group conferences. This practice is very similar to circle practices but it includes more people who have closer relationships with the person who has caused harm or was harmed. In this study, the focus of the family group conferences would be the one with the addiction. MacRae and Zehr (2015) describe

family group conferencing as “a kind of decision-making meeting, a face-to-face encounter involving offenders and their families, victims and their supporters, a police representative, and others” (MacRae and Zehr, 2015). This description of the use of family group conferencing is highly focused for those who have committed a crime. Though gaming addiction is not a crime in and of itself, there is some kind of harm being committed by the addiction.

In translating this practice to the gaming addiction topic, people who would be included would be: the person with the addiction, a health care specialist, the restorative justice facilitator, and any supporters would be included to discuss the needs for the person with the addiction. The discussion through this practice would help everyone understand how the addiction affects more than just the person with the addiction.

### ***FGC Process***

I was able to attend a two-day restorative justice conference training and learned many ways that restorative justice conferences can be helpful for the people involved. The process of making a conference come to life is very time consuming. Nonetheless, there will be a positive outcome while creating a sense of community because of it. The first step of having a conference is to individually talk to all of the people who are willing to participate. The restorative justice facilitator would first talk to the person with the addiction to see if they are willing to have this conference. If the person with the addiction does not want to participate in this kind of practice at the moment, then there will not be a conference. The restorative justice practitioner giving the lesson at the conference noted that restorative justice does not force people to take part in anything. It bases its practices on if the participants volunteer to do so.

If the person with the addiction chooses to have the conference, the restorative justice practitioner/facilitator would ask them questions about how they feel with their addiction and

what they think is needed from it. They will then ask who that person would like to have as their supporters at the meeting. This could be a close friend, a spouse, parents, etc. The restorative justice practitioner would then find a day to meet with that support person to see if they would like to engage in this conference. Most of the time, people who are seen as support systems will likely take the chance to partake in a practice that will help their loved one.

When talking to the supporter, it is important to describe the kind of wordings that should be used within the conference. For example, if that person wants their loved one to talk to their family more about the issue, they should say so in tone and in words that are not forcing the person with the addiction to do something. Instead of saying something along the lines of, “I wish you would talk to your family more”, the supporter could say, “I understand you are in a difficult position right now but I just want you to know that your family will always have open arms for you to share anything with them”. The word choice and the tone of voice that people use when talking in any restorative justice practice is important to keep in mind because it can influence the person with gaming addiction.

After talking to the person with the addiction and their support system(s), the restorative justice practitioner could then talk to the health care specialist and describe the situation to them. They would also need to remind them about the tone of voice and word choice needed to be used. Once all parties of the conference have been contacted and prepared, there will be a set time and date to have the conference.

During a restorative justice conference, everyone will be sitting in a circle formation similar to the circle practice. The facilitator will have a script with them to follow along with. In this script there is a welcoming statement as well as an introduction of everyone at the conference. The facilitator will then start asking questions to each individual in an open manner.

For example, they may start with the person with the addiction and ask them how they started gaining the addiction and how it has influenced their life. Once answered, the facilitator will continue asking them questions until all of the questions have been answered. The facilitator will then move onto the support person (or one of the support persons if there are multiple) and ask them questions that will relate to how they feel about their loved one being addicted to gaming and how they have possibly been affected. The final questions in this conference ask each member what they would like out of the conference. For example, if the support system would like a written form of how the person with the addiction will obtain their needs, and everyone agrees, then that can be arranged by the restorative justice facilitator.

At the end of the conference, the restorative justice facilitator will make an agreement form while everyone in the conference has refreshments and can talk amongst themselves. Having this sort of debriefing at the end of a serious conference is crucial to maintaining and mending broken relationships. Because everyone is given the time to talk to one another, the sense of community becomes stronger. The person with gaming addiction would then feel like they are not going through their addiction alone. They start to believe that they are able to get through their addiction with the support from their family, friends, health practitioner, and restorative justice practitioner.

