

# The Restorative Justice Attitudes Scale: Development and Initial Psychometric Evaluation<sup>Ψ</sup>

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## Abstract

Restorative justice as an applied and theoretical construct has received growing public attention; yet, little research on restorative justice has been conducted within psychology, including counseling psychology—a subfield devoted to social justice, advocacy, and the promotion of human rights and dignity for all people. This may in part be due to the lack of established empirical measurement concerning restorative justice. We developed the Restorative Justice Attitudes Scale (RJAS) using data collected from 650 US adults. Exploratory analyses yielded a 5-factor structure composed of 20 items within five dimensions: (a) Empathic Understanding, (b) Harm and Needs, (c) Restoration Processes, (d) Accountability, and (e) Community Engagement. However, confirmatory analyses suggested the use of a total scale score. Evidence of construct validity was established as the RJAS score was related to measures of empathy and perspective-taking. We discuss implications for the use of the RJAS in practice, advocacy, education, training, and research.

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**Keywords**

restorative justice, social justice, empathy, perspective-taking, measure development

**Significance of the Scholarship to the Public**

*This research investigates restorative justice—an approach centered on repairing harm between victims, offenders, and the surrounding community following incidents of wrongdoing. The article introduces a new survey-based tool to measure individuals' attitudes toward restorative justice and the associated constructs of empathy and perspective-taking.*

Harm and wrongdoing represent actions that violate rules, law, and social order. Whether intentional or unintentional, acts committed by wrongdoers evoke an emotional response in the harmed individual(s) and within the broader community (Sawyer & Wagner, 2019). It is this emotional response that largely informs the harmed individual's, often negative, attitudes toward wrongdoers and their desire for sanctions that are harsh and punitive. These punitive sanctions, such as incarceration, the death penalty, school suspension, and expulsion, to name a few, are based on principles of retributive justice. Retributive justice posits that individuals who have engaged in harmful acts or rule violations should be sanctioned with punishment and some degree of suffering as a means of having the person “learn their lesson” (Subramanian & Shames, 2013; U.S. Sentencing Commission, 2017).

Support for punitive sanctions may indeed inform policymaking decisions within various governing bodies and institutions (e.g., states and federal laws, judicial courts, and academic judiciary systems). Yet, there is something uniquely troublesome about retributive policies given that the United States has the highest incarceration rate of any industrialized country in the world, with approximately 0.7% of the population currently incarcerated and 3% of all adults having been to prison at some point in their lives (Sawyer & Wagner, 2019). Furthermore, research suggests that punitive sanctions are more heavily imposed upon members of minority communities (Nellis, 2016). Racial and ethnic minorities, such as African Americans, and members of lower socioeconomic status are overrepresented in the carceral system. More than 60% of those in state and federal prisons come from African American or Latinx communities, and two-thirds of those detained in jails report annual incomes under \$12,000 prior to arrest (Alexander, 2012; Nellis, 2016). It is plausible that these disparities are driven by policy, or perhaps more-so by individual's implicit biases and attitudes that inform their support for retributive sanctions.

Justice reform advocates have highlighted how retributive responses to wrongdoing do not promote opportunity for wrongdoers' growth, ignores the needs of victims, and fails to address the impact harm has on communities (Wilson et al., 2017). Thus, it is not only critical to address how punishment affects the wrongdoer, but also to better understand how individual and community-level healing is needed after harm has occurred. Whether it be harm resulting from an interpersonal offense, law violation, or issues of systemic injustice, dividing the lines and focusing solely on retributive approaches to justice that embody punishment and separation appears to be ineffective (Lacey & Pickard, 2015). As an alternative, scholars have suggested the adoption of *restorative* approaches to justice—judicial interventions that return the ability to address and resolve the conflict to those affected by it: victims, offenders, and community members (Robinson & Shapland, 2008; Wilson et al., 2017; Zehr, 2002). Restorative justice is largely defined as a process that creates reconciliation, hope, and healing following events of harm or wrongdoing (Zehr, 2002). As a traditional indigenous judicial practice, restorative justice involves the parties coming together to discuss and collectively resolve justice matters through mutual understanding and agreement (Bazemore & Umbreit, 2001; Marshall, 1998), with a strong focus on healing relationships for the future (Braithwaite, 2002).

Restorative justice has been an understudied phenomenon in psychology, including counseling psychology—a profession whose values and identity embodies the work of advocacy, activism, and social justice (DeBlaere et al., 2019; Vera & Speight, 2003). In reviewing published research in the top counseling psychology journals (e.g., *The Counseling Psychologist*, *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*) at the time of this writing, there were no published articles found examining restorative justice. Therefore, as some have argued, the social justice discourse in counseling psychology has not fully evolved to social justice action (e.g., Singh et al., 2010; Vera & Speight, 2003), and further justice-oriented research is needed (DeBlaere et al., 2019; Varghese et al., 2019). Considering that counseling psychologists are called to engage in research and practice that disrupts oppressive systems (DeBlaere et al., 2019), we argue the need for counseling psychologists to take up the work of restorative justice. Yet, before counseling psychologists are able to engage in this necessary and meaningful work, first a better understanding of individuals' beliefs and attitudes towards restorative justice is needed.

Furthermore, in order to develop a deeper understanding of restorative justice in the psychological literature, there needs to be sound psychometric instruments that fully capture individuals' attitudes towards this phenomenon. The established empirical literature on restorative justice, and more specifically, the measurement of restorative justice is limited. The purpose of this study was thus to develop a research measure examining individuals'

restorative justice attitudes. Measuring restorative justice attitudes is a critical first step to help inform future research and interventions of restorative justice from a psychological lens. The investigation of individuals' attitudes may also create opportunities for public policy change and the implementation of restorative justice practices within various judicial settings. In this article, we begin by describing the theoretical basis of restorative justice and then discuss our development of a measure of restorative justice attitudes. Finally, we conclude by discussing the utility of the measure and its usefulness within psychological research and practice.

## What Is Restorative Justice?

*Restorative justice*, a form of social justice (Winslade, 2018), has been defined as “a process to involve, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offense and to collectively identify and address harms, needs, and obligations, in order to heal and put things as right as possible” (Zehr, 2002, p. 37). Put differently, restorative justice is a process that attempts to create healing and decrease the damages of those who experience injustice and/or wrongdoing (Lacey & Pickard, 2015). Additionally, restorative justice attempts to restore those who have been harmed, whether an individual or the community, to as good or better of a place prior to the occurrence of the harm (Blom et al., 2010; Zehr, 2002). This is most often accomplished through specific restoration processes and practices such as restorative circles (having participants sit in a circle to share dialogue about the harm) and community-building conferences. These restorative-based processes emphasize shared dialogue between parties (e.g., crime victims, the person who harmed them, and the community itself), victim reparation, offender responsibility, and communities of care (Braithwaite, 2002; McCold, 2001). McCold (2001) argued that if attention is not paid to all three concerns (or parties), then the result will not be fully restorative.

