

RPI Newsletter – 6th August 2025



Hello everyone,

We hope this newsletter finds all our readers well.

This month we begin by paying tribute to an incredible restorative practitioner, Emer Byrden, of Killcullen, Kildare and Carlow ETNS, who passed away recently, with a lovely piece from Jennifer Little and Yvonne Carey. Our deepest sympathies to her family and friends from all in RPI.

We also have updates from the world of Restorative Justice and some recent publications from Marie Keenan, as well as a new feature where we showcase some of the individual practices of various restorative practitioners.

Tribute to Emer



Our RP community is deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Emer Byrden, of Killcullen, Kildare and Carlow ETNS (second from left). When we first met Emer, she was championing RP in her school. She organised for all the adults in the school community to train in “Getting Started with RP.” Emer prepared the ground and the training was extremely well

received. Under her leadership, her colleagues had completed a relational schools project with Erasmus previously, so RP was a natural next step.

A small group of colleagues, including Emer, completed “RP Facilitation Skills” training and Emer, along with her staff, used circles and other restorative approaches as part of the daily life of their school. Around the same time, Emer began her research and work for her PhD in relational pedagogy in primary schools in Ireland.

In the summer of 2024, Emer trained as an RP trainer and graduated with the group in April 2025.

She brought her intelligence, humour, wit and warmth as well as an unwavering desire, a passion for and commitment to relationships and equality in education for all.

She is sorely missed by all of us who had the honour and good fortune to work with her. Our deepest condolences to her husband Sean, her sons Colm and Finbarr, her mother, siblings, school community and wide circle of friends, including her many RP friends.

written by Yvonne Carey & Jenn Little. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a hanam



Marie Keenan - new resources



Marie Marie Keenan is a criminologist, forensic psychotherapist, registered social worker and one of the leading restorative justice practitioners in the country. She has a particular expertise in the area of gender based and sexual violence and interested readers may like to look up some of her recent resources and publications.

This is a link to a Podcast on Restorative Justice and Sexual Violence with Sophia Murphy, available [here](#). The same interview is available through YouTube [here](#)

Here is a link to her latest book (with Anne-Marie McAllinden and James Gallen) on Transforming Justice Responses to Non Recent Institutional Abuses (OUP, 2025) that is available on open access for [download](#) for free:

And finally, a link to her book (with Estelle Zinsstag) on Sexual Violence and Restorative Justice: Addressing the Justice Gap, (OUP, 2022) which is now available to [download](#) for free:

Ian Marder and Ailbhe Griffith talk RJ on Radio 1

On a related topic to the last piece this is a [link](#) to an excellent piece on Radio 1 last month where Ailbhe Griffith shared her story to highlight the importance of restorative justice. Listen too for Dr. Ian Marder talking about the current state of RJ services in Ireland with a subsequent panel discussion.

My RP Practice

This month sees a new section to our newsletter. It's a look into the individual practice of some of the RP practitioners around the country and what they do and how they do it. Hopefully this will be of interest to people and an opportunity to share and learn from some of the wonderful work that goes on around the place, but that we often don't hear about. This month we hear from Jenn Little. If you would like to share please, we would love to hear from you.



What's your favourite sharing piece?

The sharing piece that circle participants I work with enjoy the most, is an expandable multi-coloured plastic ball. I place it in the centre of the circle before we start while I'm meeting and greeting people and it often arouses curiosity. Some people even pick it up and start playing with it. That's what's so lovely about this piece; it is so interactive. For anyone who is a bit unsure about cuddly toys the expand-a-ball works well. It expands and contracts and I

notice that people open and close it as they share. It appears to be quite regulating. I connect to my breath easily when I hold it.

I was on the lookout for one because my friend Jude Lardner used one and I saw how it worked for her. I found mine at a car boot sale! After a few years of not seeing them anywhere, they are now available in Tesco for €4. Wishing you even happier circles :). Jenn

Training

Anyone looking for information on possible training available, check out

- **CDI** <https://www.cdi.ie/our-programmes/restorative-practices/> (schools and non-school)
- **restorativeliving.ie** (schools and non-schools)
- **OIDE** (formally PDST) schools only
- **Local Education Support Centre** (schools only)
- **Connect RP** (schools only)

That's all for now Folks. Please check out next month's edition for an important update on the long awaited membership launch. Please also remember to send in information, photos, updates and events you may be running and we'll spread the word for you. Also, do get in touch via info@restorativepracticesireland.ie or on X [@RP_Ireland](https://twitter.com/RP_Ireland) if you would like to get involved in RPI activities as a volunteer.

Joe Power, newsletter editor powerjoseph1@gmail.com 087-2879679