



January 19, 2024

Chair Hymer, and Members of the Juvenile Justice Oversight Committee,

We are pleased to be with you today, offering information about the Family Peace Initiative and its services, and what would be helpful for us in advancing services.

Family Peace Initiative: The Family Peace Initiative (FPI) founders, Steve Halley and Dorothy Stucky Halley, have been focused on helping domestic violence offenders change their behavior since the early 1990's. While the program was originally called Alternatives to Battering, it became clear that having a name that identifies what we're trying to achieve was important: hence, the name of the program became the Family Peace Initiative in the early 2000's. In addition to the change of name, the approach was changed. Originally developed similar to other programs with a cognitive-behavioral approach, the high level of trauma that the participants had experienced informed the founders to enhance the programming and develop an approach that is trauma-focused. Over the years, this enhanced approach has led to the development of the "FPI Facilitation Approach" of which you have been provided with an overview.

The use of this approach for battering intervention has been tested in multiple ways. In the fall of 2015, the Office of the Attorney General staff did a multi-site study in cooperation with the Attorney General's Batterer Intervention Program (BIP) Advisory Board and the Office of Judicial Administration, examining the outcomes of all 2012 graduates from 6 different certified BIP programs across the state. This study found that 88% had not been charged with another "person" crime since their date of completion, and 90% had not had another protection order filed against them in that approximate 3 years since their completion. This "BIP Program Evaluation Study Report" can be found on the Attorney General's website at: https://www.ag.ks.gov/docs/default-source/publications/bip-program-evaluation-study-report.pdf?sfvrsn=c5b5da1a_4 In addition to being one of the sites for that study, it is important to note that 5 of the 6 certified programs in that study were using the FPI curriculum, and staff of all 6 had received training from FPI.

More recently, a study was done by the local YWCA and reported in the Topeka Mayor's Taskforce Against Domestic Violence 2021 Statistical Report, page 4:

"Longitudinal data collected across the past six years indicates that graduates of a Topeka-based battering intervention program are significantly less likely

to re-offend. Data was evaluated by YWCA Northeast Kansas' Center for Safety and Empowerment to determine rates of re-offense in graduates of the Family Peace Initiative's battering intervention program. Examining across a six-year time span, 85% of Family Peace Initiative graduates from Shawnee County were not found to be subjects in police responses to new domestic violence calls in Topeka. A total of 15% were found to have had a new domestic call. 'YWCA Northeast Kansas is proud to partner with Family Peace Initiative, as well as Washta'ge Peacemakers Men's Project to hold domestic violence offenders accountable for their behavior and to ensure greater safety for victims and survivors of domestic violence,' says Becca Spielman, program director for the Center for Safety and Empowerment. 'We recognize the importance of these battering intervention programs, and their success rate demonstrates just how effective they are in eliminating the cycle of violence and creating a safer community for families within Shawnee County.'"

While the FPI Program has become more and more recognized nationally and internationally, and the curriculum is now in its 3rd edition, the FPI Facilitation Approach has expanded to include different populations, resulting in the development of curricula and workbooks for Justice-Involved Women and Gender-Diverse People, Trauma Healing Groups in prison, and several curricula for our work with youth: the *Professional Educator's Guide: Youth Initiative Curriculum*, *A Social Emotional Learning Experience* for educational settings, and the *FPI Youth Initiative Curriculum: A Trauma-focused Approach for Justice-Involved Youth*. Our most recent venture, a partnership with Shawnee County Juvenile Detention Center, is a curriculum that detention centers can use to change the culture of their facilities to be trauma-focused: *Mastering Change Opportunities: A Training Program for Juvenile Justice Professionals—A Trauma-Responsive Guide*. It is nearing completion. These curricula are all built on the core principles noted in the FPI Facilitation Approach. This approach combines many trusted and evidence-based approaches to transformational change including (but not limited to) Motivational Interviewing, Cognitive Behavioral concepts, Trauma-Informed Practices, Rational-Emotive Behavioral concepts, Internal-Focused Dialogue, Polyvagal Theory, and Mindfulness. Our work with the youth has incorporated another evidence-based approach into the mix, and that is Hope Theory.

