

**CTTF Meeting Minutes Approved 1/7/20**

Office of the Child Advocate  
Childhood Trauma Task Force Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, December 3rd, 2019  
1:00pm-3:00pm

**Task Force Members or Designees Present:**

Maria Mossaides, Chair (OCA)  
Claudia Dunne (CPCS)  
Yves Singletary (DPH)  
Yvonne Sparling (DYS) via phone  
Stacy Cabral (DESE)  
Tammy Mello (Children's League)  
Rachel Wallack (Juvenile Court)  
Janice LeBel (DMH) via phone  
Maggie Randall (Senator Boncore's Office)  
David Melly (Representative Dykema's Office)

**Other Attendees:**

Members of the Public

**OCA Staff:**

Melissa Threadgill (OCA)  
Melissa Williams (OCA)  
Kristine Polizzano (OCA)

**Meeting Commenced:** 1:05pm

**Welcome and Introductions:**

Ms. Threadgill welcomed the attendees to the Childhood Trauma Task Force (CTTF) meeting, and each person introduced themselves.

Ms. Threadgill noted that there are enough people present for a quorum.

**Discussion of the Legislative Report Draft:**

Ms. Threadgill reviewed the agenda and discussed the structure of the meeting. First, there will be a discussion on the edits of the legislative draft report that were submitted to Ms. Threadgill in advance, and then the task force will have the opportunity to discuss any additional edits that

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someone may have. Ms. Threadgill distributed the most recent draft version of the report and all of the submitted edits for review.

Ms. Threadgill reviewed the edits submitted by Representative Dykema regarding pages 5 and 16. Ms. Threadgill asked if there were any questions or comments regarding Representative Dykema's edits.

Ms. Mello pointed out that the Legislature has recently taken an interest in the opioid crisis. She stated there is a lot of language about trauma in the report, but there isn't anything about the linkage/pathway between trauma and drug use. Ms. Mello suggested making that connection in the report.

Ms. Mossaides agreed with Ms. Mello and suggested adding language after the second sentence in the last paragraph of the executive summary after "children who have experienced trauma..."

Ms. Threadgill reviewed the edits submitted by Ms. Dunne from CPCS regarding pages 5 and 16. Ms. Threadgill stated that this was written to include language regarding racial trauma in Finding #1 and asked if there were any comments or questions.

Mr. Melly suggested adding trouble in school, drug use, and law enforcement to the paragraph in order to remain consistent throughout the executive summary.

Mr. Singletary suggested adding more concise language to make it clear black and Latinx are disproportionately affected in multiple ways, not just in terms of trauma.

Ms. Mello stated that there isn't any language surrounding institutional racism within the systems already in place. She commented that these systems, such as law enforcement, often re-traumatize children and youth as well.

Ms. Threadgill noted that institutional racism is addressed in another section of the report.

Ms. Threadgill reviewed the edits submitted by Ms. Dunne from CPCS regarding page 6.

The task force had no comments or questions.

Ms. Threadgill reviewed the edits submitted by the Juvenile Court regarding pages 7 and 29.

The task force had no comments or questions.

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Ms. Threadgill reviewed the edits submitted by Ms. Dunne from CPCS regarding pages 7 and 29.

The task force had no comments or questions.

Ms. Threadgill reviewed the edits submitted by the Juvenile Court regarding page 8.

The task force had no comments or questions.

Ms. Threadgill reviewed the edits submitted by the Juvenile Court regarding page 13.

Mr. Singletary asked if there is language in the report that mentions or describes typical adolescent behavior. He stated that it's important to add that behaviors can mirror typical adolescence.

Ms. Threadgill stated that she will send Mr. Singletary an email with language to approve and then will add it to the report.

Ms. Threadgill reviewed the edits submitted by the Juvenile Court regarding page 15.

The task force had no comments or questions.

Ms. Threadgill reviewed the edits submitted by Ms. Dunne from CPCS regarding page 15.

The task force had no comments or questions.

Ms. Threadgill reviewed the edits submitted by the Juvenile Court regarding page 18.

The task force had no comments or questions.

