



FAMILY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Location: Virtual - MS Teams Date: 11/16/24 Time: 10am-2:30pm

Teleconference details: MS Teams - Meeting ID: 212 813 247 784

MEETING ATTENDEES

<u>James R. Key, Deputy Assistant Secretary</u> Department/facility co-chair	<u>Sara Leon</u> Family co-chair	<u>Greg Mansfield</u> Vice-chair(SFC only)
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<u>Charissa Reno, Executive Assistant to James Key</u> Department/council secretary	<u>Vacant</u> Family secretary, if applicable
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Members present: AHCC- Eileen Hargrove; CCCC-Diane Sifres; CRCC – Scarlett Williams; MCC- Danielle White Josephine Johnson; OCC – Jennifer Schaibly; SCCC-Daphne Nolte, WCC-Felix D’Allesandro; WCCW- Greg Mansfield.

Not present: WSP, MCCCW, CBCC.

Non-council member attendees: _____

Commonly Used Acronyms

SFC – Statewide Family Council **LFC** – Local Family Council **FC** – Family Council **DOC** – Department of Corrections **OCO** – Office of Correctional Ombuds

Prison Facilities:

AHCC – Airway Heights Corrections Center	MCC - Monroe Correctional Complex	WCCW - Washington Corrections Center for Women
CBCC - Clallam Bay Corrections Center	MCCCW - Mission Creek Corrections Center for Women	WCC - Washington Corrections Center
CCCC - Cedar Creek Corrections Center	OCC - Olympic Corrections Center	WSP - Washington State Penitentiary
CRCC - Coyote Ridge Corrections Center	SCCC - Stafford Creek Corrections Center	

AGENDA

Topic	Discussion/Key Points
Welcome	Introduction of James Key as the SFC Department Co-Chair. Welcome to the Family Councils, DOC staff, the OCO, and everyone who joined today.
Agenda Review, Action Item Review, Election Announcement <i>Charissa Reno, DOC Co-Secretary</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda reviewed (<i>Attachment #1</i>) • Action Items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mail Room: Residents facing challenges when mailing hobby projects. Mailroom sergeant is saying that USPS 1st class is the only option. State policy is ambiguous. UPDATE: Received explanation from Rec Managers, they are allowing USPS and FedEx, and that expectation was re-enforced. We enter weight, size, and other factors like rigid or lumpy. All that information is used to determine how to send the package. Not all options are available for all packages due to USPS shipping requirements. This action item is closed. • Concern with Body Scanners, are these scanners emitting ionized radiation? Public Hearing scheduled for Nov 20th. Can we have the actual data? UPDATE: The Department uses two types of scanners: Millimeter wave – staff/visitors. No radiation Transmission X-Ray – Incarcerated individuals Radiation The Smiths Detection B Scan emits 0.0000025 rem (0.025 mrem) per scan which is the equivalent of approximately 2.5 bananas. In the 2023 WCCW log the most one individual was scanned was 116 times in a year which is equivalent to 29% of a single dental x-ray, ~3% of a single chest x-ray and 0.73% of a mammogram. This action item is closed. • Elections Results: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earlier this month we had the SFC representatives and current elected members vote for the 2025 Family Vice-Chair. Elise McKinnon has been voted into the role as Family Vice-Chair for the 2025 year. We also had a majority vote for Sarah Leon to take over the role as Family Co-

