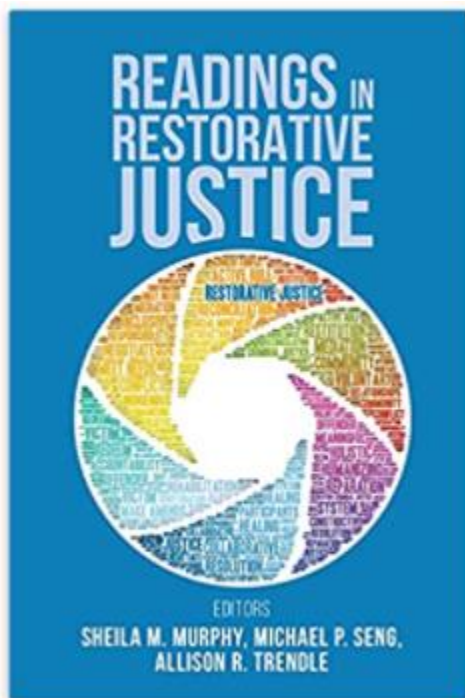




LAP Board Member Judge Sheila M. Murphy Co-Authors Important Work Shedding Light on the Stark Effects of Trauma within our Legal Community Pointing to LAP's Legacy of Success as a Roadmap Towards a Better Future



The solution has always been with us. The issues mounting among the courts, weighting down the very people they function to serve. The ripple effect of a community in desperate need of repair is felt among judges and attorneys alike.

The Illinois Lawyers' Assistance Program (LAP) is proud to announce Board Member, Justice Sheila M. Murphy's recent publication, co-authored with Michael P. Seng and Allison R. Trendle, addressing the complex and imperative issues of our present day legal system: *Readings in Restorative Justice*.

As a retired judge on the Circuit Court of Cook County and an adjunct professor at the UIC Law School, where she teaches restorative justice, Judge Murphy's charge to the legal community is the bold and wise message we all need to impart on our work moving forward.

Contributing author, LAP Executive Director, Dr. Diana Uchiyama brings her expertise as an attorney, Doctor of Psychology, and Certified Advanced Alcohol and Drug Counselor, to direct her chapter speaking to trauma, mental health needs, and the needs of substance abusers. Focus on these important issues will lead to intellectually vibrant solutions as we work to challenge conventional norms moving past the massive issues that persist.

The reality is stark. Defendants left unqualified for treatment or community courts are stranded in their circumstances, traumatized, and effectively sidelined. Vicarious and severe trauma is experienced by all parties involved. Trauma opens the doors to depression and other serious issues. The worst thing that can happen to someone who is struggling is shame. Prosecutors have done it consistently for generations. Sometimes the judges as well. Hurt people, hurt people. The solution requires a collaborative charge.

The map for success is found in LAP's example. For forty years, judges, lawyers and law students have paved the ways to recovery through LAP. Eliminating pipelines to failure within the legal system is essential in successful treatment and recovery. At LAP we give help with radical kindness. No one is abandoned. Help is always available along the entire journey.

Client-centered pathways forward must have consistent support to overcome trauma and serious issues. When incarcerated individuals return from prison, they do not go to the community of the judge or the prosecutor. They go back to their own home, the neighborhood where trauma resides, and they are shamed into thinking they cannot make it. Restorative legal practice is possible. LAP's model of steadfast support, breaking through stigma to encourage help seeking behaviors serves as a model to break through these harmful norms.

The solution is here. LAP has been successfully executing restorative practices for decades. Lawyers and judges are inherently good, intelligent persons – fostering change requires a community-wide commitment to adapt and resolve fatal practices.

Restorative Justice comes from the community. Red Hook Court in Brooklyn, New York has been the gem of the country for some time. The community brought in tribe members from New Mexico to learn how to do circles, etc. A law student asked Judge Alex Calabrese the following question:

"How many times do you let defendants flunk urine tests before you send them to prison?" Judge Calabrese said, "If the person before me continues to use drugs, alcohol, etc., this is on me. It is my fault. I have not recognized the needs of the person before me. Clearly, more intensive help is needed. Everyone in the Courtroom helps me. If they come back with no failures, I read the probation officer's report. Everyone in the court applaud the person in recovery. Until they recover, all in the court and their family are urged to help them. More intensive treatment is sorely needed. Those who are clean give advice." We heard, "Come on. You letting that shame come back to you. Stop letting shame in. Tell yourself that you can do it. We are all the same. Sisters and brothers." Judge Calabrese

Facilitating change will require judges and lawyers who are not in recovery themselves to understand the issues, embody empathy, and a willingness to embrace a collaborative effort to affect change.

"My humanity is bound up in yours for we can only be human together. We are different precisely to realize our need of one another. None of us comes into the world fully formed.

We would not know how to think, or walk, or speak, or behave as human beings unless we learned it from other human beings. We need other human beings in order to be human. I am because other people are. A person is entitled to a stable community life, and the first of these communities is the family. You and I and all of us will realize that we are family, that we are made for togetherness, for goodness, and for compassion.”

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

LAP's mission is to help, protect, and educate our legal community about addiction, mental health and wellness. If you or someone you know needs support with mental health or wellbeing, do not hesitate to contact LAP. Our services are 100% confidential with immunity.

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