Ms. Threadgill reviewed the edits submitted by DPH regarding page 19.

Ms. Mello agreed with adding the proposed language submitted by DPH. She stated that from her experience working with DCF and the provider side, many of the substance abuse programs are not built for children. She stated that just because there are services available, it doesn't mean that they will work for all populations. She provided the example of kids in out of home placements that need substance use programs but these youth do not meet the eligibility criteria for the DPH programs related to substance use.

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Ms. Threadgill stated she will invite Mr. Jenney from DPH to a future meeting.

Ms. Threadgill reviewed the edits submitted by the Juvenile Court regarding page 24.

The task force had no comments or questions.

Ms. Threadgill reviewed the edits submitted by Ms. Dunne from CPCS regarding page 27. She stated that she has already added this language as the previous language was too simplistic.

Ms. Mello commented that the language seemed very wordy.

Ms. Mossaides stated that it needs to be explained thoroughly for the people who do not have a background in positive youth development.

Mr. Singletary commented on the word “resources” instead of saying “strength-based.”

Ms. Threadgill noted that the word “resources” is part of a direct quote from another source, and the group agreed to leave the quote as is.

Ms. Threadgill reviewed the edits submitted by the Juvenile Court regarding page 28.

The task force had no comments or questions.

Ms. Threadgill reviewed the edits submitted by Ms. Dunne from CPCS regarding page 30.

The task force had no comments or questions.

Ms. Threadgill redirected the attention of the task force to the handout outlining the edits submitted by Ms. Cabral from DESE.

Ms. Threadgill reviewed the first edit on page 7 regarding recommendation #1. The comment from DESE asks if the report should include a bullet point on organizations including trauma-informed/sensitive in their vision/mission statement. Ms. Threadgill suggested that we do not include this in the report, but make sure it is part of the TIR principles document. The task force agreed. This edit will not be included.

Ms. Threadgill reviewed the second edit on page 12.

Ms. Cabral suggested adding this language to the fourth bullet point.

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Ms. Threadgill reviewed the third edit on page 14 and agreed to add the term “Latinx.”

Ms. Threadgill reviewed the fourth edit on page 14 regarding the possibility of including statistics on children of color. Ms. Threadgill stated that she will go back and see if those statistics exist.

Ms. Threadgill reviewed the fifth edit on page 18 regarding the addition of information on Safe and Supportive School initiatives. Ms. Cabral will send Ms. Threadgill the information. The task force agreed with this addition.

Ms. Threadgill reviewed the sixth edit on page 23 regarding Finding #3, bullet point three. The task force agreed to add a reference to continuous professional development.

Ms. Threadgill reviewed the seventh edit on page 24 regarding the addition of two proposed bullet points. The task force agreed with these additions.

Ms. Threadgill asked the task force if there are any additional comments or edits people would like to propose. The task force had no additional edits and Ms. Threadgill thanked everyone for submitting their comments and feedback.

Ms. Threadgill asked for a motion to approve the report to submit to the Legislature. Ms. Mello motioned the approval and Ms. Dunne seconded the motion. The following individuals, representing their agencies voted to submit the report:

Maria Mossaides, Chair (OCA)

Claudia Dunne (CPCS)

Yves Singletary (DPH)

Yvonne Sparling (DYS) via phone

Tammy Mello (Children’s League)

Janice LeBel (DMH) via phone

Maggie Randall (Senator Boncore’s Office)

David Melly (Representative Dykema’s Office)

Ms. Cabral and Ms. Wallack abstain from voting. The report was approved to submit to the Legislature with edits as discussed.

Ms. Mossaides thanked the task force for their hard work on this report. She stated this is a great first step compared to where we first started one year prior.

Task force members commented on how they really like report.

**Next Steps:**

Ms. Threadgill began a discussion on possible next steps and new directions for the CTTF. She proposed bringing in people from various outside sectors to speak about their work and to see how we can include trauma-informed and responsive practices in their field.

