



Health & Wellness



Fall 2023

Newsletter for Job Corps Health & Wellness Staff

Solutions

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A-ha Moments in Trauma-Informed Care

Many Job Corps behavioral health providers have long embraced a trauma-informed approach (TIA), encouraging Job Corps staff members working with students in distress or crisis to consider “What happened to you?”, instead of questioning “What’s wrong with you?”

While many of us have an innate understanding of the long-term effects of traumas, large and small, sometimes we need a strategy to convince others with less exposure to this concept of the need to understand other people’s behaviors through a trauma lens.

To try to determine the best ways to help staff embrace TIA, we asked Job Corps Center Mental Health Consultants (CMHCs) to describe a time when they witnessed a coworker understand this approach that may be helpful if you are looking to begin or strengthen TIA training on center.

These a-ha moments included:

Seeing TIA in Action

Traci Bowling, Jacobs Creek JCC, told a story about a teachable moment when a student became upset during class, saying,

The student was angry but practiced his coping skills and sat in the classroom in silence. The instructors, over a short period of time, asked him numerous times “What’s wrong?” The student didn’t want to talk and stood up to leave the classroom. He was a very tall, very large young man and accidentally knocked over a desk when he stood up. Staff assumed he knocked over the desk on purpose and followed him out of the room and outside where he hit a tree. Not knowing how to handle the situation, staff called for me to come to trade to speak with him. When I arrived, several of the male instructors told me not to get too close; they were afraid he would hit me. I slowly approached the student and sat across from him at the picnic table where he was sitting (with all the instructors and security watching him). I gently spoke with him and gave him an opportunity to share his concerns. The staff were in shock as they witnessed him speaking calmly with me.

I later had an opportunity to speak with staff about 1) reviewing accommodations, 2) giving students an opportunity to cool off before demanding they speak about their issues, 3) reminding them that these students have all experienced trauma and that a high percentage of them had been abused by men. Now, before approaching students who are upset (unless there is a dangerous situation), they review accommodations, give the student space, and immediately call me.

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Using Media and Community Resources

Other CMHCs have used a variety of resources to create a profound learning experience.

Juli Cioffi-Smith, LCSW, uses the documentaries *Paper Tigers* and *Resilience* to lead a discussion with staff at New Haven JCC.

Alyssa Thomas, CMHC at Pittsburgh JCC, encourages staff to discuss societal issues that lead to trauma. Staff at her center had a particularly strong reaction after watching a video on the [lack of funding for daycare centers](#) and the financial stress and associated trauma caused by the cost of childcare for working families.



Edward Shelly, LCSW, CMHC, at Sierra Nevada JCC, recommends using [Help for Billy: A Beyond Consequences Approach to Helping Challenging Children in the Classroom](#) book and workbook. The book's website describes it as "a pragmatic manual to help guide families and educators who are struggling with traumatized children." Edward describes past experiences with using the book and seeing teachers go from "chasing the behavior around the classroom all day, [they recognize] to the benefits a trauma-informed approach offers."

After getting the impression from residential staff that a person who does not work in the dormitories cannot understand the residential staff's specific needs in working with students, Laura Scrofani-Jones, LCSW, CMHC, at Schenk JCC, partnered with S.A.F.E, an agency in the local community that provides quarterly training to staff and students. She found that staff members were more receptive to an outside perspective.

Understanding Trauma on a Personal Level

Trauma is part of the life experience. Jennifer Stout, LPC, CMHC, at Blue Ridge JCC, reminds us that, "It is important to remember that everyone has gone through something in their life and we all perceive trauma differently. Even if it isn't a big deal to us, that doesn't mean it is not a big deal to someone else." Some CMHCs have helped staff tap into their personal experiences in order to better understand students.

Rich Gordon, Delaware Valley's CMHC, created an interactive staff training where staff members had the opportunity to think about their own personal traumas and associated reactions to gain a better understanding of student behavior. He said, "The staff shared some personal stories and how trauma affected them and how they handled the situation."

Alyssa Thomas also uses a personal approach asking staff to think through past experiences and how these experiences influence their current lives and perspectives. She then drives home the importance of self-care for everyone.

Collaborative Problem Solving

Cleveland JCC CMHCs Kailyn Juth, LISW-S, and Anne Veneziano, LISW, delivered a casual discussion-heavy training with plenty of examples. They included brainstorming questions and encouraged staff to share examples that they have witnessed in their classrooms for group discussion. The training was salient to staff because it included real-life scenarios and examples of trauma that are more common in the Cleveland area.