Having a shared understanding, between parties, of the negative effects of harm is valuable and is described as being necessary to promote growth and healing (Zehr, 2002). Considering that restorative justice emphasizes accountability and finding resolution for the person who has committed an offense, or who has engaged in some degree of wrongdoing, there is a focus on bringing individuals together as compared to pushing people apart (Gavrielides, 2013; Zehr, 2002). Unlike traditional retributive practices of justice that focus on punishment, limited or no restoration of harmed parties, and entails social exclusion from the community, restorative justice takes on a socially integrative approach to conflict and allows for a peaceful cohabitation amongst community members (Blom et al., 2010; Gavrielides, 2013). Restorative justice values an agreed understanding on the outcomes or sanctions while emphasizing the importance of shared dialogue between parties. To this end, including victims of harm, community members, and perpetrators of

harm together within restorative processes is critical. This collective and relational stance allows individuals to work collaboratively toward agreement on terms of reparations and can be beneficial for all parties to move forward. Restorative justice does not suggest that punishment or sanctioning is not necessary, but rather, emphasizes reconciliation in the process (Bazemore & Umbreit, 2001; Daly, 2002). Restorative justice suggests that disciplinary processes, proceedings, and outcomes do not have to be all about crime and punishment, but rather should emphasize healing (Wenzel et al., 2008). Yet, as some have pointed out, there are limitations to this approach, mostly due to the fact that restorative justice lacks theoretical underpinnings (Gavrielides, 2007). There is instead a focus on integrating multiple principles of restorative justice throughout judicial and healing processes.

### *Principles of Restorative Justice*

In lieu of theory, restorative justice proponents highlight the multiple principles or themes within restorative justice practices, as well as the multiple perspectives held between wrongdoers, victims, and community members that restorative justice processes seek to address. For example, scholars posit that there are specific needs that wrongdoers have that contribute to their reason for engaging in harm or wrongdoing, and additionally, there are needs of victims following events of harm that should be addressed (Jackson, 2009; Zehr, 2002). If effective, addressing these needs should allow for reconciliation and healing. There is also an emphasis on empathy, and being able to understand the perspective of others impacted by harm (Jackson, 2009). It is the consensus of all parties involved that define the appropriateness of a specific outcome, and it is not until parties have engaged in specific restorative-based processes (e.g., victim–offender mediation, community peacemaking circles, and restorative conferences) that these outcomes can be determined (Umbreit et al., 2004; Wenzel et al., 2008).

As referenced earlier, restorative justice principles do not suggest that wrongdoers are given a clean slate, as some scholars have asserted (Brubacher, 2018; Gromet & Darley, 2009; London, 2013), but rather, restorative justice aims to hold wrongdoers accountable for their actions through collective agreements. Based on this component of accountability within restorative justice, some degree of retribution or consequence may still be warranted. Further, because restorative justice emphasizes community engagement, the harm that occurs is not only considered a violation of specific norms, rules, or the law, but also a violation against community members (Gromet & Darley, 2009; Zehr, 2002).

Given the interactional nature of restorative justice, it is plausible that individuals inability to empathize with, and take on, varying perspectives of others might also prohibit some from achieving a true restorative justice

consensus. Côté and Hodgins (1990) defined empathy as the ability to appropriately respond to another person, often evidenced by a heightened awareness of feelings and the use of “I” statements, which conveys the impact of such feelings. Davis (1980) conceptualized differences in an emotional versus an intellectual state of empathy, which is defined as being warm and compassionate toward others (empathic concern) and, alternatively, being able to see things from another person’s point of view (perspective taking). The attitudes that individuals might hold about restorative justice, may be dependent upon the degree to which they empathize and take on the perspectives of others, such as seeing themselves in the other person’s shoes. Some researchers have established a connection between principles of restorative justice and empathy and/or perspective-taking (e.g., Jackson, 2009). However, there appears to be no established comprehensive measures of restorative justice attitudes that embody all of the principles and underlying processes of restorative justice practice that limits the implications of existing literature and our current understanding of restorative justice.

## Measuring Restorative Justice Attitudes

Restorative justice has gained more attention with scholarly publications and public credence into the topic having increased in recent decades (Hermann, 2017), yet there is still limited information concerning individual’s attitudes toward restorative justice. Obtaining information on individual’s restorative justice attitudes may allow for additional opportunities for restorative justice work to be implemented, which in turn may help provide much-needed evidence concerning its effectiveness (Wilson et al., 2017). Developing an understanding of individual’s attitudes about restorative justice may be accomplished through research measurement. As some scholars have suggested, the limited amount of empirical research on restorative justice might be due, in part, to the lack of established psychometrically sound research measures that could be used to fully capture the conceptual framework of restorative justice phenomenon (Gavrielides, 2007; Okimoto et al., 2012), such as individual’s attitudes. Without an observable understanding of people’s attitudes toward restorative justice, the progress in this area may be stunted.

Further, criminological and sociological paradigms have often been criticized for overlooking psychological factors such as attitudes and beliefs (see Laub & Sampson, 2011). From a psychological perspective, justice systems and processes have an emotional impact on individual’s lives, such as their hope, well-being, self-actualization, and potentially, their future self-transformation (DeBlaere et al., 2019; Varghese et al., 2019). Thus, developing effective means of measuring individuals’ attitudes toward restorative justice may help inform investigations of the experiences and psychological effects of those affected by harm, wrongdoing, or injustice. Indeed, one of the predominant

factors that shapes support for changes in public policy is the examination of people's *justice-related attitudes* (Brubacher, 2018; Wilson et al., 2017), that are defined as people's overall evaluation (i.e. favorable vs. unfavorable) of the appropriateness of specific sanctions following events of harm or wrongdoing (Tyler, 2003). However, as mentioned, there are limited research measures of justice-related phenomenon, especially with regard to restorative justice.

### *Existing Instruments*

Research measures that solely examine restorative justice are lacking. However, some researchers (e.g., Okimoto et al., 2012) have examined how individuals' orientation toward restorative approaches differs in comparison to traditional, retributive orientations of justice. For example, the 12-item Retributive Versus Restorative Orientation measure developed by Okimoto et al. (2012) was designed to better understand and predict individuals' conceptualization of justice-related responses. This measure assesses individuals' orientations toward both retributive and restorative conceptualizations of justice together. That is, the measure polarizes participant's responses in two opposite directions as both of these justice-related concepts conceptually differ from one another.

In their study, a retributive orientation was described as a unilateral assertion against the offender, reducing the status and power usurped by the offender through the transgression (Okimoto et al., 2012). On the other hand, a restorative orientation was inferred as achieving a renewed consensus with the affected parties (Okimoto et al., 2012). The researchers noted that the strength of participants' restorative orientation predicted their concrete desires for interventions that fostered a renewed consensus with the offender (e.g., apology seeking, acknowledgment seeking, offender voice, respect, forgiveness, and bilateral decision process), while also maintaining a shared identity by preventing the exclusion of others (e.g., reduced offender punishment and humiliation; Okimoto et al., 2012). A strength of this measure is that it appears to be congruent with restorative justice praxis, however, there are notable development and psychometric limitations to the measure based on best practices in scale development (DeVellis, 2016). For example, the researchers stated that the content for their items was derived based on their research examining situation-specific attitudes about retributive and restorative approaches to justice, however, discussion of their item pool development did not include expert reviewers. As DeVellis (2016) asserted, failure to consult with others by expert review may lead to biased item development, which in turn, might impact the validity of the instrument score (historically referred to as content validity).

