

New York City Department of Correction Trauma-Informed Care Report Calendar Year 2025

Trauma-Informed Care Guidelines

Trauma-informed care is defined as an approach that acknowledges the impact of trauma on individuals. To ensure that trauma-informed care is prioritized and integrated into all operations, the Department provides training as well as information on the impact of trauma to its employees. In order to ensure a trauma-informed care approach when implementing new policies and practices, the Department considers the following:

1. Examining the widespread impact of trauma and understanding the potential paths to recovery;
2. Recognizing the signs and symptoms of trauma;
3. Responding by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into Department policies, procedures, and practices; and,
4. Seeking to prevent re-traumatization.¹

Training Data

There are several trauma-informed care aspects built into the New York City Department of Correction's ("DOC" or "the Department") in-service and recruit training which are outlined herein.

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Training

MHFA Training is a collaboration between the Department's Correction Academy and Health Affairs Division. The instructors provide MHFA training to in-service uniformed staff, teaching them how to recognize the signs of distress in people in custody may be experiencing mental illness, primarily focusing on staff who are assigned to Mental Observation and Program to Accelerate Clinical Effectiveness (PACE) housing units.

- ❖ A total of 1,337 staff members, including uniformed staff, non-uniformed staff, and volunteers, have been trained on this since 2021:
 - CY21 – 154
 - CY22 – 255
 - CY23 – 181
 - CY24 – 269
 - CY25 – 478

Though the Department's goal is to consistently provide training to people in custody as well, it was prevented from doing so in CY25 due to depleted staffing levels.

¹ SAMHSA. (2018). Trauma-Informed Approach and Trauma-Specific Interventions. Retrieved from: <https://www.samhsa.gov/nctic/trauma-interventions>

- ❖ A total of 31 people in custody have been trained on this topic since 2021:
 - CY21 – 0
 - CY22 – 0
 - CY23 – 31
 - CY24 – 0
 - CY25 – 0

Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training

CIT training is designed to teach staff primarily assigned to mental health housing areas the common signs and symptoms of mental illness, as well as how to recognize those symptoms during a crisis situation. The goal of CIT is to improve safety for both people in custody and staff. Instead of having to dispatch a tactical team to a crisis, staff are enabled to respond and utilize verbal de-escalation skills to defuse a situation where a people in custody may be experiencing a crisis, thereby ideally averting the need for any use of force.

- ❖ A total of 259 staff, inclusive of staff from both NYC Health + Hospitals (H+H)/Correctional Health Services (CHS) and DOC, have been trained on this topic since 2021:
 - CY21 – 0
 - CY22 – 8
 - CY23 – 21
 - CY24 – 130
 - CY25 – 100

The Department recently received a \$250,000 grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), which will allow us to secure additional trainers as well as host additional training sessions.

Visit Process Training

In CY25, The Department’s Training and Development Division (TDD) conducted the annual Visit Process Training. This training highlights the positive effect that visits have on both people in custody and their loved ones. The training emphasizes the importance of employing a trauma-informed approach to security searches, such as the pat-frisk search, which can be particularly sensitive for transgender, gender non-binary, and gender-expansive visitors. Development of these training materials included input from the City’s Commission on Human Rights.

- ❖ A total of 433 staff members have been trained on this topic since 2024:
 - CY24 – 212
 - CY25 – 221

Training Initiatives

Gender Responsiveness Training

In CY25, a revised Gender Responsiveness curriculum was rolled out to staff assigned to the Rose M. Singer Center (RMSC) as a condition of their facility assignment. TDD trained 167 staff members in CY25, 32 of which were assigned to RMSC.

Staff Wellness Training

The Department recognizes that trauma impacts both people in custody and staff. In CY25, the Department held train-the-trainer sessions with Desert Waters Correctional Outreach for both TDD and Correction Assistance Response for Employees (CARE) Unit instructors. TDD also held train-the-trainer sessions with the New Jersey Resiliency Officer Program to provide staff resiliency training.