The FPI Youth Initiative: The FPI Youth Initiative is a 16-week, trauma-focused program, based on the FPI's River of Cruelty model. This model illustrates how cruelty is passed from person to person and from generation to generation. The approach asks participants to do two things: 1) take responsibility for the cruelty they have done, and 2) begin the process of "healing" from the cruelty they experienced long before they were cruel to anyone. Participating youth are provided with an opportunity to learn more about themselves, become more accountable, give voice to their own trauma histories, and take steps toward achieving their life goals.

Our Youth Initiative program was born at the Shawnee County Juvenile Detention Center in 2018. It expanded to include USD 501's Avondale Academy in 2019. We were invited to include justice-

involved youth in Shawnee County Community Corrections in 2020 and incorporated a program in Kansas Juvenile Correctional Complex in 2021. In 2023, we worked with The Topeka Center for Peace and Justice to develop the Peace Outreach Project (POP) serving youth on Diversion in Shawnee County. The POP Program is funded by the State's Evidence-based Program Fund. To date, the Youth Initiative, in a variety of settings, has served well over 150 justice-involved youth in Shawnee County.

Papa Sall, former Re-entry Specialist/CC II at KJCC and a supporting staff member in the group said,

"I believe that the youth are in the primary phase of acknowledging and exploring the trauma they faced as children/adolescents and how it somewhat "molded them" or contributed to some of the risky behaviors they engaged in. I think they are making those connections and dealing with that. They are motivated and looking toward group as a safe place..."

As was mentioned earlier, we expanded our approach by incorporating Hope Theory into our work with youth. Hope is an evidence-based protective factor for children. As noted by Hellman and Gwinn, "hope, as a psychological strength, is a protective resource that can help children cope with stress and adversity..." Children with higher levels of hope are found to have a greater capacity to identify viable pathways to their goals and mental energy to achieve them. Additionally, increasing hope scores are related to better grades, increased emotional regulation, and overall well-being. One example of this impact on well-being was a study regarding suicidal ideation. Of the youth studied, grades 8 to 12 with no, or low hope, 48% reported suicidal ideation whereas those with high hope only 12% reported suicidal ideation.

Therefore, we are interested in raising the Hope Score of the youth we serve and have instituted pre and post measurements, looking at Agency, Pathways and a total Hope Score. "Agency" refers to motivation or willpower to achieve a goal. "Pathways" looks at the belief that a workable route to the goal can be found. The combination of Agency and Pathways results in one's goal-directed thinking and total Hope Score.

Of the youth in KJCC and Community Corrections who have completed both the pre and post-test measurements, (N = 31) the scores reveal an average pre-test of 33.0 and an average post-test score of 39.4, for an average total increase of 6.5 points. When discussing this change with our Hope advisor, Dr. Chris Freeze, he reminded us that a change of just a couple of points in the youth scores at Camp HOPE resulted in improved grades and other positive well-being outcomes. While the N is currently too small to draw conclusions, the outcomes are promising. The attached Youth Data Metrics sheet provides more information regarding the Hope Score findings.

Looking into the future, youth should be able to access this trauma-responsive program wherever they reside, whether it be temporarily in an incarcerated setting or while living in the community. There have been cases where youth join us in JDC and then continue the

program in Community Corrections and then again in Avondale Academy. This seamless accessibility provides an important stability for justice-involved youth, and it is one that the youth themselves are asking for. However, our vision is bigger than the continuum of care we have been developing. Expanding community programming around the State is a reasonable goal. Helping professionals expand their trauma-focused interaction with youth, and providing youth with community programming that is transformational and accessible is a real possibility with appropriate support and resources. The entire State of Kansas can be moved to a powerful Juvenile Justice response that can create healing and accountability.

Having community program alternatives to correctional placements for troubled youth is critical for improving the outcomes of the individual youth as well as the community well-being. As SB 367 notes, the end-goal must be the youth becoming a healthy, contributing young adult. FPI's Youth Initiative Program offers a unique trauma-responsive approach to engaging justice-involved youth. Our approach has been honed over the last 33 years and has been shown to be effective in a variety of justice-involved settings including youth. We look forward to working with you to have a positive impact on youth in Kansas.

Respectfully Submitted by the Family Peace Initiative.

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Supportive Citations:

BIP Program Evaluation Study Report, Office of the Attorney General, 2016.

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The Interrelatedness of ACES among High-Risk Juvenile Offenders.

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Topeka Mayor's Task Force Against Domestic Violence, 2021 Statistical Report.