



Annual Report

Office of Trauma and Resilience Policy

Prepared by:

The Office of Trauma and Resilience Policy

SFY 2025



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

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Annual Report

Office of Trauma & Resilience Policy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In state fiscal year 2025 (July 1, 2024–June 30, 2025), the **Office of Trauma and Resilience Policy** (OTRP) at the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) achieved major milestones in advancing trauma-informed, healing-centered, and resilience-building approaches across the agency and with partners across the Commonwealth.

Key accomplishments include:

Agency Culture and Workforce Support

- » 214 members of the DSS workforce completed the Fundamentals of Trauma e-Learning module that was launched in FY 2023.
- » Vicarious Trauma training workshops were facilitated for 341 DSS employees.
- » Two OTRP staff were certified as Community Resiliency Model (CRM)© teachers. CRM is a skills-based framework that helps individuals regulate their nervous systems when they are experiencing trauma and stress.
- » The CRM framework was introduced to over 1,000 VDSS employees.
- » The OTRP team developed and produced a training video on integrating hope-centered language into web content.
- » Staff from the OTRP worked with Hope Navigators across VDSS to embed the Science of Hope into onboarding, case management, and both internal and external communications.

Best Practices for Lived Experience Engagement

- » Three 60-minute listening sessions with members of the statewide Lived Experience Community of Practice were held, providing valuable feedback and insight to shape the content of best practice resources.
- » The OTRP facilitated the creation of a **training video** featuring Virginia-based lived experience experts, viewed nearly 400 times on the VDSS YouTube channel.

Trauma-Informed and Healing-Centered Practices

- » The **Virginia HEALS** Trauma-Informed Model of Service Delivery toolkit resources were refreshed and updated.

- » The OTRP updated the **Trauma-Informed Language Guide** and developed a **Trauma-Informed and Hope-Centered Communications Checklist**.
- » The OTRP provided technical assistance and support to five local agencies within Virginia’s Trauma-Informed Community Networks (TICNs) to engage in healing-centered organizational assessments, develop strategic plans, and begin implementation efforts as part of the Healing-Centered Organizations (HCO) project, which resulted in actionable lessons and tools for broader statewide replication.
- » The OTRP facilitated the creation of a **video** featuring the HCO agencies to inspire and guide other organizations across the Commonwealth to engage in trauma-informed organizational assessment and planning processes. This video has been viewed over 575 times on the VDSS YouTube channel.

This progress reflects VDSS’s commitment to system-wide transformation that centers healing, equity, and resilience in every aspect of service delivery.

INTRODUCTION

Public policy plays a critical role in shaping how health and human services are delivered across Virginia. As agencies and organizations work to embed trauma-informed and healing-centered practices into their systems, policy can be a powerful catalyst for meaningful and sustained change.

In April 2022, the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) formally established the Office of Trauma and Resilience Policy (OTRP) — the first state-level office of its kind in Virginia — to lead the department’s trauma-informed and hope-centered work. The OTRP supports internal culture change, fosters cross-agency collaboration, and advances practices that build resilience for children, families, and individuals across the Commonwealth

This report outlines the OTRP’s efforts and progress during state fiscal year 2025, organized into three core areas:

1. **Agency Culture Change and Workforce Support**
2. **Best Practices for Lived Experience Engagement**
3. **Trauma-Informed and Healing-Centered Practices**

This report demonstrates how OTRP is helping build a more resilient and compassionate human services system for all Virginians.

AGENCY CULTURE CHANGE AND WORKFORCE SUPPORT

The Office of Trauma and Resilience Policy (OTRP) at VDSS supports a trauma-informed, healing-centered culture through training, policy guidance, and workforce well-being initiatives. The OTRP

specializes in statewide training, the Community Resiliency Model[©], and promoting the Science of Hope across the agency.

