

Q & A

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Restorative justice provides support and safe opportunities for the voluntary participation and communication between those affected (victims, offenders, and the community) to encourage accountability, reparation, and a movement towards understanding, feelings of satisfaction, healing safety and a sense of closure.

1. On average how long does the process usually take from the beginning to end in getting an answer on a victim being able to visit someone who has been incarcerated?

There are no set timelines mandated in the Restorative Opportunities (RO) process. Each case is different and must be handled carefully. It is not unusual for the process to take months, a year or even longer to reach its conclusion.

Through the RO program, people that have been harmed by crime have a chance to communicate with the offender who has caused the harm. During these meetings, participants can tell their story, explain to the offender the crime's physical, emotional and financial impact on their lives, explore unanswered questions about the crime and the offender, and participate directly in developing options to try to address the harm caused, where possible. Offenders are afforded opportunities to provide information and to gain insights that contribute to their accountability and personal growth.

2. How many times do restorative justice mediators meet with a convicted person during the process? (In this case it took three meetings between the mediator and Wettlaufer to decline the request)

The RO process respects the privacy of the participants and therefore we can't speak to specific cases. However, each case is different and complex so the process is flexible and the amount of times that a mediator will meet with an offender varies from case to case. There can be many steps and the goal is always to ensure that the victim and offender are prepared and supported throughout the process.

3. In the Restorative Justice program, why is it up to the incarcerated person to decide whether or not they want to speak with a victim?

Restorative justice is, by nature, a voluntary process all participants, including the offender. It can be initiated by either a victim or an offender. CSC provides victim-offender mediation services through informed consent, and voluntary participation, sincere motivation, and accountability are some of the factors that are key to an safe, honest and productive dialogue between participants.

4. Are there any other programs through Corrections Canada victims can use as a next or alternative step if person behind bars declines their request?

As per Commissioner's Directive 085—[Correspondence and Telephone Communications](#), any member of the public can correspond with offenders through mail correspondence.

5. Are victims required to submit their questions ahead of time, and are those questions usually shared with the incarcerated person as part of the decision-making process?

This is not a specific requirement, however if a victim wants to ask questions to an offender through the RO program, a mediator in their work with the participant needs to understand the victim's needs, what questions they may have that may evolve through their work together, as well as prepare the victim for the responses they may receive and the potential impact. The process requires preparing consensual participants on both sides for what is often described as a difficult process that can challenge participants given the serious nature of the offence(s).