In all of the restorative justice practices I have explained, they all have a similarity in a sense that the restorative justice practitioner/facilitator is very empathetic towards the person with addiction while continuing to follow their script. In each practice, there is a script being used by the restorative justice practitioner in order to make sure that all questions are asked and answered. There is also a clear understanding for what is being needed by the person with addictions. The one practice that I want to push with this research is the use of family group

conferences. Because this practice would involve support systems for the person with addictions, I believe that it could help them through the psychological symptoms that come with gaming addiction.

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this research project is to identify if restorative justice can serve as an additional treatment to gaming addiction in global and cultural contexts. Themes of global design and innovation, as well as health and human rights, will be included in this research study. The research questions that will be answered are:

1. Would restorative justice practices – particularly circle practices – help the treatment process for those with gaming addiction?
2. What are the costs and benefits of using restorative justice for people with gaming addiction?
3. How has restorative justice been used globally and how can we include those methods to help with gaming addiction treatment?

### ***Methods***

IRB approval was obtained from the University of Washington Human Subjects Committee. The research design, questions and consent were approved. Recruitment of participants were conducted by email invitation. The consent form was sent to each interviewee in the initial recruitment email sent to them. Once the interviewee read the email and accepted their invitation for an interview, the consent form was signed and sent back to me as an acknowledgement of their understanding of the study and interview format.

The interviews were done though Zoom and ranged from thirty minutes to an hour – depending on the amount of information the interviewee wanted to share. For the interviews, an

interview guide was created as the main data gathering instrument. This interview guide has been reviewed by my faculty advisor as well as the University of Washington Tacoma Institutional Review Board (IRB). The questions were divided into four sections: demographic, those who have worked with restorative justice, those who have worked with people with addictions, and recommendations/improvements for the researcher. Figures 1 and 2 show the complete interview guide that were used for all of the interviews. The sample questions that were sent with the consent forms to the interviewees were:

1. Have you worked with using restorative justice practices in your line of work?
2. Thinking about the sector in which you work, what impact do you think RJ would have to those who have an addiction?
3. From your experience/what you understand, what are some successful treatments that have helped people with addictions?
4. Do you think restorative justice practices can be something used for people with gaming addictions?

Figure 1

Qualitative Research – Interview Questions
<p>Demographic questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is your profession?               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. How long have you worked in that profession?</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. What pronouns do you like to be called by?</li> <li>3. What race and/or ethnicity do you identify as?</li> </ol> <p>First question: Have you worked with using restorative justice practices in your line of work?</p> <p>To those who have used restorative justice (RJ) practices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How have you used restorative justice practices (i.e. one-on-one dialogues, family group conferences, “circles”) in your line of work?</li> <li>2. Comparing now to before you used these practices, do you believe that RJ has a positive outcome on people?               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. If yes, please expand on what those outcomes are.</li> <li>b. If not, please explain why.</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Thinking about the sector in which you work, what impact do you think RJ would have to those who have an addiction?</li> <li>4. How much does it cost to have a restorative justice program?               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. What resources are necessary? (i.e. who needs to be involved and what kind of setting is preferred)</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

Figure 2

<p>To those who have not used RJ practices, but worked w/ people who have addictions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. From your experience, what are some successful treatments that have helped people with addictions?</li> <li>2. RJ is usually done with at least 1-2 people around. If there are any, what impacts do social interactions have for people with addictions?               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. If there are none, why is that?</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. How would/do people with addictions react to treatment/programs that involve people interactions?</li> </ol> <p>Final questions relating to gaming addiction:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have you heard of gaming addiction before?               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. If so, what do you know about it?</li> <li>b. If not, I will give a brief explanation of it.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Do you think restorative justice practices can be a strategy for people with gaming addictions?</li> </ol> <p>FINAL QUESTIONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Is there any one you know or can recommend me to interview for my project?               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. If so, are you willing to share their contact information with me?</li> <li>b. If not, that is totally okay :)</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. In terms of my interviewing, is there anything you think that I should do better for future interviews? (i.e. Use different wordings? Explain anything better?)</li> </ol>
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For this research, a qualitative interview was conducted among five professionals from different backgrounds. The interviewees ranged from those who have worked with restorative justice, those who have worked with people with addictions, and those who have worked with both restorative justice and people with addictions.