Training Initiatives

Fundamentals of Trauma

To provide VDSS employees with a foundational understanding of trauma, the OTRP developed an e-learning module titled *The Fundamentals of Trauma* in 2024. This eLearning module helps provide a strong foundational understanding of trauma, helps the learner understand the prevalence of trauma, our brain and body's responses to trauma, and what all

of this information means at an individual level. To date, 214 members of the DSS workforce have completed the training. This year, the course was also made available more broadly statewide, and another 198 state and local employees with access to the Commonwealth of Virginia Learning Center completed the course.

Vicarious Trauma

In response to the unique challenges human services professionals face, the OTRP created *Vicarious Trauma: An Overview*, a 1.5-hour facilitated workshop. This training explores the effects of secondary exposure to trauma, how it impacts individuals and organizations, and how to mitigate these impacts, both individually and organizationally. Since its launch in September, the OTRP has facilitated quarterly virtual and in-person sessions, with a total of 341 DSS staff trained.

Community Resiliency Model (CRM)[©]

The OTRP has begun promoting the implementation of the evidence-based Community Resiliency Model[©] to help staff regulate their nervous systems and recover from stress and trauma. Following the recommendations of the **Capstone Report on Vicarious Trauma in the Workplace** (2024), two OTRP staff members completed 40 hours of CRM Teacher Training and have since been certified as instructors. They have introduced the model to over 1,000 VDSS staff and led two workshops



with nearly 20 participants. A full six-session workshop series, already at capacity with waitlists, is scheduled to begin in August 2025.

Trauma-Informed Policy and Practice

Beyond the structured training programs, the OTRP delivered additional trauma-related presentations to over 1,050 VDSS staff and leadership. These trainings sought to engage individuals with lived experience, educate on the Science of Hope, and highlight strategies for supporting the workforce.

Technical Assistance

Policy and Curriculum Review

To ensure trauma-informed and healing-centered principles are embedded throughout VDSS operations, the OTRP continues to review training materials, guidance documents, and policy and communications. Over the past year, reviews and feedback were provided across ten VDSS divisions. OTRP also supported in-person trainings and events at the home office, regional offices, and community venues. A high-level review of legislative reports is also underway to promote trauma-informed and hope-centered language.

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Trauma Resource Institute, creators of the Community Resiliency Model©

Science of Hope Implementation

Recognizing the power of hope as a protective factor, the OTRP launched a multi-phase Science of Hope initiative in 2023. In the past year, these efforts included:

- » Convening bi-monthly meetings of the VDSS Hope and Resilience Transformation Team (HARTT)
- » Collaborating with VDSS's Division of Public Affairs to create a hope-centered training video
- » Facilitating training opportunities for staff on hope awareness

- » Integrating hope-centered practices into agency communications and case management practices

Notably, the Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE) embedded hope into their case management strategies, and the Division of Local Training and Development incorporated hope-centered language into Virginia Initiative for Education and Work (VIEW) training curricula. Agency-wide, divisions under the Employee and Organizational Strategy Portfolio have also woven hope into onboarding, internal messaging, and external communications, supported by VDSS-branded hope graphics and guidance documents.

Internal Resource Development

Staff Well-Being Resources

In alignment with VDSS's mission to support employee well-being, the OTRP developed key resources to assist staff in managing stress and supporting one another. These included:

- » *A Supporting Workforce Well-Being* guide with stress management tips and guidance for peer support
- » *A Mental Health Resource Card* containing crisis contacts, hotlines, and Employee Assistance Program information

Hope Integration into Website Modernization

As part of VDSS's ongoing web modernization initiative, the OTRP partnered with the Division of Public Affairs to enhance the website's accessibility and emotional tone. The OTRP team developed **Integrating the Science of Hope into Web Content**, a video that was used to train migration specialists and subject matter experts across the agency. The video introduced hope-centered language and visuals that reinforce agency goals and pathways to independence, helping users across the Commonwealth engage with services in an empowering way.

