

Meeting People Where They Are

Beyond the Courtroom: A Therapeutic Approach to Restoration

Competency restoration is often misunderstood as simply teaching someone about the court system. In reality, it is a highly individualized therapeutic process that helps each person develop the understanding, confidence, and skills needed to meaningfully participate in legal proceedings. Through individualized education, clinical interventions, and relationship-building, restoration also supports broader behavioral health recovery and stability.

Every individual enters the restoration process with different strengths, challenges, life experiences, cultural backgrounds, and behavioral health needs. There is no single approach that works for everyone.

Life Experience

Using familiar experiences to teach new concepts.

For one individual, understanding legal concepts began with familiar farm equipment. A clinician used the client's years of repairing tractors to explain decision-making and problem-solving, helping connect everyday experiences to the legal choices he faced.

Individualized Learning

Adapting education to each person's cognitive and communication needs.

Another individual struggled to learn because of previously unidentified hearing and auditory processing challenges. By incorporating visual teaching tools, repetition, and modified learning strategies, clinicians were able to improve comprehension and communication.

Trust & Therapeutic Relationship

Building rapport through trauma-informed and culturally responsive care.

Others required trauma-informed approaches that first focused on building trust before meaningful learning could begin. Some benefited from culturally responsive interventions that honored their personal experiences and values. Others learned to recognize and manage symptoms of serious mental illness that had previously prevented them from effectively participating in legal proceedings.

These examples reflect a common principle that guides every aspect of forensic behavioral health care at RBHA:

Effective restoration begins by meeting people where they are - not where we expect them to be.

Through individualized education, therapeutic interventions, relationship-building, and clinical expertise, RBHA's forensic clinicians help individuals move beyond legal processes toward greater understanding, stability, and recovery.