

Does Your Non-Profit Agency Want To Be On The Cutting Edge As Westchester Evolves More Trauma-Informed Systems of Care?

Westchester County is moving inexorably toward evolving more trauma-informed systems of care for children, families and adults. Large numbers of staff in several Westchester County Departments, non-profit organizations, school districts, and community coalitions have received trainings on trauma and resilience. Agencies like Andrus, WJCS, MHA, FSW and the Guidance Center are on the leading edge of trauma-specific treatments and organizational approaches. Westchester's Resilience Coalition held over 200 screenings and discussions of the film "Resilience: The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope" that reached over 5,000 Westchester residents and built widespread understanding of the need to find ways to address the negative impacts of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). The CCSI Trauma Subcommittee has been offering technical assistance and support in all of these efforts. We now know where we want to go but don't yet have a clear road map of how to get there.

Westchester County is about to undertake the next major step in our evolution. Westchester is currently leading the effort to administer to thousands of county employees across the Mid-Hudson Region the Attitudes Related to Trauma Informed Care Survey, a psychometrically sound measure of attitudes and beliefs about trauma and resilience. All staff from DSS, DCMH, Probation, Family Court, the Youth Bureau, and County Attorneys working with children, will take the ARTIC with the goal of identifying priorities for staff training and technical assistance. Westchester County's Department of Probation is leading this seven-county initiative as part of its Regional Youth Justice Initiative.

This effort currently focuses only on county employees, however, several agencies have expressed interest in extending it to the non-profit sector. To this end, Dr. Andrew Bell, one of the Trauma Subcommittee's co-chairs, has developed a strategy that allows selected non-profit agencies to participate in this next step of Westchester's evolution at almost no cost. Potential partner agencies would need to agree to:

1. encourage most or all of their staff take the ARTIC survey,
2. review their agency's results in relation to overall averages of their local service sector and Westchester agencies as a whole,
3. participate in discussions about local priorities for training and technical assistance, and
4. consider potential opportunities for next steps including specialized staff supervision, free training in stress reduction techniques, and/or developing local learning collaboratives.

Cost: There is a licensing fee for taking the ARTIC. Local coalitions, like the Yonkers Coalition for Youth and the Westchester CoC Partnership To End Homelessness, can bundle member agencies' responses to take advantage of bulk licensing fees, bringing the cost down to roughly \$1 per response. Agencies often pay thousands to have their ARTIC responses tabulated and analyzed by a third party. Dr. Bell has created a low-tech solution using commonly available tools to deliver comparable results, which he will provide to Westchester non-profits at no cost.

Time Commitment: Each staff person would spend approximately 5 minutes completing an anonymous survey. Group planning sessions to develop priority recommendations for training and technical assistance would take place via Zoom and require only 60-90 minutes per month of one senior administrator. Agencies could drop out of the planning process at any point.

Timing: Dr. Bell expects data input and initial planning can happen in October and November.

Next Steps: Interested coalitions should assess their member agencies' interest, identify how many agencies and how many staff would participate, and email Dr. Bell at aqba@westchestergov.com by September 30th.