Further, it was not the authors' intention to develop a psychometrically sound instrument, but rather, to examine two starkly different conceptualizations of

justice for the use of their own independent research study. Although Okimoto et al.'s (2012) intention may have been to measure two distinct conceptualizations of justice, it is plausible that a singular measure of each of these perceptions of justice would be more appropriate for future researchers interested in investigating restorative justice (Green & Citrin, 1994). To this end, repackaging the construct of restorative justice as its own distinct measure may offer a fresh perspective in the literature and may also allow for a fuller understanding of all the aspects of justice unique to the restorative justice domain. In the current study, we aimed to examine attitudes associated with restorative conceptualizations of justice solely.

There is a need to gauge people's attitudes towards restorative justice as a means of assessing their willingness and acceptance of restorative justice interventions. Put differently, examining individual's attitudes may offer psychologists' clearer insights into what aspects of restorative justice may be received more readily. Because people's attitudes influence their behavior via intention (Armitage & Conner, 2001) counseling psychologists could have an impact on justice-related fields by emphasizing the implementation of restorative justice-based prevention and intervention strategies in their work, and supporting the use of restorative justice across various judicial contexts. To enhance these efforts, it is important that counseling psychologists use psychometrically sound instruments to measure individual's support for restorative justice. However, as previously noted, the empirical literature on restorative justice is scant and based on our review to date, there are no measures that solely focus on individuals' attitudes as they relate to restorative justice. Thus, it is necessary to develop a scale of restorative justice attitudes that offers a complete measure of this phenomenon and meets psychometric standards.

## *The Present Study*

Meta-analytic evidence suggests that justice attitudes are the strongest predictor of harm deterrence and prevention (Wilson et al., 2017). Recognizing the importance of Wilson et al.'s (2017) findings, we developed the Restorative Justice Attitudes Scale (RJAS) to better understand individuals' attitudes toward alternative sanctions, as compared to punitive responses to justice, in addition to considering how more harmonious approaches that emphasize unity, inclusion, and community-building, might be more useful. Given the limited nature of empirical research on restorative justice, we largely drew our perspectives from conceptual arguments of restorative justice.

## **Study I**

Study 1 involved the development and refinement of the item pool, factor and item selection, and examination of initial evidence for the reliability and

validity of the RJAS. After developing and screening items for the RJAS, we sought to examine whether the construct of restorative justice attitudes would be best represented as unidimensional or multidimensional and also to evaluate the initial internal consistency of the RJAS. Initial internal structure evidence of validity and reliability for the RJAS would be provided if the RJAS demonstrates adequate factor structure based on the themes and/or principles represented in the restorative justice literature (Hypothesis 1), and if the RJAS yielded an adequate internal consistency score (Hypothesis 2).

### *Scale Development and Item Construction*

**Items.** A literature review was conducted to capture emergent themes and inform item content (e.g., Bazemore & Umbreit, 2001; Gavrielides, 2013; Okimoto et al., 2012; Wenzel et al., 2008; Zehr, 2002). Based on these themes, we developed an initial pool of 115 items.

**Restoration, Harm and Needs.** Items under this theme covered research on the restoration process of restorative justice. This theme was defined as a process that involves individuals being able to identify and address the harm caused toward oneself or others while understanding there is a need to restore relationships (e.g., “I believe there should be an equal concern toward healing the lives of both those who have been harmed and those who cause harm”).

**Accountability.** Accountability, for the purpose of our study, is described as the process in which offenders of wrongdoing are able to gain a deeper understanding of the depths of their actions, including accepting responsibility and the mutually agreed-upon consequences for their actions (e.g., “I believe that offenders should work to develop a greater understanding of their actions as opposed to just being compliant to laws”).

**Engagement.** Given the unique nature of restorative justice and its inclusion of a coalition of involved parties, engagement is defined as an inclusive and collaborative process to which stakeholders (i.e., victims, offenders of wrongdoing, victims, and community members) are actively involved in the justice process, and/or working together to determine outcomes following events of harm (e.g., “Inclusive, collaborative processes between victims and offenders of wrongdoing are necessary to repair harm”).

**Empathic Understanding.** This theme included items geared toward measuring the degree to which individuals endorse a demonstration of care or concern toward others (e.g., “It is okay to empathize with both victims and offenders”).

*Expert Feedback.* Initial content evidence of validity was first examined through a review of the items by five national experts in restorative justice literature and processes (Worthington & Whittaker, 2006). Before beginning a sorting process, these independent reviewers were given the definitions of restorative justice and the themes previously described. The independent reviewers were instructed to sort the initial 115 written items, presented in random order, into one of five categories: (a) restoration/harm and needs, (b) accountability, (c) engagement, (d) empathic understanding, and (e) unsure. Reviewers were also asked to provide qualitative feedback about the content clarity of the items, and whether or not they believed the items were reflective of restorative justice attitudes. At the conclusion of the first round of sorting, fifty-seven items were sorted into the theme-based categories by at least four of the five judges, thus these items were retained without revision. The remaining 38 items only had consensus amongst three of the five reviewers. These 38 items were revised and sent back to the reviewers for a second sorting. The 20 items that had fewer than three reviewers sort them into congruent categories were discarded. The conclusion of these two sorting rounds resulted in 95 items being retained out of the original 115-item pool. In addition, reviewers provided commentary on the content quality of the items and their appropriateness to be included for the current measure. Some items such as “Punishing individuals for the harm they cause is the only way to teach accountability” were written with the intent of being reverse-scored items, however, based on expert feedback, some of these proposed items more closely aligned with retributive justice. Given that these items appeared to measure alternative aspects of justice, these items were deemed unsuitable for the overall objective of the current measurement. Thus, 16 of the negatively worded items that emphasized punishment and/or separation were removed. As such, an initial pool of 79 items of the RJAS was retained and administered to participants in study one.

## Method

### *Procedure*

After receiving institutional review board approval, US adult residents were invited to participate in the study. Participants were recruited via online Listservs and social media (e.g., Instagram and Facebook) recruitment. Participants were offered an incentive for their participation, a chance to be included in a raffle of 1 of 5 \$20 Amazon gift cards. Participants were asked to include their name and email address via a separate link at the end of the survey to ensure the confidentiality of their survey responses. All participants were provided with the informed consent page that stated the participants could proceed to the next page to begin the study, or close the browser at any time if they no longer wished to participate.

**Data Screening.** To examine threats of validity, we assessed the data for any duplicate entries based on respondent's IP addresses and examined if any completion times were judged to be unrealistic (under 2 minutes). In total, 445 participants accessed the survey. However, 71 participants were removed for not completing any measure items, and an additional 59 participants were removed due to not having completed at least 80% of the measure. Little's missing completely at random (MCAR) was then performed to determine whether missing data from the remaining participants were missing completely at random. Little's MCAR indicated that data were not missing completely at random,  $\chi^2(351) = 305.61, p = .027$ . Because less than 5% of the data were missing per the measure and by categorical variable, we used expectation maximization imputation to impute missing values (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012).