One of the interviewees is an article author, two interviewees were recommended by UW faculty, and the last two were reached out to because of their work in a company/organization. These professionals also varied in their location. Everyone lived across the United States except one – one of the interviewees was from Canada. Though all of the interviewees have different professional backgrounds, they have similar demographic features such as their race/ethnicity.

### ***Interview Procedure***

Within the interviews, a review of the consent form was given in case there was any underlying questions that the interviewees wanted to be answered. Once the interviewees gave

their verbal consent, the Zoom meeting would start to be recorded and questions were asked from the interview guide. The interview started with the same questions for everyone but eventually branched out between two sections depending on what kind of practice the interviewee takes part in. At the end of each interview, everyone received the same question about whether or not they believe that restorative justice can be used as an additional treatment for those with gaming addiction.

### **Data & Results**

The various topics discussed in the interviews are coded into two general sections: social elements and cost effectiveness. There is an overlap between these two sections when thinking about the benefits of using restorative justice practices in the healthcare sector. Not only do the people with gaming addictions receive benefits, but gaming addiction specialists, social workers, and friends/family members also benefit.

#### ***Social Elements***

There are many symptoms to gaming addiction. ReStart is a gaming addiction center based in Bellevue, Washington. This company focuses on people with internet video game addiction and provides them with treatment services/programs (*Why restart*, 2021). According to a mental health counselor that works at ReStart, there are two kinds of symptoms for those with gaming addiction: physical and psychological symptoms. Physically, people with gaming addiction are: sleep deprived, vitamin D deprived, have eye-strain and/or bad posture, haven't been exercising, and are overweight or severely underweight. Meanwhile, with the knowledge of who comes into ReStart for treatment services, many people with gaming addiction enter treatment being depressed and/or anxious. They have social anxiety and around one-third of the

participants do not pick up social queues. For the purpose of this study, we will only analyze the psychological symptoms.

Because restorative justice practices require some kind of social engagement, it can be used to help with the psychological symptom of social anxiety for those with gaming addiction. One of the interviews was with a psychologist who has practiced therapy for nine years has also worked with people with addictions. At some point the question arose about using people-oriented programs for those who have been isolated. The psychologist noted that it is important to start small and gradually get bigger – in terms of how many people the person with addiction talks to. They suggested that the person with an addiction have a one-on-one assessment to address where that person needs help and how they can receive that help. The ReStart employee comes at this topic in a slightly different approach.

At ReStart, the first program they place people is called, “De-Tech Rise-Up Sober Living” (*Services for adults*, 2021). In this program, people are stripped from their electronics and brought to a ranch where they learn to live without electronics. There is a group of people that go through this program together. For example, someone that enters this program will go through it with around five other people (having six total participants). In this way, the social element is already included in the first interactions that someone with gaming addictions have.

Both the ReStart mental health counselor and the psychologist agree that some type of social interaction needs to happen for those with addictions. With social anxiety being a psychological symptom for gaming addiction, treatments need to include programs that have a social element to them. Restorative justice would then help solve that problem by using the practice of circles, which will be discussed later in this paper.

### ***Cost Effectiveness***

Matsuzaka & Knapp (2019) conducted a conceptual study to analyze and compare the addiction treatment services given to people of color and white people. Though there is an equal rate of people of color and white people misusing substances, there is a difference in the severity of their substance misuse when entering treatment (Matsuzaka & Knapp, 2019). Economic barriers were the main driving factor that determined when people received treatment and what kind of treatment they received. People who went to private addiction treatment centers had better quality treatments than public addiction treatment centers (ibid). Thinking about the economic barriers and differences in treatments, the use of restorative justice practices and restorative justice practitioners/volunteers would be a feasible way to include programs that will be beneficial for those with gaming addiction.

