2026 Solution Focused Justice Symposium

Statement of Principles

Article 1: Dignity and Respect

All persons shall be treated with dignity, compassion, and cultural respect throughout every stage of the justice process.

Article 2: Voluntariness and consent

Participation in solution focused, therapeutic and restorative justice mechanisms shall be based on the informed, voluntary, and ongoing consent of all parties involved.

Article 3: Participation and empowerment

Mechanisms shall empower individuals, families and communities through active participation, dialogue, and shared decision-making.

Article 4: Holistic well-being

Outcomes shall prioritise the mental, emotional, physical, cultural, social and spiritual well-being of individuals, families and communities.

Article 5: Accountability through rehabilitation, restorative processes and healing

Accountability shall be framed not solely through punishment but through acknowledgement that accountability includes reparation of harm and meaningful engagement to rehabilitate and engagement in restorative processes.

Article 6: Inclusivity and non-discrimination

Therapeutic justice programs shall be accessible and inclusive, without discrimination on the basis of race, gender, age, ability, culture or status.

Article 7: Respect for culture and embracing local knowledge and solutions

Justice processes shall recognise and incorporate First Nations peoples and their culture, voices, customs, traditions, and healing practices within solution focused, therapeutic and restorative justice mechanisms.

Article 8: Restoration

Justice approaches shall focus on restoring and strengthening relationships of individuals with their families and communities.

Article 9: Capacity building and resources

At Federal and State level, governments and institutions shall ensure sufficient resources, training and support to uphold the integrity and sustainability of solution focused, therapeutic and restorative approaches to justice. This includes supporting the capacity of First Nations controlled organisations to design and deliver support services to First Nations people. Government support shall extend to regional and remote communities.

Article 10: Support for judicial officers and others working within justice systems

Judicial officers should be supported and provided training to be equipped to practice and conduct their courts in a trauma informed and culturally safe way. That support and education should also extend to members of the legal profession and other services involved in the criminal justice system.

Judicial officers should be supported to improve the information available to them to inform judicial decision making. This includes information about:

a. The unique and systemic historic, social and political context impacting First Nations people;
b. the impacts of adverse experiences including trauma socioeconomic inequality and structural disadvantage;
c. being mindful of avoiding A deficit narrative and actively considering the strengths of individuals families and communities; and
d. the role of community supports, family and culture as protective factors.

Article 11: Evaluation

Solution focused, therapeutic and restorative justice initiatives should be subject to ongoing evaluation, learning, and refinement in collaboration with affected communities and stakeholders. Evaluations should be carefully designed so as to identify the range of potential benefits associated with solution-focused justice, including qualitative outcomes, and to ensure those outcomes are appropriately captured in evaluations.

Article 12: Connection and future

The participants of the symposium support fostering relationships between participating jurisdictions including joint initiatives to share learning and experiences which support these principles. The participants support the next solution focused just to symposium being held in 2028.