BEST PRACTICES FOR LIVED EXPERIENCE ENGAGEMENT

Lived experience (LE_x) refers to the unique knowledge and perspectives individuals gain through personal challenges—social, health-related, or systemic—that directly impact their lives. Centering and elevating the voices of people with lived experience is a transformative practice that strengthens policies, improves services, fosters trust, and leads to more responsive, equitable, and effective systems. The OTRP leads the development of best practice strategies to engage

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The OTRP produced a first-of-its-kind video, **Best Practices for Engaging the Voices of People with Lived Experience**, featuring Virginia-based experts with lived experience and showcasing crucial collaborative practices across multiple state agencies. The video serves as a training and learning resource, advancing trauma-informed, co-designed service models.

individuals with lived experience, ensuring their valuable insights drive the development of policies, programs, and service delivery.

LEx Community of Practice

Facilitated by the OTRP, the LEx Community of Practice is a cross-agency collaborative network that includes members from the state's Department of Social Services, Department of Health, Department of Medical Assistance Services, Virginia Commonwealth University, and other state-level stakeholders. Now in its third year, the Community of Practice serves as a hub

for exchanging insights, building engagement strategies, and sharing learnings about best practices for engaging advisory group members and leaders.

Pathway to Compensation

Compensating individuals with lived experience reflects respect and recognition of their time, expertise, and emotional labor. In 2025, the OTRP provided constructive review and feedback on the VDSS Procurement Gift/Debit Card Policy. Based on this feedback:

- » Policy revisions are under way to simplify use and improve accessibility of incentives.
- » Visa gift cards and similar tools will be used to offer timely and appropriate compensation.
- » VDSS has an increased capacity to engage LEx participants more meaningfully and equitably.

LEx Engagement Video

The OTRP produced a first-of-its-kind video, **Best Practices for Engaging the Voices of People with Lived Experience**, featuring Virginia-based experts with lived experience and showcasing crucial collaborative practices across multiple state agencies. The video serves as a training and learning



resource, advancing trauma-informed and co-designed service models. This video highlights and

strengthens engagement while promoting collaboration between agencies. It has been viewed on YouTube 397 times and has been widely shared across sectors to promote cooperation and equitable education.

Listening Sessions

To inform best practice development, the OTRP hosted three 60-minute listening sessions with Community of Practice group members. These intimate sessions yielded deeper dialogue and valuable feedback to help shape guidance materials.

Core Competencies and Training

Ongoing professional development is essential to building effective and equitable engagement. The OTRP has identified core competencies and created a training framework tailored to both LEX members and the staff support members who are supporting and/or facilitating the groups. Core competencies for lived experience groups include Strategic Sharing, Emotional Intelligence, and Conflict Resolution; and core competencies for group leaders include Assessing Readiness, Co-Design, and Team Building. Downloadable training on these core competencies will be shared widely in the fall of 2025.

In the last year, OTRP provided trauma-informed training and technical assistance across local, regional, and national platforms.

