



Alaska Department of Health and Social Services
Division of Juvenile Justice

TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

Improving Outcomes for At-Risk Youth in Alaska.

What is Trauma-Informed Care?

- A program, organization, or system that is trauma-informed **realizes** the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery; **recognizes** the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff and others involved with the system; and **responds** by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices, and seeks to actively **resist re-traumatization**.
SAMHSA's Trauma and Justice Strategic Initiative, 2014
- Staff trained in trauma informed care understand how trauma may impact a juvenile's ability to benefit from treatment; have more understanding of the connection between trauma, behaviors, and development; and focus on improving a youth's emotional and behavioral regulation through coping skills.

Staff Training

- After a successful 2009 pilot project showed improvement in the number of juvenile room confinements and restraints, the division launched a widespread effort in late 2012 to provide Trauma Informed Care training to all statewide staff.
- To date, 100% of the Division of Juvenile Justice staff in our eight detention and treatment facilities, 16 probation offices, and administrative offices have completed Basic Trauma/Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE), the eight hour introductory course.
- Additionally, most direct service staff (probation officers and facility staff) have been trained in secondary trauma which can occur when someone experiences stress or symptoms of trauma when working with traumatized children and families or being exposed to traumatic material.
- With the goal of building internal training capacity, the division has trained 15 staff as Advanced trauma informed care trainers with the goal of all staff being trained in Advanced Trauma Informed Care by the end of FY 2015.

Changing How We Work

- Facilities and offices are revising policies, procedures, and juvenile handbooks to reflect a more trauma informed care approach to working with the juveniles under our supervision.
- Facility staff are modifying individual treatment plans and discussing how trauma can negatively influence behaviors and relationships with youth who have a history of traumatic experiences.

Long-Term Outcomes

- The division expects continued reductions in resident restraint and assault incidents as the Trauma Informed Care philosophy is fully integrated. Reduced room confinement and restraints gives more opportunity for juveniles to participate in treatment and educational programs and improves the climate in facilities.
- According to the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (2010), a trauma-informed approach to juvenile justice "improves youth's feelings of safety, reduces exposure to traumatic reminders and helps equip youths with supports and tools to cope with traumatic stress reactions,"
- These outcomes decrease financial costs in a variety of ways, such as through reduced medical claims or need for staff overtime.
- Ultimately, the division expects continued use of Trauma Informed Care to contribute to its mission to "assist offenders and their families in developing the skills to prevent crime."