- ❖ Desert Waters Correctional Outreach Training:
 - Correction Fatigue to Fulfillment
 - CY25 – 28
 - Peer Support Training
 - CY25 – 13
- ❖ New Jersey Resiliency Officer Program:
 - Staff Resiliency
 - CY25 – 19

Special Management Unit (SMU) Training

The Department has integrated trauma-informed care into all operations within the Special Management Unit (SMU) housing area at the Otis Brandum Correctional Center (OBCC), which first opened in February 2025. A total of 191 uniformed staff members were trained on the policies and procedures of this new unit during CY25.

Programs that Incorporate Trauma-Informed Care

In CY25, the Department continued to expand its trauma-informed care programming. The Division of Programs and Community Partnerships (DPCP) led the way in these efforts.

DPCP is leading the implementation of various programs and practices for incarcerated women that support healing in the hope of creating futures that afford less adverse contact with the justice system. In collaboration with national experts and community partners, the Department developed a training on gender-responsive practices and trauma-informed care for all uniformed and non-uniformed staff who work in RMSC, the Department's facility for women. In December 2022, DPCP partnered with the Correction Academy to launch the training and begin delivering it to new recruits.

In December 2025, the Department finalized a contract with the Osborne Association to provide trauma-informed care services. The Osborne Association is tasked with providing individual and

group-based programming as well as hiring trained social workers and mental health clinicians (and interns) to support providing people in custody with cutting-edge, strength-based approaches to programming that infuse a holistically trauma-informed lens. This contract also provides training by trained clinical professionals on an annual basis for DPCP staff. The Osborne Association is subcontracting with New York University's (NYU) Silverman School of Social Work as well as the Horticulture Society of New York to ensure new and innovative models of trauma-informed healing are applied in the Department's facilities.

In January 2025, the Department rolled out a new training series titled "A Trauma-Informed Approach to Working with Maximum Classification People in Custody". This training was facilitated for uniformed and non-uniformed staff and specifically focused on maximum classification people in custody who are demonstrating challenging behavior. It aims to help staff understand behaviors that result from trauma, providing them with tangible steps on how to respond to these behaviors through a trauma-informed approach.

To support incarcerated mothers with overcoming the trauma associated with being separated from their children, the Department has programming designed to focus on these relationships. In partnership with the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ), the Osborne Association, and Hour Children, the Department offers the Visitation and Family Assistance (VAFA) program. In CY25, the Department continued to facilitate quarterly Community Engagement Days at RMSC, which allow for incarcerated mothers to spend time with their children while engaging in familial activities. These Community Engagement Days also happen in the men's facilities. The Department also continued its partnership with the Caribbean Women's Health Association to provide doula services for the incarcerated women in RMSC, providing pre-natal care, birthing support, and post-natal care.

The Department has child-friendly visit spaces at the George R. Vierno Center (GRVC), OBCC, the Robert N. Davoren Center (RNDC), RMSC, and at the Central Visits building, which have children's furniture, toys, games, and books. We currently have Visit Facilitators in OBCC, RNDC, RMSC, and Central Visits. From July to December 2025, Visit Facilitators engaged with 4,402 people in custody, 2,962 visitors aged 0-10, 272 visitors aged 11-17, and 6,179 adult visitors.

The Department has also maintained its ongoing partnership with the Children's Museum of Manhattan (CMOM) to help facilitate off-island visits for incarcerated parents and their children. This initiative aims to provide incarcerated parents with young children an opportunity to connect with their children and family members through facilitated programming in a supportive, non-institutional setting. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, CMOM facilitated monthly visits with incarcerated mothers, and when this program resumed in October 2022, it was expanded to include incarcerated fathers. Each month, DOC and CMOM facilitate one visit for fathers and one visit for mothers. Since the program resumed in 2022, DOC has facilitated 67 visits to CMOM with 453 participants and 1,240 family members

DPCP recently established monthly off-site visits to the Brooklyn Children's Museum (BCM), which allow the Department to offer museum visits to more incarcerated fathers and mothers.