Start with the New Hires

Kevin Steede, PhD, CMHC, at North Texas JCC, has found that the new hire period is the best time to make an impression on staff and help them understand the challenges faced by students. He talks about the impact saying, "That initial introduction seems to emotionally impact our new staff rather profoundly. In fact, during the last session, one of our new security staff was tearful and said, "I see God in you and your work, sir!"

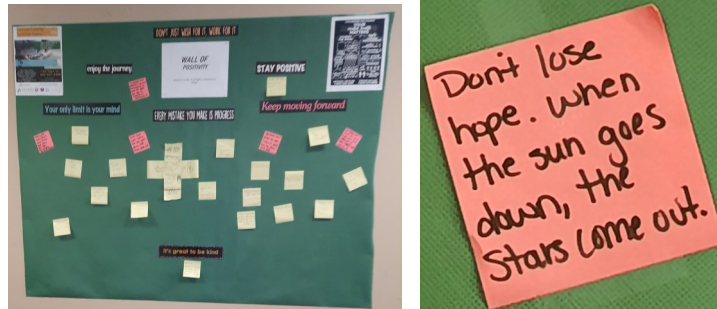
These are just a few examples of how CMHCs have found ways to help others understand and embrace working with students using a trauma lens. The ability to relate to our students and see things from their perspective creates the opportunity for new and positive solutions in working with students!

Interested in learning more about TIA? Go to the new [Trauma Informed Approach](#) webpage on the Job Corps Health and Wellness website for additional resources.

Wall of Positivity — Delaware Valley JCC

Submitted by: Lynne Wilcox, RN, Health and Wellness Director

The Delaware Valley JCC has put together a Wall of Positivity. Students and staff are encouraged to post positive words and thoughts to brighten someone's day.



Mental Health Month — Excelsior Springs JCC

Submitted by: Dianna Hall, LCSW, Center Mental Health Consultant

Dianna Hall, CMHC planned several activities for Mental Health Month including introducing the PAUSE program, giveaways, challenges, and awareness events.

Mental Health Month coincided with the kickoff of the center's PAUSE program. The PAUSE program originated at the Oneota JCC. It focuses on teaching and reinforcing self-regulation and composure. PAUSE stands for Positive Action Under Stressful Experiences. Ms. Hall provided training to staff and students on how to "take a PAUSE" and the positive consequences of acknowledging our emotions and experiences while "pausing" before reacting. The PAUSE Team then offered a staff training as a part of professional development day. Staff promoted this powerful new programming by wearing t-shirts and giving students "swag bags" with tools for calming, such as fidgets, journals, and water bottles.

The CMHCs had fun coordinating mental health challenges for staff and students to celebrate Mental Health Month. These challenges culminated with a prize drawing from the Wellness Department for the ever-coveted Door Dash gift card(s). Students and staff were challenged to give yoga/mediation a try, share their favorite uplifting music jam, participate in a planting seeds project, and share how they cope/PAUSE. Ms. Hall plans to extend this to the Google Classroom and other student platforms to share songs and coping strategies so everyone can see them and maybe give them a try!



The final celebration of mental health was a staff Greens and Jeans day! To bring awareness and support [Mental Health America](#) (MHA), staff made donations and wore jeans and something green for the day! The center raised over \$130 for MHA!



safeTALK — Flatwoods JCC

Submitted by: Rachel Carter, Center Mental Health Consultant

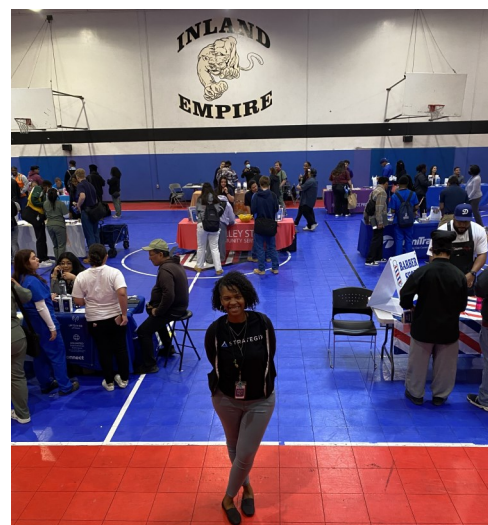
In support of [Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month](#), all Flatwoods JCC students and staff were recently trained in [safeTALK](#)—a 3-hour training that teaches individuals ages 15 years and older steps to identify people with suicidal thoughts and connect them to resources for help and support. SafeTALK is the world's fastest-growing suicide prevention skills training course. Training was facilitated by Frontier Health Prevention Services, which is the local Community Services Board for Wise County, Virginia. All who attended the training received certificates of completion and are considered certified “Suicide Alert Resources.” This training was organized by the center’s CMHC, Rachel Carter.