	<p>Secretary. Thank you both for your willingness to take on these important roles within family council.</p>
<p>Secretary Time Cheryl Strange, Secretary</p>	<p>For anyone reading the news and a lot of information going around about state budget deficit. Budget proposals have been submitted for the 2025.</p> <p>Budget reduction – The state is projected to be in between 10-12 billion deficits. Have been asked by OFM, which holds the gov budget and HR dept, policy dept, in a couple weeks the revenue budget council will send out another report.</p> <p>Budget request – Maintenance level budget 123 mil, policy level budget 198 mil, this is our ask for 2 years, Gov budget comes out 12/20.</p> <p>Base Budget Staffing – Bringing up the base of our prisons, HS division and CCD division. We do not have enough staff to cover leave status for staff. Need additional resources to cover those staff. The relief factor for staff. Make sure that we have ample people so that we can do it to a higher degree.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 56 mil in behavioral health – Bring in some licensing and cert efforts, many regulatory bodies that corrections uses to ensure quality services. Need some funds to continue to comply with settlement agreement for gender affirming care. And, for the Amend program. Also to continue work in reducing solitary confinement. • 35 mil for the fentanyl and opioid response. Medical assisted treatment 3325 I/I that would benefit from treatment. • 43 mil to replace OMNI system. That holds all DOC information in relations to operations of DOC. Legislator supportive of the update to OMNI. • All information is available in OFM.wa.gov. <p>Transitions- We are wanting our new Governor and Legislators along with new Secretary to be able to weigh in on various topics. January 15 will be sworn in as Governor, Nick Brown as Attorney General. No information on who will be the Secretary of DOC.</p> <p>Work in supporting Green Hill- Is a juvenile correctional facility. Assisting with operations and movement of individuals and ensure good radio operations, minimizing incidents. Continued support until Gov says to stand down.</p> <p>Felix D’Allesandro – Which part of budget is federal? Cheryl Strange – we are a general fund state and are fully funded by tax dollars. It is less than .0001 in grants. WA state may have options to charge federal reimbursement rates, 115 waivers.</p> <p>Daphne Nolte – Do you have any updates on where the extra capacity will go at Green Hill in the moment. Cheryl Strange– SCCC is one of the places being considered, but a choice has not been made on that. Looking at different needs and different levels of care. Some smaller facilities in Eastern WA may be an option. DCYF is working with many counties in the discussion process.</p>
<p>Facility Updates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AHCC – Last LFC Sandy Hippy elected Family Co Chair and Ellen continued as rep. Dentist is hired and beginning 12/1. Talked about MSU cover and awning. It was determined a cover on the walkway is not able to be done due to emergency access. Increasing space in proposed location to facilitate visitors coming through. Other improvement will be repainting and updating artwork. Good results in improving MSU Access. Has a tour of the facility and was impressed with the facility and the space with large walkways and gardens. Lots of programs and toured the optical program. There is a video posted on archives on DOC website that gives a tour of optic dept. Also saw the education area, property and kitchen and carpentry. Il working there was building a huge doghouse that they will be donating. Mock job interviews and participants close to release have an opportunity to sit with people from various fields to sharpen their skills. • CBCC – Not present • CCCC – We have some good news, 8 new members starting at LFC and increasing in person meetings. New visit hours. Cut back nighttime hours at CCCC, going through Olympic Forest is a little tough. Increase the check in times for visitation. Incentive meals for I/I for not having any overdoses. • CRCC – Tier reps at LFC meeting. New vending machines for visit by fresh market. Looking to replace tables at visit. Ongoing issue for lights at camp possible budget issues. We get energy drink in visit, but when we go to EFV energy drinks are not allowed. Why is that? Family friendly events where children are not included? Sarah Leon- Plant-based protein drinks are not allowed in EFVs either. Lorne Spooner – we will make this a follow up as there is a facility involvement on that. UPDATE: Vending machines in visit rooms should not include energy drinks. Sometimes vendors put them in machines in error. When staff catch that, they’ll follow up with the vendor and let them know not to include them. This will also be discussed with the Security teams to create a

