

# Vermont Judicial Commission on Family Treatment Dockets

## Meeting Minutes

**Date: October 3, 2018**

**Present:**

Hon. Paul Reiber  
Hon. Karen Carroll  
Hon. Brian Grearson  
Ms. Patricia Gabel  
Commissioner Ken Schatz  
Theresa Scott  
Senator Jane Kitchel  
Marshall Pahl  
Senator John Campbell  
Mary Alice McKenzie  
Lisa Ventriss  
Alice George  
Tracy Shriver  
Maxine Grad

Also present at the meeting was Mr. Jeremy Zeliger, Robert Post, Kim Owens, and Linda Richard with the Vermont Office of the Court Administrator, Nora Sydow with the National Center for State Courts, Sarah Reed with the Chittenden County Office of the Public Defender, and Judy Ashley with the Vermont Department of Health in St. Albans.

- I. **Call to Order.** The meeting was called to order at 1:05pm and Chief Justice Paul L. Reiber welcomed the members and guests and provided an introduction to the guests' presentations.
- II. **Approval of Minutes.** The minutes from the June 16th meeting were approved.
- III. **Presentation Introduction.** Justice Carroll introduced the guest speakers and thanked Commission Member Dr. Holmes for connecting the Commission with these child trauma experts.
- IV. **Presentations by Joelle van Lent, Psy.D., Licensed Psychologist and Danielle Lindley, Director of Children, Youth, and Family Services at Northwestern Counseling and Support Services.**

Ms. van Lent delivered a presentation that covered:

- "Outsmarting Trauma" - Follow-up research to the ACEs study that looked at 5 (of the 10) ACEs that demonstrated that people with all 5 ACEs and high relational health had better outcomes than those with only 2 ACEs;

- The extremely high percentage of women with substance use disorders (SUD) who have experienced trauma and were often victimized by a person(s) they knew and trusted;
- Association and trauma-related triggers;
- Stimulation of “reward” neural systems in the human brain;
- Why people who utilize mental health services, and other related services, are responding to our system in a maladaptive way;
- Trauma is not in an event; it is in the *response* to the event;
- What we have learned about how best to respond to individualized who have experienced trauma? Ms. van Lent responded to a question on how courts can better help parents and families navigate the CHINS court process. Recommendations included meet basic needs first, consider pacing to allow for processing of information and instructions, reduce the demand on the working memory by using visual guides and note takers, make the unfamiliar familiar, and offer/allow regulation tools;
- Compassion fatigue and the signs of vicarious trauma; and
- Contextual risk factors including our own complex histories, implicit bias, prejudice, the high tolerance for violence in society, and world events that contribute to a sense of despair or hopelessness.

Ms. Lindley delivered a presentation that covered:

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) study;
- Vermont Prevention Model;
- Resilient Communities Action Team (RCAT) in Franklin County;
- Research and policy guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics on children in foster care;
- Overview of trauma-informed care;
- The sequential intercept model;
- The length of time in foster care versus whether the goals of the case plan are being met;
- Components of Trauma-Informed Care: creating a safe environment, building relationships and connectedness, and supporting and teaching emotional regulation; and
- No cost to creating trauma responsive/informed approach.

V. **Update from the Chins System-Wide Reform Committee.** Judge Grearson reported that the first meeting of the committee discussed what prevention work could be done before a CHINS petition is filed. Subsequent meetings focused on generating ideas including (1) the role of the attorneys general versus the states attorney in the CHINS process; (2) the role of the judiciary; (3) whether there is a role for a judicial master; and (4) a regional approach in attorney assignment.

V. **Interim and Final Reports Update.** Chief Justice Reiber thanked the Commission for its thoughtful and helpful feedback and work on the Interim Report and noted that it had been posted to the Commission website. Chief Justice Reiber suggested to the Commission that it

would likely need to extend the deadline for the Commission's work and final report to the Supreme Court, and he would make a specific proposal at next meeting.

- I. The meeting adjourned at 3:25.