

STRIDE Staff Attends Healing Trauma Workshop



On November 29th, STRIDE Career Specialist, Sarah Very, attended the workshop, Healing Trauma: A Brief Intervention for Women. The training was facilitated by Eileen Russo and was hosted by the Women's Consortium in Hamden, Connecticut. The training

has helped to enhance the trauma workshop that STRIDE facilitates as part of the ten-week class curriculum at York Correctional Institution, by focusing on key points that should be covered when discussing the trauma.

Russo focused on being aware of the women and their response to some of the difficult topics that are discussed with trauma. When people begin to feel triggered, they may revert back to their conditioned responses to trauma, such as loss of concentration or withdrawing from the group. By being aware of these behaviors, more grounding exercises will be implemented into our curriculum to help participants feel present in the discussion at hand.

Many of our STRIDE participants have not experienced healthy relationships in their lifetime, and having the women discuss what they believe one is, we can better understand their past and their expectations. Russo explained that women may not think of setting healthy boundaries and having open communication as part of this. Providing more examples of healthy relationships can ensure that the STRIDE participants have a clearer understanding of what this means.

The training emphasized that participants must understand that their unhealthy behaviors are due to their sensitized



nervous systems. We need to focus more on the process of trauma and explain the changes that happen to the brain and central nervous systems. STRIDE participants will gain a deeper understanding of why they are experiencing the behaviors that they are feeling and they will better understand the importance of the mind and body connection. Russo stated to the audience, "If you are not treating the body, you are not treating the trauma."

Submitted by:
Sarah Very, Career Specialist

"Hire One" Campaign



In April 2016, President Obama launched the Fair Chance Business pledge. This pledge was meant to encourage business owners and the community to support returning citizens and provide them with a second chance. As of today, there are more than 300

employers who have signed on and pledged their support. www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/04/11/fact-sheet-white-house-launches-fair-chance-business-pledge

Please join me as I am initiating a local grassroots effort called "Hire One" where we are asking employers to take an opportunity to hire one returning citizen and give him/her a chance at employment.

**Be the key to unlock an individual's potential,
"Hire One"
and gain a workforce for the future**

Based on what we know of individuals returning home, those who acquire employment upon their release have a higher success rate as well as a reduced chance of recidivating. Please join us in spreading the word and ask an employer to take a chance and "Hire One".

Special thank you to Hannah Hurwitz from Institute for Municipal and Regional Policy at CCSU for creating the logo.

Submitted by:
Sue Gunderman, STRIDE Job Placement Coordinator





Rachel Strides Forward

STRIDE Participant Rachel is a bundle of energy, ideas, talents, and motivation. This can be a great combination when you also have direction and support during your transition home. Fortunately, Rachel came home with an eye on all of these. She worked hard and focused her time and energy while still at York Correctional Facility and knew she would need the same when she got home. Rachel had identified that she would need a positive support system of individuals and agencies to help her get and stay on track. She asked questions and found those support systems to help her with the emotional and mental concerns that are a natural part of the transition back home. She found a counselor at a local health facility and through Access to Recovery obtained a gym membership which has been pivotal to her mental and physical health.

Rachel pays attention to her diet, being sure to eat healthy foods, knowing that even what you eat is important to your health and how you feel daily. After a short stint at a local restaurant Rachel found a job in her career choice of Hairstyling. Rachel is a talented and creative artist and Hairstylist. While at York Rachel discovered a latent creative ability in art. She does complex, intricate drawings, each one taking hours and hours of her time. Rachel took part in the Connecticut Prison Arts Program and exhibited some her drawings last Spring. She has her own chair and full time position at a family run salon in Connecticut where she has become part of the family. I visit the salon regularly and now Rachel is the only one I trust to cut my own hair. Over the Christmas holiday Rachel committed to giving back by offering free haircuts to those in need. She distributed gift certificates that she created to churches in her area. Through her hard work and focus Rachel affords her own apartment and spends plenty of time with her 2 growing sons and immediate family. Hats off to you Rachel and your continued success.



Submitted by:
Anne Mehr, Job Developer Region I



Ayanna Brown (left), Taylah L. (right)

Partners in Progress

STRIDE has been partnering with Dress for Success Mid-Fairfield County for many years in an effort to assist females re-entering their communities. Dress for Success Mid-Fairfield County is an affiliate of Dress for Success® Worldwide in New York City since 1998, the organization has served over 5,000 women in Fairfield County through its Simply Suited program and career development programs. The mission of Dress for Success is to empower women to achieve economic

independence by providing a network of support, professional attire and the development tools to help women thrive in work and in life. STRIDE referred two of our female participants for suiting appointments, pictured below is STRIDE participant Taylah L. and Dress For Success Operations Manager, Ayanna Brown, who suited Taylah with five interview outfits that she will use while interviewing for a variety of jobs in the Bridgeport area. This type of community partnership is a great asset to our participants and we would like to thank Ms. Brown and her entire staff for their assistance.

Submitted by:
Rob Hebert, Job Developer Region II

Would You Like
More Information
On **STRIDE?**

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