Community Supervision Advisory Committee (CSAC)

Deliverable #5:

Providing Gender-responsive, Culturally Appropriate Services and Trauma-Informed approaches.

The Evidence Based Practices (EBP) Statewide Advisory Committee was asked by CSAC to provide advice/recommendations for this deliverable.

The EBP Statewide Advisory Committee has provided the following advise/recommendations with the understanding and keeping in mind of the ask and timeframe per Minnesota Statute 401.17 Subd. 3 (a) By December 1, 2024, the committee must provide written advice and recommendations to the commissioner on developing policy on: (5) providing gender-responsive, culturally appropriate services and trauma-informed approaches.

Definitions:

Gender-Responsiveness-Gender responsiveness is recognizing and accounting for the important differences between all identified genders in psychological development, socialization, culture, exposure to trauma, and life experiences. Gender responsive practices are relational, trauma-informed, strength based, and culturally relevant. (Washington DOC)

Culturally Appropriate Services- A culturally responsive system values diversity, understands differences and develops services and supports to meet the unique needs of each community. (MN System of Care)

Trauma-informed Care- Trauma-informed care is an approach used to engage people with histories of trauma. It recognizes the presence of trauma symptoms and acknowledges the role that trauma can play in people's lives. Trauma-informed criminal justice responses can help to avoid re-traumatizing individuals. (SAMHSA)

What the research/data has shown:

Historically providing gender-responsive, culturally appropriate services, and trauma-informed care/approaches have not been front and center for probation supervision. With a more thorough understanding from research & data collection probation agencies are seeing the importance of how they relate to successful outcomes when they are put into practice.

According to the American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) report "National Standards for Community Supervision" responsivity factors such as gender, cultural background, and trauma contribute to an individual's outcome on supervision and the ability to comply with conditions. Further, interventions and treatment options should also be based on responsivity factors such as gender, cultural background, etc…

Gender-responsive:

According to APPA's report "National Standards for Community Supervision" Some research exists to support the premise that gender-informed interventions are significantly more likely to be associated with reductions in recidivism than gender-neutral interventions. These findings support recent research indicating that women and girls are more likely to respond well to gender-informed approaches if their backgrounds and pathways to offending are associated with issues related to gender. Identifying gender-specific needs is the first step, but an agency's access and connection to gender-responsive services should be considered as well.

An article by Matousek, T. (2023), examines gender-responsive probation supervision and how it has been shown to lower recidivism by 30% for females on probation by using a cognitive behavioral program, such as "Moving On", which is designed for females and the cognitive groups are all female participates. The article further discussed how using a gender-responsive risk and needs assessment tool also aided in a reduction of recidivism for females.

Culturally Appropriate:

According to APPA, Culturally appropriate supervision acknowledges the diverse backgrounds of individuals under supervision and ensures that programming is respectful of and responsive to different cultural values and norms. The standards promote culturally sensitive assessments and interventions that consider the cultural and ethnic context of individuals to increase engagement and compliance.

According to an article by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (2023), Culturally appropriate programs that are tailored to the population they serve will have better long-term outcomes. These types of programs have increased engagement because they are relevant to the individual's culture due to each culture being unique, as well as social and historical factors.

An article by the Council of State Governments Justice Center (2021), also discusses how tailoring interventions based on cultural backgrounds has improved program engagement and effectiveness.

An article by Cobb, K.A., Mowatt, M.A. & Mullins, T (2013), discusses the importance of using culturally appropriate interventions regarding the responsivity principle. This key for improving outcomes for tribal members. Interventions should incorporate tribal traditions, cultural values, which will help reconnect them with their culture while addressing criminogenic needs.

Trauma-Informed Care:

According to APPA, a Trauma-informed approach regarding assessment tools and supervision lead to a more productive supervision strategy. Also a safe and supportive environment should be in place to avoid so individuals are not re-traumatized.

An article by the Council of State Governments Justice Center, outlines how trauma on justice involved individuals, could have impacted them as far back as their childhood experiences having an impact on their neurological and psychological development, resulting in mental health disorders, which could lead to substance use and/or aggression. The article recommends a trauma-informed approach.

It further outlines the following:

1. **Trauma Prevalence:** Nearly 90% to 99% of incarcerated individuals report having experienced trauma, with rates of PTSD four to five times higher than in the general population.
2. **Impact of Trauma:** Trauma-related behaviors, such as aggression and substance use, are often survival coping strategies. These behaviors complicate reentry, but addressing the trauma underlying these behaviors is crucial for successful rehabilitation.
3. **Trauma-Informed Practices:** Practical recommendations include training staff on recognizing trauma, developing trauma-specific mental health services, and ensuring cross-system collaboration to provide comprehensive support for reentry clients.