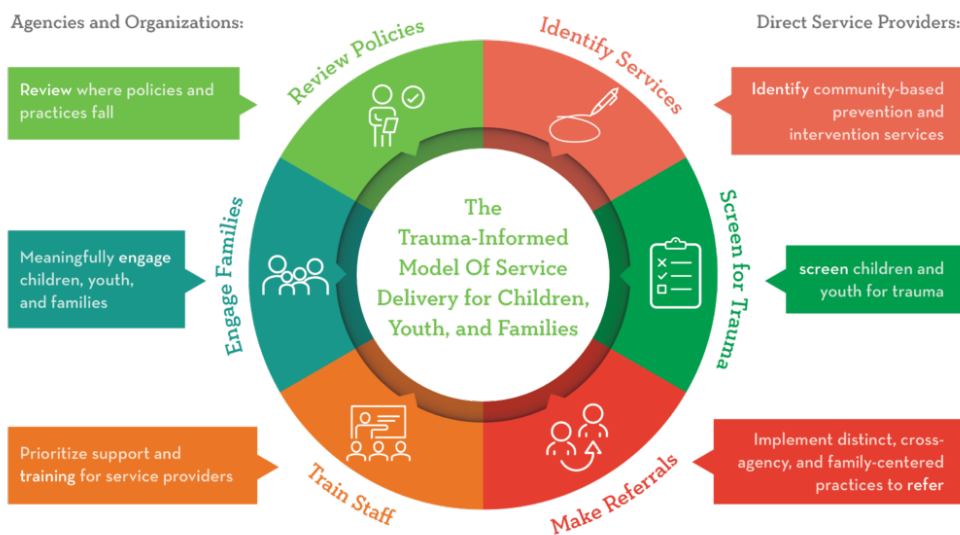
TRAUMA-INFORMED AND HEALING-CENTERED PRACTICES

Trauma-informed and healing-centered practices recognize that many individuals have experienced adversity and that systems should prioritize safety, trust, and well-being. These approaches go beyond recognizing trauma—they also focus on long-term resilience, strengths, and collective healing. The VDSS Office of Trauma and Resilience Policy (OTRP) advances these principles by

offering tools, training, and technical assistance to help service providers create environments that reduce harm and foster healing across the Commonwealth.

Virginia HEALS: Trauma-Informed Model of Service Delivery

Virginia HEALS is a cross-systems initiative designed to prevent and address childhood



trauma through a comprehensive, trauma-informed service delivery model. Supported by a robust toolkit and e-learning courses, the model helps service providers identify children affected by trauma and coordinate specific, individualized support. This past year, toolkit resources were updated to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness for cross-sector providers.



Training and Technical Assistance

In the last year, the OTRP provided trauma-informed training and technical assistance across local, regional, and national platforms. Over 300 individuals were trained at major conferences including the Child Abuse Prevention Conference, the Children’s Services Act Conference, the Crimes Against Children Conference, the Medicaid Advisory Committee, and the national Child Welfare League of America Conference. This training focused heavily on vicarious trauma, engaging individuals with lived experience, and the toolkit

resources that support the Virginia HEALS Trauma-Informed Model of Service Delivery, including the resource mapping facilitation guide and the trauma-informed agency self-assessment. These efforts support agencies in becoming more responsive, coordinated, and healing-centered in their services.

Healing-Centered Organizations (HCO) Initiative

Using American Rescue Plan Act funds, the OTRP supported five local agencies within **Virginia’s Trauma-Informed Community Networks (TICNs)** to engage in healing-centered organizational assessments and strategic planning. The Crater Health District, New River Valley CARES, Greater Richmond Stop Child Abuse Now, EO (formerly United Way of Southwest Virginia), and the United Way of the Virginia Peninsula all participated in the initiative. Each agency completed a trauma-informed self-assessment, developed a strategic plan, and began implementing the plan. The initiative lasted 18 months and concluded in the fall of 2024, with results and lessons learned shared with TICNs across the state. The OTRP also created a

To further embed trauma-informed and healing-centered practices into agency culture, OTRP updated the *Trauma-Informed and Hope-Centered Language Guide* to incorporate the **Science of Hope.**

video and storytelling flyer about the process of becoming a Healing-Centered Organization to share lessons learned and encourage other agencies to begin similar journeys.

Tools and Resources

To further embed trauma-informed and healing-centered practices into agency culture, the OTRP updated the **Trauma-Informed and Hope-Centered Language Guide** to incorporate the **Science of Hope**. Further, the Office created the **Trauma-Informed and Hope-Centered Language**

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Resilience Week Va 2025 MAY 1-7



Checklist—a practical tool for reviewing communications, policies, and curricula for alignment with trauma-informed principles. These tools have been distributed internally and across networks including Virginia’s Trauma-Informed Community Networks and the statewide Trauma-Informed Leadership Team.