After discussing the programs and treatments that ReStart offers, the topic of price was introduced in the interview. It was noted that the first program (the “De-Tech Rise-Up Sober Living” program) is around \$50,000 to be part of. Most of the time, the people with internet gaming addiction are not the ones who are paying to be part of this program. Their parents or loved ones are the ones putting in money for them to get treated. This creates a disparity between who is able to receive gaming addiction treatment and who isn’t.

A criminal justice professional who specializes in research about restorative justice shared information on how to start restorative justice programs. This person has worked as a judge and is currently a professor at a university. They have also worked with restorative justice as it relates to drug courts. When asked about the cost of creating a restorative justice program, they explained that it can cost to as little as nothing. They noted that a restorative justice program can run and function as long as there are restorative justice practitioners/volunteers who are willing to devote their time into the program.

In a separate interview with a restorative justice practitioner, they analyzed how much it would take for restorative justice to be implemented in the healthcare sector. This practitioner shared that most of the cost for a restorative justice program would be put towards the trainings for the practitioners. Depending on where the training comes from and how intensive the training is, the price could range. After creating many searches for restorative justice trainings, I have seen the price range from \$300-\$1,500. The information shared within these programs differ depending on where restorative justice will be used. For example, there are some restorative justice trainings made for schoolteachers/faculty members, while other restorative justice trainings are created for victim-offender mediations within the criminal justice system.

An interview with a different restorative justice practitioner also included their input on pricing for restorative justice programs. This person is a restorative justice practitioner for Community Justice Initiatives, a restorative justice organization based in Ontario, Canada. The Community Justice Initiatives (CJI) collaborate with other organizations and expand their use of restorative justice practices. In the talk with their director of programs, the use of restorative justice for people with addictions is a current discussion for their organization. They are currently trying to create programs for those with addictions, but their engagement has not started because of the lack of funding. It was explained that they needed funds to establish quality services to those that need it. Though these funds exceed the amount it costs to train someone as a restorative justice practitioner, they do not include the cost of the infrastructure. The cost to establish their addiction program excludes the cost of training their volunteer and staff members.

There is a range of numbers shared throughout this section about how much it could cost for a restorative justice program to be implemented. Nonetheless, all of the professionals

mentioned have a common understanding that volunteers need to have restorative justice training in order to make the restorative justice program more feasible and open to those who can afford it. If there was a way for volunteers to receive restorative justice training that was free or paid for, they would be able to facilitate programs that can be used by people with gaming addiction. These programs are important in getting people with gaming addiction to engage with people and restore relationships that could've been broken because of their addiction.

### **Discussion**

Through the five interviews that were conducted, there was a consensus in thinking about how restorative justice could be used for people with gaming addictions. Many may think about restorative justice being similar to therapy sessions. Though this can be true, there is a difference in approaches. As explained in the Restorative Justice Practices of this paper, family group conferencing involves more than just the talk at the conference. There is a lot of preparation work that goes into conducting this practice. By incorporating restorative justice practitioners/facilitators as people who can conduct circles and conferences, people with addictions would be able to benefit in regards to the social element they are lacking in.

Having restorative justice practitioners as part of the people who can provide these therapy-like sessions will also take a load off of social workers. One of the restorative justice practitioners I was able to interview provided general information about how many cases social workers have to work with. There is a huge caseload on their end, in which they have to get through all of. Restorative justice facilitators/practitioners would be able to lessen that caseload by taking in people with addictions. They are able to create and take part in practices that will benefit those with addictions without negatively affecting other social workers. Incorporating

more people to do the work that social workers would do will also help make each case more personal and give facilitators the time they need to prepare for it.