## Participants

Overall, a sample of 315 participants completed the survey for Study 1. The age range was 18–76 years old ( $M = 35.08$ ;  $Mdn = 32$ ;  $SD = 12.45$ ). See Table 1 for full demographics.

## Measures

**Demographic Questionnaire.** Participants completed a demographic questionnaire that asked about age, race, biological sex, gender, sexual orientation, education, income level, geographic region, and political affiliation.

## Preliminary RJAS

The preliminary RJAS consisted of 79 items measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) with higher scores indicating a higher favorability or positive attitudes toward restorative justice processes. Mean scores were then used to calculate a total scale score and subscale scores.

## Results

### Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

The items of the RJAS were developed based on a priori conceptualization of themes representing restorative justice attitudes. However, in keeping with scale development recommendations (Costello & Osborne, 2005; Worthington & Whittaker, 2006), as a precursor to a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), an EFA, using principal axis factoring, was conducted to assess the underlying factor structure of the RJAS and to refine the item pool.

**Table 1.** Sample Demographic Composition for Study 1 and Study 2

Variable	Study 1 (N = 315)		Study 2 (N = 335)	
	n	%	N	%
Race				
White, non-Latinx	188	60	243	72
Black or African American	48	15	38	11
Latinx	21	7	16	5
Asian or Asian American	17	5	9	3
Biracial or multiracial	24	6	14	4
Arab, Middle Eastern or North African	5	2	—	—
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, American Indian, or other	4	1	13	4
Sexual orientation				
Heterosexual	218	69	255	76
Gay or lesbian	34	11	27	8
Bisexual	29	9	37	11
Asexual, pansexual, or different identity	30	9	11	3
Gender				
Cis man	65	21	73	22
Cis woman	209	66	217	65
Trans man, trans woman, nonconforming, or different identity	10	3	2	<1
Political affiliation				
Democrat	178	56	169	50
Republican	19	6	42	12
Independent	45	14	50	15
Libertarian	4	1	3	1
None	55	17	60	18
Other	13	4	5	2
Religion				
Christianity	109	35	153	46
Catholicism	29	9	44	13
Buddhism	8	3	10	3
Judaism	8	3	13	4
Islam	7	2	1	<1
Hinduism	6	3	6	2
None	121	38	84	25
Other	27	9	20	6

(continued)

**Table 1.** (continued)

Variable	Study 1 (N = 315)		Study 2 (N = 335)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Education				
Completed some high school	3	1	2	1
High school diploma or GED	14	4	30	9
Completed some college	44	14	54	16
Associates degree	12	4	13	4
Bachelor's degree	74	23	55	16
Master's degree	111	35	137	41
Doctoral, or other professional degree	56	18	43	13
Region				
Midwest	95	30	165	49
Northeast	55	18	56	17
Southeast	61	19	47	14
Southwest	44	14	37	11
West	56	18	25	8

Note. Where possible, some categories were collapsed where  $n < 3$ .

We conducted a series of exploratory factor analyses to assist in the identification of items and the dimensions that best reflect the phenomenon of restorative justice attitudes. We expected that the dimensions, if they existed, would be correlated therefore an oblique rotation (Promax) was used.

Following [Worthington and Whittaker's \(2006\)](#) recommendations for factor analysis, multiple criteria were used to evaluate and refine the factor structure of the RJAS. First, we examined the determinant value, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin Measure (KMO; [Kaiser & Rice, 1974](#)) of sampling adequacy, and Bartlett's test of sphericity. According to [Worthington and Whittaker \(2006\)](#), an analysis is appropriate for an EFA should there be a determinant value of 0.00001, a KMO value above .60 (the closer to 1 the better) and Bartlett's test of sphericity significant. Our analysis resulted in a determinant value below the cutoff, the KMO value was .87 and Bartlett's test of sphericity,  $\chi^2(190) = 2684.21, p < .001$ .

Next, in order to determine the number of scale factors, we relied on visual observation of the scree plot and the interpretability of the factor solution. On the basis of these criteria, it was determined that a four- or five-factor solution would be best, however, the scree plot was difficult to interpret. Therefore, a parallel analysis ([O'Connor, 2000](#)) was conducted. In parallel analysis, actual eigenvalues greater than the average eigenvalues or the 95th percentile eigenvalues of 1000 simulated random data sets are suggested for factor

retention (Hayton et al., 2004). The parallel analysis indicated that five factors should be extracted, as the eigenvalues were greater than those obtained from simulating random data. Based on 1000 random data sets, the first five factors had raw data eigenvalues (21.59, 6.26, 2.82, 2.32, and 2.11) greater than the 95th percentile of randomly generated eigenvalues (2.26, 2.15, 2.06, 1.99, and 1.94). Thus, we specified a 5-factor solution. We then examined the rotated factor matrix and deleted items that did not load on a primary factor with an inter-item loading above .32 and items with communalities below .40 (Worthington & Whittaker, 2006). Additionally, cross-loading items with values of greater than .39 on at least two factors were deleted (Costello & Osborne, 2005; Kaiser, 1960). This item-parceling process was continued as unfit items were deleted, and the EFA was re-run until all items loaded without overlap on additional factors while also maintaining the fit of all the aforementioned criteria. This resulted in the removal of 59 items, with 20 items retained for the final version. The loadings of variables on factors, communalities, eigenvalues, and percentage of variance accounted for are shown in Table 2, with the variables grouped by the size of the loading.

The first factor (eigenvalue = 6.58) accounted for 32.92% of the variance and was interpreted to reflect individuals' Empathic Understanding (EU) toward justice-involved individuals ( $\alpha = .83$ ). The second factor (eigenvalue = 2.36) accounted for 11.83% of the variance and was interpreted to reflect individuals' attitudes about the Harm and Needs (H&N) associated with wrongdoing ( $\alpha = .79$ ). The third factor (eigenvalue = 1.69) accounted for 8.46% of the variance and was interpreted to reflect Restoration Processes (RP), characterized by individuals endorsing items associated with positive feelings toward restoration processes as a whole ( $\alpha = .82$ ). The fourth factor (eigenvalue = 1.37) accounted for 6.89% of the variance and was interpreted to reflect aspects of items associated with Accountability (ACT;  $\alpha = .81$ ). The fifth factor (eigenvalue = 1.02) accounted for 5.09% of the variance and was interpreted to reflect Community Engagement (CE), items endorsed were based on community members as stakeholders and who should have an active involvement in the justice-related process ( $\alpha = .75$ ). The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the total scale based on these five factors was .89. As the rotation in the EFA was oblique, all factors were correlated as expected. The internal consistency scores for all five factors were acceptable, ranging from  $\alpha = .75$  to .83, which taken together, presented good initial evidence of internal reliability of the data.

