

## A Path for Evidenced-Based Evaluation: The Case for Restorative Justice

Raúl D. Gierbolini-Rivera, ATC,CSCS  
*University of Southern Maine*

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21

**Title:** A Path for Evidenced-Based Evaluation: The Case for Restorative Justice

**Abstract:** Youth-LED Justice (YLJ) is a nonprofit organization whose main focus is on restorative justice for youth, ages 13-18, in order to address behavioral issues by repairing relationships in the community. YLJ's volunteer base is a significant part of the organization with an average of 80 volunteers being trained every year. Research shows that there is a lack of evaluative efforts in restorative justice interventions. Evidence-based evaluation is necessary for restorative justice to be effective, and peer mentoring has emerged as an area of great innovation. The intersectionality of public health and restorative justice presents an opportunity for improved health equity and reduced health disparities with youth. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) evaluation framework can be adapted to evaluate the effectiveness of volunteer training programs in restorative justice organizations. It is through evidenced-based evaluation and dissemination that communities can be informed of the work YLJ is doing to improve the lives of Maine's youth. The aim of this project is the development of an evaluation plan that is targeted to the outcomes of volunteer training. This evaluation plan will serve as an applicable tool that YLJ will be able to utilize for the following purposes: to gather relevant data to develop into evidence, to provide direction to their board and staff, to inform the public of program improvements, to support their efforts to receive more funding from diverse sources and to improve the impact of the youth led work at the heart of the organization.

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**Primary Mentor Name, Degree:** Elora Way elora.way@maine.edu

**Primary Author Name:** Raul D. Gierbolini-Rivera, ATC, CSCS raul.gierbolini@maine.edu

**Secondary Author Name:**

**Additional Mentor or Author Names and Email:**

**Comments/Questions:**