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18th Judicial Circuit Court Family Violence Coordinating Council Addresses Trauma in the Work Environment

FVCC teamed up with 18th Judicial Court's Department of Probation for free virtual training session

DuPage County, Ill. (July 6, 2020) The 18th Judicial Circuit Court Family Violence Coordinating Council (FVCC) and the 18th Judicial Circuit Court Probation and Court Services hosted a training workshop to legal and advocacy professional.

The virtual event – *Vicarious Trauma in the Work Environment: Strategies for Resilience* - was attended by more than 400 participants.

The goals of the presentation were to: Identify how vicarious trauma may be impacting your work; Reduce the sense of burden, and hopelessness that many people in direct service positions experience; Re-ignite your sense of meaning and hope in your career; and show how to foster resilience and increase your ability to work effectively despite the vicarious trauma you may be experiencing.

Led by Judge Ann Celine Walsh, the 18th Judicial Circuit Court Family Violence Coordinating Council (FVCC) serves DuPage County and provides a forum for the communication, collaboration and resource-sharing between criminal justice professionals and community service providers.

This collaboration strengthens the systems' response to survivors of family violence and the administration of justice. The 18th Judicial Court's FVCC work centers around professional education and training for law enforcement and criminal justice personnel, community awareness and policy/systems changes.

Due to COVID-19, the training, which was originally scheduled to take place at the College of DuPage, was switched to a virtual training session. "I'm very proud of everyone on the committee and their willingness to adapt the training to our current circumstances," said Judge Walsh. "Their phenomenal effort and ability to move to virtual training opened up the platform to reach many more people on an important and relevant topic."

Judge Walsh began her legal career as an Assistant State's Attorney in DuPage County where she was the Supervisor of the Sex Crimes/Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Unit. While at the State's Attorney's Office, she successfully prosecuted hundreds of cases, including murder, domestic abuse and other violent offenses. Currently, she is the Presiding Judge of the Specialty and Juvenile Courts Division.

"We benefit from her experience, commitment and passion in family violence work as she leads our FVCC," said Holly Smith, FVCC Coordinator, 18th Judicial Circuit Court. "She is engaged and actively involved in leading and promoting the FVCC."

Thanks to funding made available by the Illinois Department of Human Services, the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission selected the 18th Judicial Circuit Court's Department of Probation and Court Services to receive grant funding in support of youth trauma work, which made the virtual training possible.

“The training was a unique opportunity for Probation and the FVCC to partner on this very timely topic with our staff, key stakeholders and direct service providers who deal with trauma through their work,” said Smith.

Probation teamed up with four community-based agencies - Northeast DuPage Family and Youth Services, Outreach Community Ministries, 360 Youth Services and the DuPage County Health Department - to form the DuPage Comprehensive Trauma Collaborative. Over the past two years, this work included identifying strategies to uniformly screen adolescents for trauma needs, training local clinicians in Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, researching the efficacy of this intervention with partners from Loyola University at Chicago and making provider wellness training available to professionals working with youth and families.

“Working with FVCC creates a wonderful opportunity to reach new stakeholders and provide training to some who normally wouldn’t have the opportunity,” said Jennifer Hess, Supervisor – Juvenile Probation for the 18th Judicial Circuit Court Probation and Court Services. “Our partnership with FVCC has far exceeded our expectations and we look forward to using this training as a springboard for trainings in the future.”

The training was given by Carrie Steiner PsyD and founder of the First Responders Wellness Center. Dr. Steiner is a licensed clinical psychologist who is currently in private practice as a police and public service psychologist. As a psychologist, she conducts police, fire, and public safety psychological evaluations and specializes in trauma therapy utilizing E.M.D.R., exposure, and cognitive behavioral therapy. Dr. Steiner is a 13-year veteran Chicago Police Officer, Crisis Intervention Team Leader, Peer Support Member, and Chicago Police Academy Instructor. She speaks nationally on mental illness and police response, crisis intervention, identifying mentally ill persons, suicide, officer wellness, PTSD, DSM-5 and several other topics.

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