## Study 2

After the final set of items for the RJAS were identified, we proceeded to examine the stability of the RJAS factor structure by conducting a CFA with a new sample of respondents. We examined whether the RJAS score would

**Table 2.** Factor Loadings and Communalities Based on the Final 20-Item—Exploratory Factor Analysis (Study 1)

No.	Item	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	$h^2$
#1	It is important to empathize with individuals who have caused harm to others	<b>.855</b>	-.007	.040	.002	-.037	.740
#2	It is important to show empathy toward offenders of wrongdoing	<b>.760</b>	.059	.064	-.068	-.001	.668
#3	People should empathize with others, even if the person has caused harm	<b>.571</b>	.084	-.030	.041	.106	.441
#4	Showing support to offenders can be beneficial in helping the individual accept responsibility for their actions	<b>.471</b>	.267	-.116	.119	.065	.472
#5	It is important to understand the needs of offenders that are connected to the harm they caused	.066	<b>.778</b>	-.030	.088	-.059	.677
#6	Offenders of wrongdoing have needs associated with the harm they caused that justice processes should address	-.009	<b>.738</b>	.001	-.012	.054	.566
#7	There should be a greater emphasis on understanding those who cause harm	.122	<b>.706</b>	.028	-.057	-.094	.557

*(continued)*

**Table 2.** (continued)

No.	Item	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	$h^2$
#8	I believe there should be an equal concern toward healing the lives of both those who have been harmed and those who cause harm	.085	<b>.620</b>	.108	-.112	.001	.483
#9	Offenders of wrongdoing should work to restore relationships with those whom they hurt	-.104	-.004	<b>.800</b>	.037	.026	.610
#10	Offenders of wrongdoing should repair relationships with those who have been harmed	.022	-.046	<b>.765</b>	.095	-.017	.608
#11	It is important for offenders and victims to engage in face-to-face dialogue	.087	.032	<b>.637</b>	.010	-.060	.456
#12	Inclusive, collaborative processes between victims and offenders of wrongdoing are necessary to repair harm	.068	.124	<b>.604</b>	-.096	.060	.506
#13	It is important that offenders of wrongdoing accept responsibility for their actions	-.005	-.082	-.001	<b>.856</b>	-.065	.634
#14	Acknowledging ones wrongdoing is important	.201	-.151	.005	<b>.818</b>	-.049	.616
#15	I believe individuals should be encouraged to understand the impact of their harm	-.156	.300	-.004	<b>.538</b>	.039	.479

(continued)

**Table 2.** (continued)

No.	Item	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	$h^2$
#16	Truth-telling in the form of an admission of responsibility for what happened on the part of the person who caused the harm is important	-.135	.055	.122	<b>.499</b>	.169	.427
#17	Community members should have an active voice in defining justice for victims	.058	-.218	.063	-.118	<b>.780</b>	.504
#18	Justice processes should be more inclusive of individuals within the community	.021	.045	.044	.003	<b>.688</b>	.545
#19	I believe victims of harm need the community's support in order to heal	.055	-.015	-.069	.147	<b>.597</b>	.432
#20	The community has a responsibility to help victims of harm address their needs	-.061	.192	-.074	.014	<b>.574</b>	.401
Eigenvalues		6.585	2.367	1.692	1.376	1.018	
% of variance		32.925	11.835	8.460	6.878	5.089	
Cumulative %		32.925	44.759	53.219	60.097	65.186	

Note.  $p < .05$  for bold statistics; RJAS = Restorative Justice Attitudes Scale.

relate to other constructs similar in theory. If the RJAS score was found to relate to other constructs in the hypothesized manner, this would constitute initial evidence of the validity of the RJAS score (Hammer et al., 2018). First, per the literature on retributive and restorative justice, more favorable attitudes (i.e., higher RJAS score) should be associated with less favorable attitudes of a retributive orientation (Hypothesis 3), and more favorable attitudes of a restorative orientation (Hypothesis 4). In addition, given that restorative justice emphasizes greater concern toward others, and a greater degree of understanding of harm associated with the various parties involved (Gromet & Darley, 2009), we anticipated that more

favorable attitudes (i.e., higher RJAS score) would be associated with greater Empathic Concern (Hypothesis 5) and greater perspective-taking (Hypothesis 6).

## Method

### *Procedures*

We invited adults residing in the United States to participate in the study. Participants were recruited through online Listservs and social media (e.g., Instagram and Facebook). In addition, some participants were recruited through a large Midwest university. Participants were provided an incentive for their participation, which included the option to enter a raffle for 1 of 5 \$20 Amazon gift cards. After providing informed consent, participants were presented with a demographic questionnaire, followed by the remaining measures in a counterbalanced order.

*Data Screening.* To examine threats of validity, we assessed the data for any duplicate entries based on respondent's IP addresses and examined if any completion times were deemed as potentially being unrealistic (under 2 minutes). Based on these criteria 10 participants were removed. In total, 526 participants accessed the survey, however, 148 participants were deleted for not completing any survey items, and an additional 15 participants were removed for not completing at least 80% of the survey items. Eighteen participants were removed for identifying as currently living outside of the United States. There were no missing data.

### *Participants*

Overall, 335 participants were included in Study 2. The age range was 18–76 years old ( $M = 34.87$ ;  $Mdn = 29$ ;  $SD = 15.8$ ). See [Table 3](#) for full demographic characteristics.

### *Measures*

*The Restorative Justice Attitudes Scale.* Participants completed the 20-item version of the RJAS that included only the items retained from the EFA. The same scoring procedures and directions to participants were used as noted in Study 1.

*Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI).* The IRI ([Davis, 1980](#)) is a 28-item scale answered on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*does not describe me well*) to 5 (*describes me very well*). The measure has 4 subscales; however, the current study only used two of the subscales: Perspective Taking (the tendency to

**Table 3.** Restorative Justice Attitudes Scale Fit Statistics: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Models

Model	$\chi^2$	df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA [90% CI]	SRMR
One-factor CFA	981.09***	170	.680	.668	.120 [.112, .127]	.093
Five-factor CFA	390.72***	160	.909	.892	.066 [.057, .074]	.058
Second order CFA	428.83***	165	.896	.880	.069 [.061, .077]	.065
Bifactor CFA	305.92***	140	.935	.911	.060 [.050, .069]	.042

Note. CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker–Lewis index; RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation; CI = confidence interval; SRMR = standardized root-mean square residual.

\*\*\* $p < .001$ .

spontaneously adopt the psychological point of view of others) and Empathetic Concern (the “other-oriented” feelings of sympathy and concern for unfortunate others; Davis, 1980). Each subscale was comprised of 7-items. Subscale scores were obtained by summing the items, with higher scores indicating higher levels of empathy and perspective-taking. The internal reliability of the two subscales has been reported to range from .71 to .77 (Davis, 1980). The Cronbach’s alpha reliability for the 2 subscales used in the current study was as follows: Empathetic Concern ( $\alpha = .78$ ) and Perspective Taking ( $\alpha = .81$ ).

**Retributive and Restorative Justice Orientations.** The Retributive and Restorative Justice Orientations (Okimoto et al., 2012), a 12-item measure includes six items which assess retributive orientations and six items assessing a restorative orientation. The scale is measured using a Likert-type rating scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), with higher scores being indicative of a stronger or positive orientation toward the respective dimension. The measure has previously shown to have good reliability for both dimensions; retributive ( $\alpha = .88$ ) and restorative ( $\alpha = .85$ ) (Okimoto et al., 2012), which are similar to the retributive and restorative orientations reliability estimates observed in the current study:  $\alpha = .89$  and  $\alpha = .80$ , respectively.