The first visit to the BCM took place August 4, 2025. As of December 2025, there had been a total of 5 visits to the BCM, with 28 incarcerated parent participants and 78 family members.

The Department also launched a related initiative with CMOM that focused on installing interactive exhibits in each of the Department's family visits areas. These exhibits are museum-quality and are designed to support executive function and the growth of literacy skills in children. Thus far, spaces have been opened at GRVC, OBCC, RMSC, and Central Visits, with plans to expand the program to RNDC in early 2026.

And finally, the Fine and Performing Arts and Tablet Operations units, both under the broader DPCP umbrella, also provide some form of trauma-informed care services. The former regularly works in collaboration with facilities when a traumatic event may have taken place, to help route extra support via special projects or programs where needed. And the latter affords people in custody the ability to submit any number of different requests in an expedited manner via their assigned tablet.

LGBTQ+ Affairs

In August 2023, the Department reorganized the LGBTQ+ Affairs Unit to have it fall under the broader DPCP umbrella. The Unit currently has one Executive Director and three Program Coordinators. The Program Coordinators cover each jail on Rikers Island, providing several ways for people in custody to disclose their gender identity and/or sexual orientation, assisting with gender-aligned housing requests, providing one-on-one gender and sexuality education to those exploring their identity, and connecting known LGBTQ+ people in custody to re-integration resources. The team also collaborates with external organizations to enhance programming for LGBTQ+ people in custody.

One example of this is the team's work with Destination Tomorrow, an LGBTQ+ community center in the Bronx, which facilitates on-going services for LGBTQ+ individuals across facilities. The program focuses on reintegration, teaching essential skills like resume building, salary negotiation, and financial literacy. Additionally, the program connects participants to local community resources, including housing support, community building, and gender-affirming healthcare workshops.

In CY22, the Department took steps to help decrease the levels of gender dysphoria experienced by people in custody who identify as transmen, transmasculine, and/or gender non-binary by approving the use of chest binders for use by people in custody. Chest binders allow individuals to safely compress their chest and appear more traditionally masculine, which can decrease feelings of gender dysphoria. Chest binders and other gender-affirming undergarments continue to be distributed to this day. The unit also works with the Department's Law Library to provide name change services to people in custody who identify as transmen, transwomen, and/or gender non-binary; these efforts began in CY23.

In February 2025, the LGBTQ+ Affairs unit established Harmony House at OBCC, a Program-specific housing area designed to create a space for diverse groups of individuals to come

together and build a strong sense of community by fostering mutual respect, program engagement and a positive environment.

Chaplaincy Services

The Department currently has eleven full-time and seven part-time Chaplains. In addition to affording congregate services and religious studies, the Chaplains regularly tour housing units to meet with anyone who requests spiritual counseling. Staff are also able to consult the Chaplains as needed.

Mental Health Services

CHS, the health care provider for the city's jails, maintains a service for people called the Health Triage Line. Individuals can call the line directly from either their tablet or the housing area phones. The service enables them to speak to a CHS nurse Monday-Friday between 5:00am-12:00pm; they can also leave a message. Individuals can use the service to discuss mental health concerns, to schedule appointments (i.e., nursing, medical, or mental health), to refill prescriptions, to request lab results, to ask about medications, and to inquire about any other health-related issue. The CHS nurse addresses individual concerns and, if necessary, places the individual on a sick call list to be produced to the clinic by the Department.

Future Outlook

The Department remains committed to providing trauma-informed care to those in its custody. Addressing underlying trauma supports a safer and more humane environment for everyone living and working in the city's jails. The Department looks forward to continuing, if not expanding, all of its efforts outlined herein in the years to come.