



Application for Accreditation as a Group Conference Convenor by the Victorian Association for Restorative Justice

The Victorian Association for Restorative Justice (VARJ) has developed a system of accreditation for Group Conference Convenors. This system supports good professional practice among convenors, consistent with our Restorative Justice Best Practice Standards. It is essentially a system of *peer mentoring*, but with (i) specific *guidelines* on the content of key collegial conversations & (ii) external *assessment* of the written record of those conversations.

The *guidelines* guard against excessive “practice drift”, but still allow for flexibility of practice, and for creativity. External *assessment* provides the VARJ Accreditation Committee with an overview of the current range and quality of group conference convening.

What are the benefits of Accreditation for individual convenors?

Accreditation is a formal acknowledgement that a group conference convenor has attained a certain standard of professional practice. As part of the *assessment* process, a member of the VARJ Accreditation Committee will provide each convenor with feedback, suggestions and possibly also professional connections to a broader network of colleagues, who can support ongoing skills development. Accreditation provides formal recognition of skills, and makes them more portable from one program to another. Accredited convenors may choose to be listed in a directory on the VARJ website.

What do I need to provide to VARJ?

- Evidence of having completed an appropriate *Group Conference convenor training*;
- A completed *Application Form*, including:
 - ☞ contact details for *two referees*; &
 - ☞ a *written summary* of each of four structured conversations (using *Feedback Templates 1-3*);
- Payment.

What will VARJ provide me?

The VARJ Accreditation Sub-Committee will:

- assess the documentation and provide a written response;
- conduct a structured discussion (by phone / skype, or face to face) with the applicant
The basic structure for this discussion is provided by *Feedback Template # 3*);

The Committee will aim to complete these assessment tasks as soon as possible after receiving the completed application, and certainly within 4 weeks (or 20 working days).

Application Form

Name: _____

Email: _____

Mobile Phone: _____ Landline Phone [*business hours*]: _____

Postal Address: _____

Organisation/Business: _____

Job Title: _____

VARJ member? YES NO

Please provide the following information:

1. I have successfully completed a **training course** in Group Conferencing, and that course meets the standards described in the VARJ Best Practice Standards (Section 1, A1)

YES NO

Title of course: _____

Name(s) of presenter(s): _____

(Please attach evidence of successful completion, including a copy of the course certificate if available).

2. I have the requisite **knowledge and skills base** as described in the VARJ Best Practice Standards (Section 1, A2-A3).

Please provide a basic description of your experience as a Group Conferencing convenor:

3. I have recorded written summaries of conversations using the structure of the *Feedback Templates*:

- i. After *observing* a group conference run by an experienced colleague;
USING: **(Template 1)** The **TECHNIQUE-FOCUSED DISCUSSION TEMPLATE**.
- ii. After *being observed* by an experienced convenor facilitating a group conference;
USING: **(Template 1)** The **TECHNIQUE-FOCUSED DISCUSSION TEMPLATE**.
- iii. After *being observed* by an experienced convenor facilitating a group conference, after having convened at least six group conferences, or recorded one year of practice in convening group conferencing – whichever comes first;
USING: **(Template 2)** The **STRATEGY-FOCUSED TEMPLATE**
- iv. After *having had a conversation* with my line manager after one year of practice.
USING: **(Template 3)** The **REFLECTIVE PRACTICE TEMPLATE**

Note: for independent consultants, this reflective practice conversation can be held with a member of the VARJ Assessment committee, as part of the assessment process.

4. The following two referees have agreed to support my application.

They are prepared to be contacted by phone or email.

Referee 1

Name:
Organisation:
Job Title:
Email:
Phone:

Referee 2

Name:
Organisation:
Job Title:
Email:
Phone:

CHECKLIST

I have:

- completed an appropriate Group Conference convenor training;
- nominated two Referees;
- included with this application a written summary of each of four structured conversations (*Templates 1-3*);
- completed the application form;
- payment.

The cost to apply for accreditation is:

- \$250 for VARJ members;
- \$350 for non-members.

Please make your payment by EFT to VARJ:

- BSB: 063 009
- Account #: 1038 6269

Please ensure the EFT payment details include <your surname> & the abbreviation "ACCRD".

Declaration: I declare that the information provided in this application is, to the best of my knowledge and understanding, true and correct

Signature:

Date: _____

Email completed application forms to: varj@varj.asn.au