Ms. Threadgill stated that over the next few months she will set up individual meetings with everyone regarding next steps and feedback. These meetings will start in January 2020 and will be used to set up a work plan for calendar year 2020. Ms. Threadgill stated that this will be a chance to reflect on if the CTTF has the appropriate people at the table.

Ms. Dunne asked if the CTTF needs to bring up the proposed changes to the Legislature if the task force decided to bring in outside people to the table. Specifically, she is thinking about the addition of school personnel.

Ms. Threadgill commented that she thinks it would be helpful to have more named people in the mandate. She stated that as of right now, we are only able to invite guests to the table. If there are people we want at the table on a regular basis, we could potentially make those statutory changes, although it does take a while. She proposed starting a working group specifically focusing on schools with school representatives. She opened the invitation for anyone on the CTTF to join the working group.

Ms. Mello stated that she likes the idea of having a school-focused working group. She asked if it would make sense to work with school districts who have already been doing this work who have experienced a traumatic event to see how they responded. This would provide real-world scenarios and experience. From there we would figure out a way to scale it towards all schools. This would include both schools and community partners.

Ms. Threadgill stated this will be a group focusing on school-related issues and not just made up of people working within schools.

Ms. Cabral stated DESE does regional networking through the Safe and Supportive Schools initiative (SaSS) which brings in community partners to the table. She added that these meetings are held across the state to get a better understanding of issues on a geographic basis.

Ms. Mossaides suggested pulling together a list of who should be involved in the working group. She also suggested conducting an exploratory study to see what the focus should be before submitting changes to the Legislature.

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Mr. Singletary suggest looking at social determinants of health and not just what happens within a school environment.

Ms. Dunne discussed the importance of looking at early intervention efforts as this takes place before children are involved in school. She also suggested looking at the work of pediatricians.

Ms. Mossaides stated she attends the American Academy of Pediatrics meetings as they address children's behavioral health issues on a broader scale. Right now, they are working on health insurance reimbursements for behavioral health services. This is currently not covered during a well-child visit.

Mr. Melly suggested bringing in EEC to the conversation.

Ms. Cabral stated her supervisor works with both DESE and EEC and could be brought into this conversation.

Ms. Dunne talked about the importance of bridging communication between sectors.

Mr. Singletary asked if the CTTF will be intersected with the other JJPAD working groups during the next steps.

Ms. Threadgill talked about the possibility of working with the Data Subcommittee, which is juvenile justice focused, to see if the CTTF could contribute to the conversation around establishing metrics related to trauma.

Ms. Mello suggested looking further into trauma-screening across disciplines. The guidelines document will help guide this conversation.

Ms. Dunne stated that using the ACEs screen does not cover everything.

Ms. Mossaides stated we can discuss which evidence-based model is appropriate for each discipline and talk about how one would go about collecting this data. The OCA is about to release a report on transition age youth, and this could be another avenue of focus as behavioral health is on the checklist during transitioning.

Mr. Singletary stated the use of a screening tool needs to be tied to a bigger picture and next steps plan. He suggested using this framework to further the professional development of adults and to get children access to resources.

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Ms. Threadgill stated we have already identified populations of children that do not have access to the resources they need. She provided the example of children witnessing overdoses and domestic violence within the home. She asked how law enforcement notifying the correct resources when they come into contact with these situations.

Ms. Mossaides stated law enforcement has someone show up right away once they identify that there are children in the home.

Ms. Threadgill suggested inviting a representative from a DA office that has been doing work on children witnessing overdoses.

Ms. Dunne stated that children experience trauma when they are removed from home, or when DCF is involved in general. The cycle then continues, and these children age out and become involved in the justice system such as prison.

Ms. Mello stated in general, we focus on what resources we need more of when we should be focusing on what we already know and what we are lacking.

Ms. Mossaides commented DDS and DPH both providing palliative care. She asked the rhetorical question as to why are two state agencies providing two separate programs focusing on the same matter.

Ms. Threadgill stated that the task force has suggested a number of great ideas that will help her to start a workplan.

Mr. Singletary talked about the importance of recognizing there are a lot of best practices, but they may not be best for everyone.

Ms. Mello stated the CTTF needs to ground the focus on one thing in particular, whether it's the guidelines or something else.