### Analysis Plan

The CFA was conducted, using AMOS V.24 structural equation modeling software (Arbuckle, 2015), on the five-factor, 20-item version of the RJAS derived from the EFA. We employed a maximum likelihood estimation with standard errors and chi-square test that are robust to non-normality. If the model is deemed a “good fit” for the data, then it would provide evidence that supports the internal factor-structure and content validity of the scale (Worthington & Whittaker, 2006). Based on established norms (Hu & Bentler, 1999) to determine model fit, one has to meet several model fit indices cutoff values; the chi-square should be nonsignificant, the comparative fit index

(CFI) and Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) should range between .90 and .95, which is indicative of an acceptable to good model fit (Kline, 2005). In addition, the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) should have a value below .08, with a preferable cutoff of .06 (Hu & Bentler, 1999), and the standardized root-mean-square root residual (SRMR) should have a value between .05 and .08, which is generally indicative of an acceptable fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Worthington & Whittaker, 2006). Of note, although the  $\chi^2$  is a test of model misspecification and is expected to be nonsignificant, models rarely have an exact fit with the data, and  $\chi^2$  is sensitive to sample size (Marsh et al., 1988).

## Results

### *Confirmatory Factor Analysis*

In a continual examination of the factor structure of the RJAS, a CFA was conducted with the sample for Study 2. Model fit was evaluated following best practice guidelines (Hu & Bentler, 1999), using multiple fit indices. Four different models were tested: (a) a single-factor model, (b) a five-factor oblique model with all items loading on their respective factors, (c) a second-order model, in which the five factors were predicted by a higher-order restorative justice attitudes factor, and (d) a bifactor model, in which items load both on their respective group-based factor and a general factor. A one-factor model yielded poor fit of the data, and although the second-order model was better, full support of model fit was not established. We did however find support for model fit with the five-factor oblique CFA model,  $\chi^2(160, N = 335) = 390.72, p < .001$ ; CFI = .909; TLI = .892; RMSEA = .066, 95% CI [.057, .074]; and SRMR = .058. Nonetheless, the bifactor model yielded the best fit as compared to all other models (see Table 3).

**Bifactor Model.** To determine the structure and dimensionality of the RJAS, a bifactor analysis was conducted. Bifactor modeling is an empirical approach for examining the extent to which scale scores reflect a single common factor, even when the data are multidimensional (Reise, 2012) Table 4. An examination of the bifactor model is important when considering the unidimensional versus multidimensional question of whether a scale should be calculated with total and/or subscale scores (Choi et al., 2017; Hammer et al., 2018). In addition, it is worth exploring whether the subscale scores provide a unique contribution above and beyond a total scale score, and whether such subscale scores are indeed reliable. To explore this, we tested the model fit of the RJAS by way of a bifactor model that included a general factor (representing restorative justice attitudes collectively) and the five group factors. The bifactor model demonstrated adequate fit,  $\chi^2(140, N = 335) =$

**Table 4.** Restorative Justice Attitudes Scale Standardized Factor Loadings: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Models

Item	Five-factor						Bi-factor	
	One-factor	EU	H&N	RP	ACT	CE	Second-order factor	General    Group
1	.658	.768					.761	.674    .374
2	.681	.779					.780	.694    .332
3	.651	.739					.743	.626    .488
4	.655	.665					.667	.666    .088 <sup>ns</sup>
5	.650		.754				.756	.697    .370
6	.590		.693				.696	.626    .445 <sup>ns</sup>
7	.529		.582				.575	.586    -.009 <sup>ns</sup>
8	.585		.613				.614	.635    -.058 <sup>ns</sup>
9	.647			.810			.813	.530    .611
10	.630			.804			.808	.510    .623
11	.516			.685			.685	.414    .561
12	.609			.717			.709	.502    .506
13	.356				.644		.642	.235    .662
14	.315				.613		.620	.202 <sup>ns</sup> .644
15	.504				.755		.752	.442    .572
16	.501				.686		.685	.398    .530
17	.286					.464	.425	.170 <sup>ns</sup> .545
18	.555					.620	.645	.508    .329
19	.477					.654	.641	.390    .538
20	.436					.583	.591	.362    .439

Note. EU = Empathic Understanding; H&N = Harm and Needs; RP = Restoration Processes; ACT = Accountability; CE = Community Engagement. All loadings are statistically significant at  $p < .001$  unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>ns</sup> = nonsignificant.

305.92,  $p < .001$ ; CFI = .935; TLI = .911; RMSEA = .060, 95% CI [.050, .069]; SRMR = .042.

Akaike's information criterion (AIC) was used to compare the fit of the five-factor oblique and bifactor models, as these were the only two models that achieved adequate fit. Burnham and Anderson (2002) stated that the model with the lower AIC value is considered to have a superior fit, and a difference exceeding 6 and especially 10 provides evidence of model fit difference. All analyses were completed at the 5% significant level. Fit comparisons revealed that the bifactor model fit better than the five-factor oblique model as indicated by a lower AIC value of 445.92 as compared to 490.72. The factor loading patterns for all models are displayed in Table 5. Almost all items for the bifactor model had a strong standardized factor loading on the general factor

and a weak loading on the specific factor. These results suggest that most of the variance in items in the RJAS was accounted for by the general factor.

### *Reliability and Validity Investigations*

Omega coefficient  $\omega_H$  and  $\omega_{HS}$ , which are factor analytic model-based reliability estimates, were computed using a bifactor indices calculator (Dueber, 2016) to evaluate the utility of composite scale scores.  $\omega_H$  reflects the percentage of systematic variance in total scores that can be attributed to individual differences on the general factor, in which values greater than .75 are indicative of total scores being essentially considered unidimensional (Reise et al., 2013). However,  $\omega_{HS}$  are residual coefficients that assess the validity of subscales after controlling for the general factor (Rodriguez et al., 2016). The general factor  $\omega_H$  was .78, and the  $\omega_{HS}$  were .15, .61, .06, .49, and .43 for the group factors, respectively. This suggests that the RJAS total score predominately reflects a single general factor, which permits the use of a total scale score interpretation as a sufficient and reliable measure of restorative justice attitudes. Further, the poor  $\omega_{HS}$  scores observed for the subscales (EU and RP in particular) suggest that the subscale score's reliability is overwhelmingly inflated by the general factor and does not reliably measure these intended narrower specific factors. Common variance revealed a similar pattern; the total RJAS score accounted for 54.4% of variance whereas the EU, H&N, RP, ACT, and CE subscales explained 5.0%, 14.8%, 3.4%, 13.5, and 9.0%, respectively. The percentage of uncontaminated correlations (PUC) was 84.2%, suggesting a reasonable quantity of correlations reflect general factor variance (Rodriguez et al., 2016).

*Factor Determinacy (FD) and Construct Reliability/Replicability (H index).* The FD and H index for the RJAS score were examined in the confirmatory subsample. An FD < .90 would indicate that any observed differences in the restorative justice attitudes general factor score are indicative of true individual differences of the factor, while an H index less than .80 would indicate that the restorative justice attitudes latent variable is likely to be replicable across studies and useful in an SEM measurement model (Rodriguez et al., 2016). Factor determinacies for the general factor were .93, and .66, .85, .62, .84, and .75, for the respective group factors. The general factor RJAS FD (.93) and H index (.89) scores were above the recommended thresholds. Based on these validity analyses, it is appropriate for the RJAS measure to be utilized using a total scale score, thus representing a concrete unidimensional construct (Gorsuch, 1983; Rodriguez et al., 2016).

