

PREFACE

This book examines restorative justice in the Republic of Ireland. It does so in three main areas: theory, policy and practice. This provides the framework to address the salient question which is *How does restorative conferencing for young offenders facilitate an exchange process whereby forms of reparation and social regulation may be achieved?* The book outlines the historical background to restorative justice – from first the British and then the Irish perspective. It should be understood from the outset that at the time this research was conducted the restorative justice conferencing events observed were the only one of their type in operation in the Republic of Ireland. Unlike England and Wales and other parts of the world restorative justice came late to criminal justice in Ireland. This book provides an insight into the first introduction of restorative justice to the criminal justice system in the Republic of Ireland. The book then applies these understandings to six case studies of restorative conferencing events that were observed by the researcher in the Greater Dublin Region. From this a wider understanding of restorative justice theory, philosophies, practices and policies is achieved. The book addresses its main research question through this analysis and provides a fuller understanding of the significance of combining restorative philosophies and practices to actual restorative conferencing events. The researcher personally sees restorative justice as an opportunity to achieve a fairer and more satisfactory criminal justice system for all members of society. Restorative justice principles are making slow but steady progress in Ireland. There is a growing acknowledgement among professionals and academics that we need to develop other responses to crime. The restorative justice ‘process’ has much to offer and the researcher believes that this concept particularly as it centres on the greater use of non custodial sentences will bring about changes not only in the law but will have significant implications for social regulation.