Mental Health Awareness Month — Inland Empire JCC

Submitted by: Jozalynne Ray, LMFT, Center Mental Health Consultant

In honor of May being Mental Health Month, Inland Empire JCC invited both staff and students to "Look Around, Look Within" as we challenged students to consider every part of their environment and its effect on their mental health and well-being. In collaboration with Career Transitional Services, the Peer Advocates for Change (P.A.C) Committee, under the advisement of the Mental Health and Wellness Program, hosted a center-wide Wellness Fair which promoted healthy community connections that bring hope and a stronger sense of community to students and staff. Students and staff were invited to visit the Wellness Fair and receive informative resources and receive direct access to care by enrolling in medical benefits, mental health services, and some even received free cellphones and tablets.



PRIDE Month — Pinellas County JCC

Submitted by: Cate Courtney, CAP, TEAP Specialist

With LGBTQIA+ youth populations experiencing higher risks of suicide attempts, substance use disorders, homelessness, and mental health issues, celebrating PRIDE Month is essential for the health and wellness of our Job Corps students! The center offered a different activity each week of PRIDE, including sidewalk chalk art, glam art lunch, coloring, and much more.



International Self-Care Day — Pittsburgh JCC

Submitted by: Callie Scott, D.Ed., M.S., NCC, LPC, Center Mental Health Consultant

Self-care empowers individuals to prioritize their well-being and engage in activities that support their healing journey. By taking intentional steps to care for ourselves, we can regain a sense of control, rebuild trust, and develop coping mechanisms to navigate the challenges associated with trauma.

On July 24th, International Self Care Day, Dr. Scott organized a Self-Care Scavenger Hunt to bring awareness to the importance of self-care. This event was designed to be fun, engaging, and informative, incorporating the principles of trauma-informed care and the 4 R's: Realize, Recognize, Respond, and Resist Re-traumatization.

During the scavenger hunt, students embarked on a journey through various clues that encouraged reflection, exploration, and discovery. They had the opportunity to identify self-care activities, triggers and reactions, explore effective strategies, and establish boundaries. The scavenger hunt aimed to provide a safe and supportive environment for healing, while also fostering a sense of community and connection.

Students had to find the green letter R that was posted outside the door of four departments in Job Corps. Each of those departments gave the student a clue card that they had to figure out. After students found all four cards, they returned them to Dr. Scott in the Wellness Center for a chance to win a prize.



Health Observances & Resources

October

- [Domestic Violence Awareness Month](#)
- [National ADHD Awareness Month](#)
- [National Bullying Prevention Month](#)
- [National Dental Hygiene Month](#)
- [Mental Illness Awareness Week](#) (October 1–7)
- [National Depression Screening Day](#) (October 7)

November

- [Trans Awareness Week](#) (November 13–19)
- [Great American Smokeout](#) (November 17)

December

- [World AIDS Day](#) (December 1)
- [National Influenza Vaccination Week](#) (December 4–8)

Do you have a ...

Topic idea or want to highlight your center activity? **The deadline for the Winter 2023 newsletter is December 8, 2023.** You can submit your suggestions to:



Julie Luht, MPH
Email: julie.luht@humanitas.com

Job Corps Webinars

Upcoming Webinars

As new webinars are scheduled, they are announced in the *JCDC News* newsletter. [Click here to register for an upcoming webinar.](#)



Past Webinars

- Nursing Ethics — September 20 & 21, 2023
- Job Stress! Teaching Students Coping Strategies — September 12, 2023
- Suicide Prevention: Spotlight on Peer Education — August 23 & 24, 2023
- Let's Look at Intervention — August 15 & 17, 2023
- Dental Unit Waterline (DUWL) Quality — August 8 & 9, 2023
- MSWR: Probing the Policy Changes — July 13 & 14, 2023
- Suspicion Testing and Employability — July 11 & 12, 2023

Webinars are available to [print/download](#) on the Health and Wellness website.