Current Gender-responsive, Culturally appropriate, and Trauma-informed care taking place in Minnesota:

Nicollet County

- Gender Responsivity: All-female caseload since 2006.

Sherburne County

- They are committed to having all their adult agents trained in the Women's Risk Needs Assessment (WRNA). process involves a case file review, a semi-structured interview, a written survey, and a case management treatment plan that are all tailored to women entering various stages of the criminal justice system through three versions: probation, institutional (in prison), and pre-release.

Stearns County

- Bridge Healing Center – culturally specific programming for Somali/East African populations; they provide their agents training on the Somali culture.
- Agents are trained in the *Moving On* cognitive behavioral program for justice involved women.
- Agents are trained on the *Voices* cognitive behavioral program for juveniles
- They refer clients to community programming for multiple services and suggest trauma-informed programming when appropriate.

Steele County

- Female specific caseload
- Utilize *Moving on* - Female specific cog class for high-risk females

Ramsey County (Minnesota's leader in these categories)

<u>Adult Probation</u>

Gender-responsive caseload

- Two probation officers
- One assistant probation officer

<u>Culturally Specific and/or Gender Responsive</u>

- Race equity is embedded in ESP training for staff
- Strive to have cognitive-behavioral coordinators and facilitators representative of clients we serve
- **CAVA** (Cognitive Awareness Violence Abatement) group. Domestic Abuse programming, culturally specific for Black men using a trauma informed model. RC Contractor.
- **Ujamaa Place**: Provides holistic transformation opportunities for young Black men. Community Referral.
- **Nivon Wellness:** Men's Native American High Intensity Outpatient**.** LGBTQIA High Intensity Outpatient Treatment
- **MN Community Care (Catholic Charities-SPOC):** Offers Gender Care as well as other services

- **Meridian Latitudes:** LGBTQ Substance Abuse and Mental Health
- **Brakins Consultants:** African American providers but will also find resources for other races and cultures. Provides cultural mental health and organizational consultation services. Provides Afrocentric research, mental health and wellness support promoting the psychological and spiritual liberation of children of African descent.
- **Wilder Foundation**-The Center combines Western mental health services and treatments with traditional healing practices to address the needs of Hmong, Vietnamese, Karen, Cambodian and Afghan adults. 150 active members participate weekly from Hmong, Karen(ni), Vietnamese, Cambodian and Afghan communities. Facilitated by trained mental health and wellness staff who are also Hmong, Karen, Vietnamese, Cambodian and Afghan.
- **La Oportunidad:** Spanish language domestic groups.
- **LEAP:** Spanish language domestic groups.
- **Able Social Service**: Spanish Language Domestic Groups and DWI
- **Transforming Generations**: Hmong Language Domestic Groups

Trauma Informed Approaches

- Offer "Beyond Trauma" (Stephanie Covington) curriculum to staff and will be expanding in 2024 with refreshers
- **S.E.L.F. Trauma Group**- S.E.L.F. is a 12 week open psychoeducational group focused on understanding the impact of trauma and mapping a road to recovery. Community Referral.
- **ACTV**(Achieving Change Through Value Based Behavior) is domestic abuse program rooted in a trauma informed model. Ramsey County Corrections Staff Facilitated.
- **People Inc:** DA curriculum focused on an increased understanding of how past experiences of trauma or situations of stress influence one's thinking patterns. Community Referral.

Juvenile Probation

As part of Juvenile Justice transformation a race and equity lens is always used in decision making. The mental health Supervisor, Mental health professional, and line staff undergo consistent, ongoing training and guidance on identifying and brokering programming and services and making decisions using a trauma informed lens. We contract with community-based service providers who offer gender responsive services and culturally specific services.

Group homes include:

- Jelani House (African-American males)

- Journey of Hope (African-American males)
- Divine (females)
- Naima House (females)

Community-based programming includes:

- Generation 2 Generation
- Healing Streets
- JK Movement
- Power in Peace
- World Youth Connect (groups for females only; groups for males only)
- YMCA Enough program (serves all youth and has specialized services for Female/Femme/Trans Youth* and Native and Indigenous Youth)

Challenges:

One of the challenges we found working on this deliverable is not all agencies have gender-responsive, culturally appropriate, and Trauma-informed care/services and the resources are lacking across the State. Training on these topics is available, but they are not well known/advertised so agencies are not having staff trained.