### **Discussion on Draft Guidelines for Trauma-Informed and Responsive Practice in Massachusetts:**

Ms. Threadgill moved the discussion towards talking about the current draft guidelines for trauma-informed and responsive practices in Massachusetts. So far, Ms. Morgia looked through various documents to see what is currently being used across disciplines. The goal of this document is to speak across disciplines. Ms. Threadgill explained that the CTTF previously discussed the principles of the guidelines but would like to start back at the beginning.



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### *Purpose*

CTTF members had no comments or edits on this section.

### *What is trauma?*

Ms. Threadgill stated that the definition of trauma used in the guidelines is from SAMSHA.

Ms. Dunne stated the SAMSHA definition does not capture chronic complex trauma.

Ms. Mello suggested including a paragraph below the definition that talks about chronic complex trauma. Many children and adults have a lifetime of trauma including repetitive traumatic experiences.

Mr. Singletary suggested coming up with a broader definition.

Ms. Threadgill commented that it is helpful to use a national definition, and therefore, using SAMHSA is helpful. However, she stated we can add more to this section.

Mr. Singletary stated the same thing happens when people refer to the ACEs study. He suggested figuring out what works best for the CTTF.

Ms. Dunne stated the guidelines need to mention there are other areas of trauma that people should consider.

Ms. Threadgill stated we can pull in information about poverty/economic stress and oppression into the report while discussing the definition of complex trauma.

Ms. Mossaides stated there are multiple domains and boxes of trauma in a child's life, especially for the children involved with DCF.

Ms. Dunne agreed and stated access to trauma services is so important and we need to recognize that it presents differently in each kid.

Ms. Mello agreed with pulling in the definitions of complex trauma. She said if these principles are going to guide the work, we need to be explicit. She agrees the guidelines need to use a definition understood nationwide and discuss what it means for us in Massachusetts. When we say what trauma is, we want to be clear.

Ms. Threadgill agreed to pull in language from the report and talk about the impact on development.

Ms. LeBel discussed how trauma impacts longevity.

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Ms. Dunne commented we want youth to live a long and healthy life.

Ms. Threadgill suggested adding a vision statement to the “purpose” section. Everyone agreed.

Dr. Sparling agreed with the idea of broadening the definition of trauma since it would be easier to bring in strength-based, resiliency and other connections.

### *Trauma-informed and responsive adults*

Ms. Threadgill explained this section is about the role that adults can play in a child’s life. In previous meetings, the task force discussed that some adults have short terms interaction while others interact long term and this section differentiates those two types of interactions and relationships.

Mr. Melly suggested removing “including those with trauma histories.”

Ms. Mello agreed since not all children will report experiencing trauma. She stated this should be the interaction adults have with all children regardless of whether or not they know their history. We should lead with the expectation that all kids have experienced trauma instead of only focusing on the children already identified.

Katherine Hughes stated this section focuses on agency professionals and staff, but she feels like we are leaving out parents. She asked if there is there a way to include parents in this section. She also discussed the responsibility of professionals to train parents.

Ms. Mello responded that the struggle is a lot of the parents involved also have their own traumatic experiences. She suggested that all caregivers should be informed and responsive, but she doesn’t know where that fits in within the guidelines. She suggested that we first figure out how the education piece fits in.

Ms. Mossaides commented on the first bullet on page 2: She suggested including caregivers with “other adults.” Make it known that this document is for professionals which includes educating other adults. She discussed the parenting journey model and asked if they include information on parental trauma. She stated when the Commonwealth chooses a model and curriculum, we need to make sure it includes caregiver education.

Mr. Singletary built off of Ms. Mossaides’ comment and discussed the importance of having cultural engagement and looking through a humility lens to increase personal awareness. We want to make sure that we acknowledge the families are not at fault for their trauma. He stated we need to be explicit that we know these interactions can be traumatizing in itself.

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Ms. Mossaides discussed intergenerational trauma. She asked how do we say “give us another chance” when we have parents that were involved with the system as child consumers.

