Indigenous in nature, restorative justice is a way of thinking and being. The circle process used in restorative justice is rooted in the Indigenous tradition of talking circles with the goal of seeking wholeness in communities.

**The Roots of Restorative Justice**

Crime is a violation of the law and the state. Violations create guilt. Justice requires the state to determine blame (guilt) and impose pain (punishment).

Crime is a violation of people and relationships. Violations create obligations. Justice involves victims, offenders, and the community in an effort to repair the harm, to “put things right”.

**Three Different Questions**

What laws have been broken? Who did it? What do they deserve?

Who has been harmed? What are their needs? Whose obligations are these?

**Pillars of Restorative Justice**

1. **Restorative justice focuses on harm.**
   Restorative justice understands crime, first of all, as harm done to people and communities.

2. **Wrongs or harms result in obligations.**
   Restorative justice emphasizes accountability and responsibility for those who cause harm.

3. **Restorative justice promotes engagement or participation.**
   Primary parties affected are provided with significant roles in the justice process.

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