According to the American Probation and Parole Association, Supervision agencies should weigh their local resources and needs when determining whether to establish specialized caseloads and should define specialized caseloads that are relevant to their populations. Establishing specialized caseloads can be a challenge in smaller agencies where there are not enough individuals on supervision with specialized needs to justify the distinct resources required for specialized caseloads. Also, agencies in rural areas may find that the numbers of cases may be adequate, but their geographic distribution makes the organization of specialized caseloads impractical.

These are key factors when we were deciding on recommendations because we do not want to have agencies be set up to fail with unrealistic expectations.

Proposed Advise/Recommendations: The following advise/recommendations have been made keeping a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens in mind so all agencies and justice involved individuals can feel included & supported. These recommendations are also meant as a starting point, a base line of the essentials each agency should be able to have in place, monitor, and continue to support.

- The EBP Statewide Advisory Committee recommends each agency creates and maintains a resource guide identifying available resources that are Gender-responsive, Culturally Appropriate, and Trauma-informed care for the population they serve.
- Each agency establishes an engagement plan that includes identifying, training, and coordinating services with Gender-responsive, Culturally appropriate, and Trauma-informed care with the populations they serve. It is recommended each agency report on these engagement plans within their comprehensive plans.
- A baseline essential standard for education/training for Probation staff be established in Gender-responsive, Culturally appropriate, and Trauma-informed care approaches that all agencies could support. The EBP Statewide Advisory Committee would oversee providing recommendations to the Community Supervision Advisory Committee.
- Create/establish a group of train the trainers to help support agencies, so all Probation staff are trained in the determined baseline essential trainings.
- A data tracking system be established to help analyze the data reported to support further recommendations on staff training, interventions, services, and programming to help fill gaps in Gender-responsive, Culturally appropriate, and Trauma-informed care/services.
- Research an implementation/navigator team to help/assist agencies with gender-responsive, Culturally appropriate, and Trauma-informed care, is best practices and what that would look like.

Rational:

- With each agency creating and maintaining a resource guide the population they serve will have know where to receive services best suited for them. This will help when individuals on probation move to another County, they will be able to look up resources in their new community. With each agency maintaining a resource guide, they will be able to update it to keep it current and relevant.
- By each agency establishing an engagement plan it will be tailored to their staff, office, and the population they serve. Not all agencies will have the same resources and the population they serve might look different as well. Tailoring their engagement plan is in line with best practices. By doing this it should also create trust and understanding within community & supervision teams/staff.

- Establishing a baseline essential standard for education/training for Probation staff, is key so there can be equity and inclusion across the State. Education/training in these respected areas for Probation staff will help provide better supervision, reduced recidivism as the data has shown.
- By having a dedicated team/unit of trainers and train the trainers, this will help with more staff being trained, staff trained in a more timely manner, and less trainer burnout.
- Data tracking is essential to assist with proving or not proving something. In this case Probation Agencies want to see what they are doing is working (reduced recidivism, successful outcomes on probation, etc…).
- By researching if an implantation/navigator team would be the best practice, supported, and what it would look like (County, State, funding, etc…) could help the State as a whole continue this important work as the same pace.

Next Steps:

- Community Supervision Advisory Committee to make formal recommendations to the Commissioner of Corrections.
- Have justice involved individuals have their feedback heard through surveys when Agencies are working on the recommendations.

Questions to consider:

- What benefits could happen if this work is adopted? Individuals on probation supervision should be able to receive equitable and inclusive probation supervision across the state of MN. Probation Officers should have the education/training in place to provide the best supervision possible with the understanding of gender-responsive, culturally appropriate, and trauma-informed care.
- What challenges could happen if this work is adopted? Not all agencies will have the same resources, specified caseloads, etc… so best practices could not be supported by all agencies.
- How did you authentically engage people with lived experiences? The work on this deliverable was more-so looking at it in a generalized lens. The next steps, provided the recommendations are adopted, would entail reaching out to individuals currently and formally on probation (CPO, CCA, DOC), in rural and metro locations so their voice can be heard on gender-responsive, culturally appropriate, and trauma-informed care/services.

- What needs to be considered about this work moving forward? Keeping in mind not all agencies will have the resources, staff, programs, etc… to support gender-specific cognitive programming for example. Determining the base essentials all agencies can put into practice and support will be key.

References:

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The Council of State Governments Justice Center. (2021). *Assessing and enhancing cultural responsiveness in Second Chance Act programs through research and evaluation*. National Reentry Resource Center. **https://nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/culturalResponsiveEvalBrief.pdf**

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