*Internal Consistency.* Internal consistency reliability coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) estimates for the RJAS score were calculated separately for the exploratory and

**Table 5.** Alpha Coefficients and Correlations Between the RJAS, Retributive and Restorative Orientations, and IRI for Study 2

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	M	SD	Range	$\alpha$
1 RJAS-EU	—										14.69	3.01	4–20	.82
2 RJAS-H&N	.35*	—									17.42	2.26	4–20	.77
3 RJAS-RP	.68*	.38*	—								15.55	2.74	4–20	.74
4 RJAS-ACT	.51*	.31*	.46*	—							12.89	3.27	4–20	.84
5 RJAS-CE	.38*	.42*	.40*	.49*	—						15.58	2.54	4–20	.66
6 RJAS-Total	.80*	.62*	.79*	.77*	.71*	—					76.13	10.34	20–100	.89
7 Retributive	-.40*	.04	-.37*	-.14*	-.09	-.27*	—				22.88	8.04	6–42	.89
8 Restorative	.25*	.44*	.26*	.45*	.32*	.46*	.13*	—			29.45	6.15	6–42	.80
9 IRI-EC	.24*	.21*	.20*	.08	.29*	.27*	-.15*	.16*	—		28.37	4.64	5–35	.78
10 IRI-PT	.27*	.16*	.20*	.09	.16*	.23*	-.19*	.05	.56*	—	27.37	4.76	5–35	.81

Note. RJAS = Restorative Justice Attitudes Scale; EU = Empathic Understanding; H&N = Harm and Needs; RP = Restoration Processes; ACT = Accountability; CE = Community Engagement; Total = RJAS Total Scale; Retributive = Retributive Orientations Scale; Restorative = Restorative Orientations Scale; IRI = Interpersonal Reactivity Index; EC = Empathic Concern; PT = Perspective Taking.

\* $p < .05$ .

confirmatory subsamples. The total RJAS score demonstrated internal consistency in both the exploratory ( $\alpha = .89$ ) and confirmatory ( $\alpha = .89$ ) subsamples. See Table 5 for the RJAS subscale reliability coefficients.

*Convergent Evidence of Validity.* Two-tailed Pearson product-moment correlations between the total RJAS score and the scores of the other instruments were examined (see Table 5). Overall, correlations were significant and in the expected directions. The RJAS total score was significant and negatively related to retributive orientations,  $r = -.27$ . As such, higher scores on the RJAS were correlated with lower scores on the retributive orientation subscale, in support of Hypothesis 3. However, the total RJAS score was significant and positively related to restorative orientations,  $r = .46$ . This suggests that the construct of restorative justice attitudes and restorative orientations are related, which supported our Hypothesis 4. We also examined correlations between the RJAS scores and measures of interpersonal activity: empathic concern and perspective-taking. There were several significant factor inter-correlations in accordance with guidelines established by Cohen et al. (2013), supporting hypotheses 5 and 6; see Table 5. Although the majority of these correlations were small, results suggest that as scores on the RJAS increased, so did individuals scores on both the Empathy and Perspective-Taking subscales.

## Discussion

The purpose of this research was to develop a scale to measure individuals' attitudes toward restorative justice considering that previous measures of restorative justice only appear to examine singular aspects of this phenomenon. Although this earlier work (e.g., Okimoto et al., 2012) helped contribute to our understanding of restorative justice, we offer this new measure as a robust instrument that provides a more complete conceptualization of individuals' restorative justice attitudes. The results from Study 1 provided support for a five-factor solution composed of five restorative justice-based constructs: Empathic Understanding, Harms and Needs, Restoration Processes, Accountability, and Community Engagement.

In Study 2, the goodness of fit indices within the confirmatory factor analyses supported the five-factor model over a single factor and second-order model. Inter-correlations among the subscales were significant although modest, indicating the five subscales measured five related yet distinct constructs. Yet, it was the bifactor model that resulted in the best model fit of the data, and had a significantly better fit of the data than the five-factor model. To determine whether it is justifiable to calculate and interpret total and/or subscale scores for the RJAS, it was necessary to determine if the RJAS total score and five subscale scores truly represented the constructs of interest. The

results suggested that much of each RJAS subscale's true score variance was accounted for by the general factor rather than the specific group factors. Model-based reliability analyses also provided support for the use of the RJAS total scores to represent the general construct but did not provide clear support for the use of raw subscale scores to represent the narrower subdomain factors, which suggests that the RJAS should be represented using a total scale score as compared to relying solely on subscale scores. As such, the RJAS should be scored by summing all scale items to obtain a total scale score. The final 20-item scale evidenced good reliability with a Cronbach alpha within an acceptable range.

Several external scales were included to examine the evidence of convergent and discriminate validity of the RJAS. As hypothesized, the RJAS total score was negatively correlated with retributive orientations, and positively correlated with restorative orientations. This means that respondents who scored higher on the RJAS were less likely to endorse attitudes associated with retributive concepts of justice, and more likely to endorse favorable attitudes toward restorative responses to justice. In addition, higher total scale scores on the RJAS were indicative of respondents endorsing a higher degree of empathy for others, and a greater ability to take on the perspective of others, which is consistent with the core fundamental ideas of restorative justice. Of note, however, while the correlation between the RJAS and IRI subscales were statistically significant, the effects were small, suggesting a minimal overlap in these constructs. It is plausible that the multiple perspectives within restorative justice conflate these relationships, specifically given the various vantage points and differences between wrongdoers, victims, and community members.

The results derived from our investigations substantially add to the current literature on restorative justice by re-affirming the principles that represent this construct. Items of the RJAS embody the essence of empathy, which is needed in order to transform and transcend the way in which we respond to one another. As a community of people, we must empathize and work toward better understanding one another. In a justice sense, it is important that we gain greater clarity on how to best respond to individuals and communities after harmful experiences, while also working to understand individuals' needs. Yet, it is also important to recognize that the vast majority of the RJAS items appear to address the harms and needs associated with those who have engaged in some degree of harm or wrongdoing, and how one might empathize with wrongdoers as compared to victims or community members.

As explicated by [Thomas-Peter \(2006\)](#), in order to understand what psychological interventions are most appropriate to reduce the risk of harm and wrongdoing, it would first be helpful to start by understanding the complexity of people and their individual circumstances. As we learn more about individuals' attitudes toward wrongdoers, in particular, we may come to

better understand how to hold wrongdoers accountable for their actions, and in turn, how such changes impact the attitudes of those in the broader community. Items derived from the RJAS can help to illustrate how individuals perceive wrongdoers taking responsibility for their actions can have an impact on their ability to, together, move forward. As initially posited, items addressing restoration and engagement uncovered how interactions between all parties (i.e., victim, offender, and community members) can be examined throughout a restorative justice process. These items reflect a focus on inclusive and collaborative processes, such as the importance of face-to-face dialogue, which is certainly emphasized in practices of restorative justice. To this end, the RJAS embodies a cohesive collection of items that represent the fundamental goals of restorative justice not solely represented in previously established empirical measures.

