



CONNECTICUT

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PROVIDING TRAUMA INFORMED TRAININGS TO CORRECTIONAL STAFF & INCARCERATED WOMEN

Project Background, Vision, and Outcomes

Connecticut wanted to expand its services for incarcerated women with mental health challenges, particularly in supporting reentry transitions and forming and strengthening a trauma-informed care (TIC) network of providers and peer navigators. In partnership with two community providers and York Correctional Institution, the only women's correctional facility in Connecticut, the goal was to provide trauma informed reentry-oriented trainings to both correctional staff and incarcerated women and support women upon reentry to their community. Initially the focus of the Transformation Transfer Initiative (TTI) award funds was on providing services to women in the Southeastern part of the state, but based on referral numbers and capacity, the decision was made to provide reentry care across the state.

Referrals and trainings were established outcomes of the project, to include demographic and

behavioral health data of the women referred to the program and those awaiting discharge at various time frames (3, 6, and 9 months). Awardees also reported that a new service was being offered through the TTI award.

Project Implementation: Challenges and Lessons Learned

The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic impacted the project's vision because staff were not allowed in the facility and the logistics for virtual trainings were not yet in place. This however created an opportunity for outreach to community-based agencies providing reentry services to women.

The barriers to the project included losing people from the program that don't have cell phones and patients are sometimes only given a short period of bridge medication when released back into community settings. These barriers still remain and have not been overcome.

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Additionally, at the time of the project's start, York was already providing internal trainings to its staff and felt like they did not need additional trainings at that time. This also pushed the awardees to consider alternative approaches to meet the TTI goals and offered a lesson about getting buy-in from the Department of Corrections early in the programming process to ensure the offered services are of need and/or appropriate.

Sustainability and Project Legacy

Without a continuance of award funding, the current program is not sustainable. However, the legacy of the program is that, "the idea of recovery is spreading through the community," and it reinforced the need to "think about programming for incarcerated women in everything we do across the sequential intercept model."

Health Equity

Improving behavioral health equity for incarcerated women was the focus of the project, a unique population that is at the intersection of multiple vulnerabilities (e.g., behavioral health challenges, women, incarceration) to adverse health outcomes.

Using TII funds, Connecticut was able to provide trauma-informed training to assist this special health population.

Peer Services Utilization

Peer services are completed by peer navigators in Connecticut. These peer navigators have lived experience and work with the target population. Policy barriers surrounding the length of time a peer has been released from a correctional setting remains a barrier for peers gaining access to Department of Corrections facilities. There is a continued need for training to understand stigma and harm reduction as it relates to peer navigators, and these ideas have spread through the agency.

Trauma Informed Care

The focus of this award was on the understanding of trauma and trauma-informed care for correctional facility staff, reentry community partners, and among the women themselves.

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