Mr. Singletary: stated there are areas of the system that are unintentionally biased while others are explicitly biased. This is important to recognize when building relationships with the community.

Ms. Threadgill commented this is a great way to turn this section into a more positive lens.

Ms. Mello asked if we should include this in the youth and family engagement section as well. She suggested talking about the importance of why we want to engage families and highlight that working with caregivers and families lead to better outcomes for the children.

Ms. Mossaides discussed the Caring Together contracts and the recognition that the reintroduction of youth into their family after being removed includes engaging families.

Ms. Threadgill summarized the changes to be made to this section; include the importance of youth and family engagement section, include why this is important and why families are important, incorporating Ms. Mossaides’ suggestion of broadening the first bullet on pg. 2 to include parents, and add a section on cultural humility and engagement.

Ms. Dunne suggested including the need to approach everything through a cultural humility lens within the vision statement.

Ms. Threadgill will draft the changes and send them to everyone on the task force.

### *Trauma-informed and responsive systems*

Ms. Cabral asked if this is the appropriate section to include the fact that everyone should be included and the importance of continuous training.

Ms. Mossaides commented this work is not a “one and done.”

Ms. Threadgill agreed.

Mr. Melly suggested changing the word “institutions” to “agencies” for consistency.

Ms. Mello stated the system needs to support trauma-specific supervision and continuous training. She said if you want to build the capacity of the organization to be trauma-informed, supervision needs to happen.

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### *Safety Principle:*

Ms. Threadgill stated she broadened this section to include both physical and emotional safety as discussed during a previous CTTF meeting.

Ms. Mello commented on the language stating “sexual abuse from adults that have been entrusted with their care.” She stated we can’t just say adults and physical safety. We need to include something about young adults/children such as child-on-child sexual abuse.

Ms. Threadgill suggested putting the period at the end of “sexual abuse” and remove “from adults...”

Ms. Cabral talked about the responsibility of the adult to ensure a child’s safety.

Mr. Melly suggested using the language “build healthy relationships.”

Ms. Dunne suggested using the language “modeling and encouraging supportive and healthy relationships.”

Ms. Threadgill commented this would also include adults who have short-term interactions with children as they can model supportive and healthy relationships.

### *Transparency and Trust*

Ms. Wallack suggested including “legal boundaries” within the second paragraph where it talks about “within the bounds of confidentiality.”

Mr. Singletary responded he is unsure about using the term legal as sometimes doing the legal thing is not in the best interest of the child.

Ms. Wallack stated we shouldn’t be having conversations that we cannot legally have.

Mr. Singletary was thinking about this in terms of mandated reporting. Some people may think that reporting may not be in the best interest of the child.

Ms. Mossaides responded that still, the policy is that you need to inform someone about the disclosure. When a child says, “I want to tell you someone but you have to promise not to say anything,” the adult is responsible for saying they cannot promise that.

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Ms. Dunne said there can be tension between the legal and ethical thing to do.

Ms. Mello commented on the phrase “may be distrustful of authority figures.” We should talk about why these youth are distrustful.

Mr. Singletary suggested flipping the second and first sentence.

Ms. Threadgill asked what are the core ideas people want to express.

Ms. Mello want’s people to understand that distrust can lead to a child’s non-compliance and behaviors; both reactive or introverted. She wants to talk about how distrust manifests in different ways.

Ms. Dunne wants to focus on how we build trust and approach this in a trauma-informed way.

Mr. Singletary talked about the importance of understanding a child’s history. He suggested including a section about history.

Ms. Mossaides suggesting language about how certain populations are fearful of government.

Ms. Dunne provided the example of immigrant families.

Ms. Cabral suggested adding “developmentally appropriate” to the last bullet.

Mr. Melly suggested including confidentiality and legal whenever possible into a bullet point.

Ms. Threadgill stated she will take today’s feedback and will start off next meeting where we left off today.

### **Closing Comments:**

Ms. Threadgill noted the next meeting will be held on January 7th, 2020 from 1pm-3pm.

Ms. Threadgill thanked everyone for attending and the meeting adjourned.

**Adjournment:** 3:05pm