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**State of Vermont**

Department of Mental Health  
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**TO:** Representative Ann Pugh, Chair, Committee on Human Services  
**FROM:** Kheya Ganguly, Director, Trauma Prevention and Resilience Development  
**DATE:** February 9, 2022  
**SUBJECT:** Scope and Priorities of Role

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## Scope

I became the Director of Trauma Prevention and Resilience Development for the State of Vermont in June 2021. This position works across the Agency of Human Services, departments and in communities. My work, as I see it, is to touch all Vermonters and aid in creating, supporting, and growing:

- A trauma responsive and healing centered framework to use when creating policy and programs,
- Build IDEA (inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility)
- Provide advanced level training opportunities, and
- Be a subject matter expert, consultant, and advisor,
- Provide support in creating equity based, trauma responsive systems and organizations.

I do this work to increase resilience, trauma responsiveness, and create equity for individuals, community partners, educational and university systems, medical providers and systems, and the State of Vermont Government System. My current areas of focus include Racial/Marginalized Populations, COVID Recovery, and Substance Use. I aim to increase understanding and resiliency across the state.

## Groups, Committees, Consultation

I am involved in many groups, projects and trainings, including:

- i. Health Equity Workgroup
- ii. Mental Health Integration Council
- iii. AHS-wide Diversity Group
- iv. Substance Misuse Prevention Council
- v. State Interagency Team
- vi. AHS Policy Committee
- vii. AHS Professional Development Committee
- viii. Refugee Mental Health Workgroup
- ix. AHS Abenaki Workgroup
- x. Child and Family Trauma Workgroup
- xi. The Trauma Prevention, Equity and Resiliency Committee



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- xii. Building Bright Futures Child Outcomes Accountability Team
- xiii. Voices for Vermont Families Group
- xiv. Vermont Cooperative for Practice Improvement's Anti-Racism Steering Committee
- xv. Farm to Early Childhood steering committee
- xvi. Strengthening Families state co-leader.
- xvii. Board member, Outright Vermont
- xviii. Board member, The Castleton Center for Social Justice and Trauma Informed Care at Castleton University

I have acted as a consultant for the Department of Corrections, Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living, and Capstone Community Action on topics which include trauma, resilience, and anti-racism. I have also consulted with United Counseling Service, the Chittenden County Homelessness Work group, and Project Vision-Rutland's Anti-Racism sub-committee. I provide support for employees who work for AHS and the State Field Directors around trauma and resilience.

### **Training**

I have provided consultation and training to the Agency of Natural Resources, the Department of Labor, the Vermont Health Department, the Department of Corrections, Social Security Disability specialists, Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living, Agency of Education, and Department for Children and Families.

I created and conducted a five-part training on creating Equitable Trauma Responsive organizations for all Community Action Agencies in the state. I did a series of training on Understanding Resiliency for non-profits, Head Start programs, and designated agencies in Bennington County, the Northeast Kingdom, And Washington County. Topics include Moving Beyond ACEs: Understanding Resilience, Trauma Informed Supervision, Anti-Racism and Allyship, Workforce Retention, and Creating Equity based, Trauma Informed Organizations. These trainings are being offered to state employees and community partners. In a six-month period over 1,900 people received trainings in the above topics. I have also provided training on a state and national level on trauma responsive, health and culturally sensitive care and self-care, as well as compassion fatigue, burnout, and vicarious trauma

### **Conclusion** *(From the [Annual Children's System of Care Report](#))*

COVID presented a host of challenges unlike any other previously experienced in the state. We have seen the population face novel trauma and upheavals. The strain on the system and staff has been unprecedented. Despite barriers and increased levels of need caused by the pandemic and



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other upheavals, during this time, we were able to find new and creative ways to provide supports and services for Vermonters. Although the strain of COVID has been significant and continues to exist, our systems and communities displayed an incredible ability to “bounce back.” We did this by working together to achieve our mutual goals, sharing ideas and resources, and meeting to work through any disagreements along the path into our new normal.

The work of the future is to celebrate and build on all we have learned and achieved, to remain open to emerging effective and efficient solutions to new challenges, and to support each other when the journey is hard. Fortunately, these are all things that Vermonters are good at doing! I continue to look for new ways to improve outcomes and increase resilience for all Vermonters.