Resilience Week 2025

In May 2025, Governor Glenn Youngkin proclaimed Virginia’s 5th Annual Resilience Week. The OTRP partnered with Public Affairs to promote awareness and engagement by sharing daily social media content on the six trauma-informed care principles and publishing articles in *VDSS e-News* and *LinkedIn* highlighting connections between trauma-informed

practice and the agency’s mission. These efforts helped reinforce the importance of resilience and trauma awareness within both internal operations and public outreach.

The Office of Trauma and Resilience Policy continues to lead Virginia’s efforts to create supportive, healing-centered systems. Through statewide training, cross-sector collaboration, and the development of practical tools, the OTRP equips service providers to respond more effectively to trauma and build systems rooted in safety, equity, and resilience.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The OTRP is actively working to gain the funding and resources necessary to fully implement a statewide Workforce Support Program. This program would include a peer support line staffed by retired DSS human services workers and statewide implementation of the Community Resiliency Model[®]. These program components are crucial steps toward creating a trauma-informed culture in the agency. They highlight healing-centered approaches that strengthen staff resilience, cultivate healing-centered policy and practice, increase

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employee retention, and ultimately enhance outcomes for individuals and families throughout Virginia. In collaboration with VDSS's Division of Local Training and Development, six virtual CRM workshops are scheduled to take place before the end of calendar year 2025 to begin introducing the model to the local workforce. All of these workshops are full with waitlists, demonstrating the need and demand for support.



Additionally, in the fall of 2025, the OTRP will be unveiling a reimagined and enhanced Virginia HEALS website. The revamped website will include updated Virginia HEALS tools and resources, brand new best practice guidance and training tools for engaging individuals with lived experience, and resources for organizations looking to engage in an active process to become more trauma-informed and healing-centered. The OTRP is looking forward to continuing to engage with local communities to drive the integration of trauma-informed and healing-centered practices and policies across the Commonwealth.

OTRP STAFF



Laurie Crawford — Director

Laurie Crawford (she/her) stood up Virginia’s inaugural Office of Trauma and Resilience Policy (OTRP) in 2022. Prior to this role at VDSS, she managed Virginia HEALS, a state demonstration project to link systems of care for children and youth and served as a program manager at the Virginia Department of Health, where she led efforts to enhance healthcare provider response to domestic and sexual violence. Laurie has been responsible for statewide policy, training, and public awareness initiatives in criminal justice, public health, child welfare, and victim advocacy for over 25 years.



Adam Creveling — Policy Specialist

Adam Creveling (he/him) is a Policy Specialist at the Office of Trauma and Resilience Policy (OTRP). He has a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Philadelphia. For the last seventeen years, Adam has worked in state government and community nonprofits focusing on the intersection of trauma, addiction, prevention, and wellness. Adam enjoys gardening, biking, hiking, and exploring the beautiful mountains of Virginia with his wife and their two rescue dogs.



Stacie Vecchietti — Policy Specialist

Stacie Vecchietti (she/they), M.S.W., is a policy specialist at the Office for Trauma and Resilience Policy (OTRP). Prior to working at VDSS, Stacie was a senior training and technical assistance specialist at the Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center, and they also previously served as the Executive Director of the Virginia Anti-Violence Project (VAVP), a community-based organization which focused on addressing and preventing violence within and against diverse LGBTQ+ communities. Stacie received both their bachelor’s and master’s degrees in social work from Virginia Commonwealth University.



Sigourney Jeans — Administrative Staff Specialist

Sigourney Jeans (she/her) is an Administrative Staff Specialist with the Office of Trauma and Resilience Policy (OTRP). Sigourney is an administrative professional with over 9 years’ experience within the medical and government sectors. In her free time, Sigourney enjoys dancing, traveling, and has started a new hobby of doing her own nails. She lives in Newport News with her two cats Biggie and Buzz.



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