

Office of the Child Advocate  
Childhood Trauma Task Force Meeting Minutes  
Monday, March 10, 2025  
1:00pm-2:30pm  
**Meeting held virtually**

**Task Force Members or Designees Present:**

Maria Mossaides (OCA)  
Commissioner Miller (DCF)  
Beth Schatzel-Murphy (DYS)  
Laura Brody (DCF)  
Mia Alvarado (CLM)  
Rachel Wallack (Juvenile Court)

**OCA Staff:**

Audrey Smolkin (CCWT)  
Joy Cohen (CCWT)  
Arianna Turner  
Daisy Perez  
Kerin Miller  
Ari Fertig

**Other:**

Amy Whitehead-Pleaux (EEC)  
Katherine Hughes (Parent Child Trauma Resources)  
Carisa Pajak (MassHealth)  
Carmel Craig (ABH)  
Alison Morrissey (Baystate Health Center)  
Kathleen Bitetti (OSA)  
Julia Lane (DPH)  
Jennifer Hallisey (MassHealth)

**Meeting Commenced: 1:03PM**

**Welcome and Introductions**

Ms. Smolkin welcomed the attendees to the Childhood Trauma Task Force (CTTF) meeting. She explained that the group had not reached quorum and therefore would not be voting on the minutes from the December 16, 2024 meeting.

Ms. Smolkin welcomed opening remarks, comments, or questions. None were raised.

Ms. Smolkin then reviewed the agenda for the meeting, which included:

- Update on Center on Child Wellbeing and Trauma (CCWT) Activities
- Discussion: A Trauma Responsive Massachusetts
- Update on State Agencies' Trauma Training Requirements and Opportunities Project

Ms. Smolkin welcomed questions on the agenda. None were raised.

### **Discussion Preview**

Ms. Smolkin shared the discussion preview, explaining that members would discuss the following questions following the presentation:

- What will be different in a trauma-responsive Massachusetts?
- How will that change over time?
- How do we measure success?

### **Update: CCWT Work in 2025**

Ms. Smolkin began presenting CCWT work in 2025, including initiatives on systems transformation and schools.

Ms. Smolkin then reviewed each of the initiatives, including information on:

- STREET Initiative – Partnership with OCA
  - STREET Initiative Training Opportunities
- Strong Start Learning Management System (LMS) Trauma and Resilience Training
- Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) Regional Office TIR Training and Communities of Practice

Ms. Smolkin welcomed questions on the work completed with EEC. None were raised.

Ms. Smolkin continued reviewing the initiatives, including:

- Core Champions Train-the-Trainer Program: Deeper Dives in Trauma and Resilience
- Deeper Dives in Trauma and Resilience Early Childhood Educator Training (Regional Training)

Ms. Smolkin then reviewed additional CCWT work, including collaboration with Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) and Department of Youth Services (DYS).

Ms. Smolkin welcomed questions. None were raised.

Ms. Smolkin continued reviewing CCWT work, including:

- Partnering with the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC)

- Trauma-Informed and Responsive (TIR) Services for Newcomers

Ms. Smolkin then reviewed building a TIR Commonwealth based on previous member answers. Members were encouraged to begin discussion of the following questions:

- What will be different in a trauma responsive Massachusetts?
- How will that change over time?
- How do we measure success?

One member shared that, to them, a trauma-responsive Massachusetts means ensuring that all people have their most basic needs met. They added that these resources must be supported by state resources, rather than relying on external resources to create the foundation for strong communities and individuals.

Another member shared that their vision for a trauma-responsive Massachusetts is for those who work with children and families in the Commonwealth to be sensitive to their traumas and for professionals to be better equipped to identify and work with behaviors stemming from trauma.

One member suggested that the next step in trauma-related work is to address trauma reduction and to ensure that stakeholders work at the community and systemic level rather than just at the individual and family level. They suggested this be done by bringing community partners into state agency work.

Another member added that some state agencies focus on the individual client over focusing on the underlying community and that there is an opportunity to partner with state agencies that do focus on the community such as the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, and the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security.

One member shared that sometimes the most helpful action a state agency can take is to connect kids to members of their community and that state level leadership could improve local coordination.

Another member shared that trauma is intergenerational and that focusing on parents can be an effective method of helping children because of how much time parents spend with their children. They then posed the question of how members can broaden this task force to include educating families in understanding their child's trauma.

One member discussed the issue of racial disproportionality in children utilizing state services and the importance of addressing concerning behaviors early on rather than waiting for them to become involved in state services. They also suggested more work is needed to understand the situations of families who do not come across state services and ensure they are receiving the support they need elsewhere.

Another member added that having sufficient community supports means that families need to have reliable resources that they can trust and are available over the long term.

One member shared the importance of all law enforcement officials, who are often the first to respond to traumatic situations, understand trauma and that inappropriate behavior is often a reaction to trauma kids have experienced.

Another member shared that the communities from which kids are coming to the Department of Youth Services (DYS) are communities with poverty, minority residents, heavy police presence, and high levels of monitoring. They suggested thinking of ways to bring more money into communities who need them to prevent crimes from happening in the first place.

Ms. Smolkin thanked members for their participation in the discussion and promised to revisit the topics discussed in the June CTTF meeting.

### **Update: State Agencies' Trauma Training Requirements and Opportunities Project**

Ms. Smolkin then introduced Ms. Perez and welcomed her to present an update on the State Agencies' Trauma Training Requirements and Opportunities Project.

Ms. Perez then began presenting information about the project, including:

- Project Methodology
- MA State Agencies Interviews – Wish List
- MA State Agencies Interviews

Ms. Perez welcomed questions on the information presented thus far. None were raised.

Ms. Perez then shared information on MA State Agencies – Initial Training Mapping. She welcomed questions and additions. None were raised.

Ms. Perez then began presenting information on the National Scan of States' Approaches to Trauma and Resilience Training, including:

- Hawaii's office of Wellness and Resilience
- Virginia's Office of Trauma and Resilience Policy

Ms. Perez welcomed questions. None were raised.

Ms. Perez then presented on Vermont's Agency of Human Services and Next Steps on the National Scan of States' Approaches to Trauma and Resilience Training.

Ms. Perez welcomed suggestions for additional states to include in the national scan. One member suggested Pennsylvania.

Ms. Smolkin welcomed additional questions on the presentation.

One member suggested making comparisons between the Massachusetts state agencies and those examined in the other states in the national scan. Ms. Perez stated that those additions would be made to the presentation in June.

### **Closing Comments**

Ms. Smolkin shared that the next meeting of the CTTF will be held on June 9, 2025 at 1pm. She thanked members for their participation and attendance. She welcomed attendees to reach out in the meantime.

**Adjournment:** 2:09PM