### *Limitations*

There are several issues that future research must address to advance our understanding of the utility and limitations of the RJAS. First, as mentioned, the theoretical basis of restorative justice is not clear, as restorative justice may be examined differently across various contexts (Gavrielides, 2007). Although we did inform our basis of item construction and development from expert review and the extant literature, there still lies a limited theoretical understanding of restorative justice. There was also a potential for self-selection bias in the participant samples considering the nature of our research recruitment strategies. Further, the demographic characteristics for both samples were limited and do not reflect the larger general US.-based population. For example, both samples were overrepresented by a high proportion of White individuals, educated people, and also cisgender women. Such differences (along with religion and political affiliation) may impact how individuals perceive wrongdoing and justice, which is something we encourage future research to investigate more fully. Examinations across more diverse samples than was obtained in the current studies will be helpful. For example, it would be important to examine differences in restorative justice attitudes across gender, race and/or ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, and the intersectionality of these identities (Lewis & Grzanka, 2016; Lewis & Neville, 2015). Examining the factor structure and validity of the RJAS score across diverse samples will also increase the generalizability of the measure.

Instrument validation is also an ongoing process (American Educational Research Association, 2014). A measure should also be relatively temporally stable, which is captured by test–retest reliability. This was not examined in the current studies. It is therefore imperative that the evidence of reliability and validity of the RJAS continue to be examined through future research investigations. Despite these limitations, as counseling psychologists work

toward infusing restorative justice into current social justice practices, it is our hope that the RJAS will be used to promote holistic change in various justice-related arenas.

### ***Implications for Practice, Advocacy, Education/Training, and Research***

Considering that counseling psychologists are equipped with the knowledge and skills of the field, including research, advocacy, and the ability to teach others, we assert that counseling psychologists are best equipped to transform the justice landscape by emphasizing restorative justice (Varghese et al., 2019). Given the novel nature and referencing of restorative justice in psychology literature, we present ways in which counseling psychologists may use restorative justice, and the RJAS in particular, to generate knowledge, develop policy, and train others (Scheel et al., 2018; Varghese et al., 2019). Counseling psychologists are encouraged to investigate the experiences of those affected by injustice (Varghese et al., 2019), including the emotional impact that follows. Restorative justice interventions may help to heal emotional wounds and may provide collective psychological healing to individuals and communities in need. This can be established in a number of ways.

First, with regard to clinical practice, counseling psychologists are encouraged to serve as restorative justice facilitators. Serving as group facilitators may provide insight into the distinct areas needed for reconciliation and healing. Given that healing occurs as a result of therapeutic factors that arise as a group bonds, members share their struggles, and their experiences with others (Yalom, 2005), examining individuals' attitudes before and after their engagement in group-based restorative processes may be important. That is, using the RJAS alongside one's work as a group facilitator may be beneficial as it may serve as a screening tool to assess individuals' attitudes and to decipher who may best benefit from restorative justice intervention (such as restorative circles and community conferences).

Further, engaging in consultation with other professionals dedicated to advocacy work across various disciplines and systems can be helpful (Miller et al., 2018). As such, we believe the RJAS may be utilized by counseling psychologists to engage in restorative justice work through their consultative practices with other professions and professionals. For example, counseling psychologists who work alongside organizations, communities, schools, or judicial systems seeking to heal communities following incidents of harm and wrongdoing may use the RJAS to assess stakeholder's perceptions of restorative justice. Should individuals score low on the RJAS, this might suggest that further education or exploration is needed. Specifically, one might want to

investigate the reasons behind individual's varying attitudes as a way to better understand mechanisms for moving forward. Alternatively, should individuals score high on the RJAS, this might suggest a community climate which might be more readily receptive to the implementation of restorative justice-based practices within aspects of policy or organizational structure. Although additional information based on context may be needed, results derived from the RJAS may nonetheless serve as an important tool to acquire attitudinal information.

Using the RJAS to evaluate individuals' attitudes within organizations engaging in community healing work can also help inform psychology consultants to the areas where further work is needed. Information derived from the RJAS may also be beneficial in informing educational practices and training on restorative justice. For example, racial justice activists may wish to consider how using restorative justice, and the RJAS could be useful in healing racial trauma. For example, the relationship between law enforcement and members of marginalized communities, such as African Americans, has been severed due to multiple experiences of injustice and an unprecedented lack of law enforcement accountability following events of police brutality and killings of unarmed Black people (Hargons et al., 2017). Using a restorative approach to create opportunities for healing within this context is warranted. It is however plausible that individuals' attitudes toward restorative justice may differ as a result of repeated injustices in given communities. Gauging individuals' attitudes in this regard would thus be important as such information may be useful in helping to facilitate conversations and change within the police and other judicial governing institutions.

We also urge counseling psychologists to consider the myriad opportunities in which restorative justice, and the RJAS, may be used in research. For one example, the RJAS can be used to examine differences in individuals' justice-related attitudes within a cultural context. As Varghese et al. (2019) explicated,

we cannot fully resolve the problems in our justice system without dismantling racism and other forms of oppression in our society, but neither can we wait until we dismantle all forms of oppression to address the oppression that resides in the justice system. (p. 683)

In order to be effective as counseling psychologists in our social justice efforts, we must critically examine individuals' biases, as well as systemic practices and policies that are detrimental to marginalized individuals and communities. This may come by increasing our understanding of restorative justice and our intentional work to become more embracing and inclusive of all individuals, even those who may have engaged in some degree of harm or wrongdoing.

Importantly, restorative justice attitudes are indeed likely much broader than what is captured here in our current measure. It is plausible that individuals' attitudes toward restorative justice may largely differ depending on the context. Future researchers are encouraged to examine how an individual's restorative justice attitudes might predict their concrete desires for specific outcomes following events of harm or wrongdoing. Determining for *whom* and under *what* conditions should restorative justice be considered as an appropriate intervention is a logical next step and would indeed advance the literature. Examining differences in attitudes across differing levels of harm severity, and cultural identity characteristics of wrongdoers and victims, may be a useful area for further research as well. Should individuals' attitudes about restorative justice differ based on these contexts, helpful information can be obtained to direct future community-level social justice change and advocacy efforts based on such various dimensions of bias, discrimination, and marginalization.

It is also recommended that researchers and restorative justice activists who seek to examine individuals' attitudes toward restorative justice examine perspectives through multiple means. For example, case vignettes that are scenario specific might influence how individuals perceive appropriate interactions between victims, offenders, and community members. Further, examining individuals' attitudes qualitatively through written or verbal dialogue might also help us better understand the underlying conditions of restorative justice processes. Last, community-based participatory research is an enhanced area of integration to which restorative justice work may be beneficial. As an intervention, examining how individuals' restorative justice attitudes may differ before and after engaging in restorative justice processes may help to inform future public policy efforts, especially paired with examinations of individuals' physical and mental health symptoms. If indeed found to be a useful intervention, counseling psychologists may then play a key role in advocating for laws and policies that employ restorative practices as an effective community-based method for reconciliation, growth, and healing.

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