



**JOE PARISI**  
DANE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

## Dane County Department of Human Services

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Director – Shawn Tessmann

### MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 17, 2019

TO: Personnel and Finance

FROM: Shawn Tessmann  
Director  
DCDHS

RE: Trauma Informed Youth Justice Coordinator-Position 3175  
Request approval to fill position which has been vacant for 6 months

In order to create a Trauma Informed YJ System in Dane County, the Department created a Youth Justice Trauma Informed Care Coordinator Position in the 2019 budget. The candidate in this position will become a trained trainer for T-Care and/or other applicable trauma informed care trainings. Dr. Julian Ford, the creator of the evidenced based TARGET trauma treatment program, has developed T-Care as a framework for trauma-informed care implementation for a broad range of Human Service organizations including Youth Justice. TARGET (Trauma Affect Regulation: Guide for Education and Therapy) is an educational and therapeutic approach for the prevention and treatment of post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD). Dr. Ford's agency, Advanced Trauma Solutions, Inc., defines T-Care as the TARGET-based approach to trauma-informed services. T-Care has shown promising results over the past eight years of quasi-experimental testing. It is an evidenced-informed practice (based on a long standing evidenced-based curriculum). The greatest asset for the Dane County Department of Human Services in the implementation of T-Care is the ability to expand the approach beyond Youth Justice (over time) by using our own trained trainers.

The essential function of this position is to provide education and group facilitation/trauma intervention, provide community consults to purchase of service agencies and other stakeholders, co-lead existing NIP and Briarpatch Youth Services Groups, modify curriculum as needed to formally include T-Care framework, develop and facilitate additional groups for YJ involved youth, assess YJ youth for trauma, collect and maintain data for evaluation purposes, prepare reports as requested regarding numbers served, racial breakdown and outcomes, coordinate peer supports for Secondary Traumatic Exposure, and train staff and POS providers in this T-Care framework. This function has not been fulfilled and could not be fulfilled without this position. More than 80% of juvenile justice-involved youth report experiencing trauma, with many having experienced multiple, chronic, and pervasive interpersonal traumas. This exposure places them at risk for emotional, behavioral, developmental, and legal problems. Unresolved post-traumatic stress symptoms can lead to serious

long-term consequences across the entire lifespan, such as problems with interpersonal relationships, cognitive functioning, and mental health disorders including PTSD, substance abuse, anxiety, disordered eating, depression, self-injury, and conduct problems—all of which can increase the likelihood of involvement in delinquency, crime, and the justice system. The prevalence and severity of traumatic-stress reactions among juvenile justice-involved youth, caregivers, families, professionals, and providers, necessitate a system-wide response to prevent, identify, address, and minimize further traumatic stress. Adolescents are often in need of brief interventions due to the nature of their system involvement and/or other traumatic family dynamics. Staff knowledge of trauma and additional family needs would support skilled interviews and assessments and support them as needed in the moment, rather than just processing them through the court process and having a punitive role. If this position remains vacant, the Department cannot implement a T-Care curriculum or train our staff to have the expertise to be able to assess and address trauma for our youth population.