The use of restorative justice practices for people with addictions is not a far-off concept. Though restorative justice is mostly seen in the criminal justice system, it is proven that it can work in other sectors – such as the educational and the health care sector. Including restorative justice practices in addiction centers will greatly help with the feasibility of the programs. ReStart in Washington State is a great example of a gaming addiction center that can attend to almost all of their needs with the different programs they have. However, the price of the programs creates an economic and social barrier, leaving only select people to obtain that kind of treatment.

By using restorative justice volunteers to take part in creating conferences, people with addictions are able to receive that kind of service through a reasonable price. Though restorative justice practices itself will not serve as a “cure” for gaming addiction, it can serve as an additional addiction treatment that many people are able to partake in. Having the gaming addiction center pay for the restorative justice training for volunteers would be the cheapest way to create restorative justice programs for people with gaming addiction. People who volunteer to facilitate conferences for those with gaming addiction could be later promoted to jobs within the addiction center if possible, or get rewarded/incentivized in other ways.

Wrapping up all of the thoughts, bringing restorative justice practices to those with gaming addiction would serve their social needs while they find other treatment services that are at a low cost. The cost of health treatment is what prevents people from receiving their needs and leads many people to continue having their addiction. Restorative justice practices, specifically circles and conferences, are able to provide a sense of community and care to those who don't

have the funds to go through treatment programs. Implementing these services either free or at a low cost will tremendously benefit those with gaming addiction and the community around them.

### **Research Implementations**

With the acknowledgement of gaming addiction on the rise, any information about its symptoms and beneficial treatment practices need to be shared globally as well as given fairly to those that need it. By specifically creating the connection between restorative justice and gaming addiction, this study will explore new information to share locally and globally. Information from this study will first be shared locally with MultiCare Chemical Dependency Services and Bayview Recovery. Based on their connections, the results of this study can also be shared to other centers across the state, country, and world. With the lack of research in restorative justice as a treatment for gaming addiction, this study hopes to reveal the underlying qualities that are necessary for restorative justice to be effective as a treatment while also analyzing current addiction treatments. It strives to look into global treatments to understand the various ways people with addictions can be helped. Restorative justice practices and gaming addiction are both starting to receive more attention as people are continuously learning more about them. Exploring the possible use of restorative justice as an additional treatment for gaming addiction will be beneficial for those with gaming addiction as well as those around them.

### ***Limitations***

There are various limitations to how this research was conducted. If I were to conduct this research again, I would put more time into the interview part of the study. One of the limitations is the small sample size. Within this study, only five professionals were interviewed. Even though each of the interviewees are professionals in different fields that relate to this study, there is a possibility of generalization being used. Next time, I would create a small list of what

kind of professionals I wanted to interview and how many of each I should interview. In this way, there could be a better consensus without generalization. There could also be a better understanding as to why certain professionals thought the way they did about the questions being asked. It could be possible that restorative justice practitioners and health care specialists came to an agreement on their thoughts about restorative justice being used for people with addictions, but their reasonings were different.

Another limitation is the lack of global interaction with people outside of North America. All of the people I had an interview with live in a country in North America. Though the United States does things differently from Canada, they are part of the same region in the world. This could serve as a reasoning for why there is a consensus between the thoughts on restorative justice being used in the health sector. Gaming addiction is a global issue and restorative justice is used globally. I tried to combat the lack of global interaction by including research on how other countries use restorative justice. However, it is not the same knowledge I gain in comparison to having interviews with people.

A third limitation in this study is the way the data is coded. While conducting the interviews, I had started mentally grouping concepts that various professionals mentioned. Because I coded concepts as I went through my data, it might have influenced the way I interpreted my results. I could have created general ideas of how I wanted to code things before having the interviews in order to focus on the research questions better. All in all, the interview portion of this study is where many of the limitations took place. If anyone were to redo this study, having a larger sample size, interviewing people outside of North America, and having a generalized idea of how one wants to code their information is highly recommended.

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