

**New York City Department of Correction**  
**Report on Annual Training Regarding**  
**the Treatment of Visitors**  
**January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

*Pursuant to Local Law 23 of 2019, the Department is required to implement annual training regarding the treatment of visitors for staff who interact regularly with visitors, and issue reports on these trainings. The following report provides an overview of the training and its methodology, descriptions of the training materials used, and the number of staff who received the training.*

**Training Overview:** On 5/10/2019, the Department of Correction (“DOC” or “the Department”) contracted with the Osborne Association to provide a customer service and community sensitivity training to all Department visit captains and officers. The training was additionally provided to visitor shuttle bus drivers, bail window facilitators, and k9 officers who interact with visitors. A total of 199 staff members participated in the training. The full-day, eight (8) hour training was specifically designed for public-facing Department staff with the goal of improving the quality and character of professional interactions between visitors and uniform staff of the Department; and to ensure a paradigm shift in Department culture surrounding the visit process and its role in ensuring safety for correction staff and individuals in Department custody. The Department is in the process of developing a repurposed curriculum in order to provide annual refresher trainings to all staff who work with visitors.

**Training Methodology:** The Department’s visitor training occurred throughout several days over a two-month span, and was delivered to staff via PowerPoint which included various video presentations, group exercises, and case scenarios. The training team included a former Warden and retired New York State Department of Correction and Community Supervision (DOCCS) Commissioner, a retired DOC Captain, 2 trainers with years of experience working in jails and prisons, a trainer from the Perception Institute, 2 individuals trained in the Social Resiliency model, and a trainer with decades of experience working with children of incarcerated parents. The training covered a range of topics, including implicit bias, de-escalation strategies, and stress management, which are described more in-depth below.

**Visitor Training Learning Objectives and Descriptions:**

1. **Review the benefits of visiting** – This section of the training evaluated the benefits associated with visits, and outlined how visits can support correctional goals such as rehabilitation, reduced violence, and better adjustment to the environment.
2. **Better understand visiting from diverse perspectives, including from children** – This section of the training described the difference between “dealing with people” and “interacting with people”, the role of the correction officer during visits, and visiting from a child’s eye view while understanding the “Adverse Childhood Experience” (ACE) study.
3. **Strengthen interpersonal skills for interacting with the public** – This section of the training discussed what skills are acquired and strengthened by staff members during visits, including empathy, patience, professionalism, communication, responsiveness, and self awareness.
4. **Apply and practice diffusion and de-escalation skills, while also including a Trauma/ACE-Informed Approach** – This section of the training had staff members examine five (5) separate case scenarios that outlined conflicts during visits and had them answer questions on how they would respond to each scenario while keeping in mind previous learning objectives.
5. **Gain knowledge and awareness about neuroscience and implicit bias** – This section of the training included a presentation from the Perception Institute, which specializes in translating cutting edge mind science research on race, gender, ethnic, and other identities into solutions that reduce bias and discrimination, and promote belonging.<sup>1</sup>
6. **Expand range of stress management tools** – This section of the training explored the “Social Resilience Model”, which is a neuroscience-based approach to dealing with stress, distress, and trauma.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Information retrieved from <https://perception.org/about-us/>.

<sup>2</sup> Information retrieved from <http://johnjaypri.org/srm/>.