	<p>list of items that should not be in vending machines, energy drinks are one such item. The key reason for disallowing is that some energy drinks contain alcohol (e.g. Four Loko, Sparks, Charge, Torgue, etc.). Rather than making staff check to see if a specific energy drink has alcohol, the decision was made not to allow. SFC REP - is restricted diet getting holiday meal this year? James Key – will look at that. UPDATE: DGA holiday menu we have a holiday meal/menu identified to support the following Therapeutic diets: Lighter Fare, Diabetic, Mechanical Soft, Renal, no gluten, no peanut, no tomato, no fish. These menus are new to our FS staff and the first time we will be using them is during the December holiday meal service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MCC – We did not end up voting as there was only 2 family members but will vote the first Saturday of December. Did a pumpkin contest, a lot of creativity. Still having some issues with dropped calls. Having BOE on the kiosk so I/I can check them and if HSR can be added to OMNI. Some of unit workers want to be able to have a sign in and out program, there is a pilot program and wanted to know when that would be implemented? Policy issues – If someone loses their job and is written up and fired, after the punishment they get 507 write up for failure to program. Multiple punishment for same situation. October reminder for BOE – Melissa Andrewjeski - Staff received memo. MCC Rep - If the memo is not being followed what is the course of action – Melissa Andrewjeski - go back to facilities and send an appeal. • MCCCW – NOT PRESENT • OCC – No Rep information. • SCCC – Supt started new position at HQ, new interim is Scott Speer from OCC. Shout out to food manager and farmers, kitchen served 3400 fresh produce by SCCC and additional food donated. The pill line is going well now, and they have made some changes by dividing pill line in two. Thank you for Jamie Dolan and responsive to request to new items added to catalogue. Very happy with new packages and yoga commissary and helps quality of life. Blake information – public defense (need the information again) – The OPD staff provided a workshop for I/I. Mail items for hobby craft – James Key - will send something out to the institutions to go over the mail. UPDATE: Each facility is aware of mailing hobby crafts and there are certain services we can use, mainly USPS, but Fed Ex can be used depending on size and shape of items. Serious concern, the population SCCC at 730am that visitors not participating in 5 years being removed from visit list. Lorne Spooner – 450.300 VI F states that they will be removed after 5 years if you would like to put that in the notes that did start to happen and some housekeeping did start to happen and it has been updated to 10 years, we are aware and are in process of reevaluating that. Please have the I/I send a kiosk message to the visit office and we can look to resolve it. Sarah Leon – Is this just at SCCC Lorne Spooner – This is a statewide issue and this is a current process and since we had some technologic issues with applications this process came up. • WCCW – Took away artwork and little birthday parties. Passes out laundry room expectations, and there are threat of infractions. It doesn't seem to be helping as there were some assaults, the tone of unit is at a low. Learned at LFC that things are going in right direction for furniture. Not getting straight answer on CUS. Melissa Andrewjeski – can reach out to facility admin and ask some questions and provide information for that. Will follow up. UPDATE: For the CUS, Shane Swain will be filling in while Roger Afalava is deployed. • WCC – We have been trying to get people to show up at the LFC meetings, but it seems like the events are scheduled right after the family council meetings and only people on the list to the event would go to visiting. It is not clear the support we get for Family Council, nominations were sent out yesterday at 11am and responses needed at 230 and there was not information about the nominees. Felix and crystal are continuing the roles in LFC. Action item for LFC is getting ice cream machine. Dean Mason – apologize for the lack of communication – given the transition of associates. You can give me a call about the scheduling. Then food issues – we have an antiquated payment system for families, and still looking at fresh options for visitation. • WSP – Not present
<p>Behavioral Health Presentation <i>Dr. Ryan Quirk,</i> <i>Director, Mental Health</i></p>	<p><i>See Attachment #2</i></p> <p>Catherine Antee– Are the counselors licensed? Just WA or national. Who are the supervisors? Dr. Quirk – All of the HS staff/ mental health possess license through DOH, they possess an independent license that would be associate with different education levels. The PDs and associated responsibilities are consistent with what their credentials permit and license. Changes in credentials did happen within the last year. The person can only work within that credential within functions of their position. There is a concentration of PS4w in living units, Chief of Psychology supervises those with licenses.</p> <p>Sarah Leon – In light of the urgent med model, is behavioral health considered having an urgent care model? Dr. Quirk – I have some more to do to learn about medical urgent model, if there is someone experiencing an emergency, eminent danger to self, we do have processes in place for that person being seen without waiting those 72 hours. Match response to situation.</p>

	<p>Sabrina Ryan – Is there any movement support/ see a lot of focus on men’s division, women are more likely to seek out mental, is there a higher concentration of mental health for women then for men? Dr. Quirk – The peer support aspect, so far in my understanding the highest concentration is in women’s division. Peer to peer – is at SCCC. There are a lot of efforts being done at SCCC. I am sure there are more opportunities. Peer to peer credential – we are learning about. My understanding that there are more women in need of service and seeking service. And working with psych 4s they have a good approach in the level of care.</p>
<p>Victim Services Presentation <i>Ludmila Tschursin, Program Manager, Victim Services</i> <i>Autumn Dell-Witten, Community Corrections Administrator</i></p>	<p><i>See Attachment #3</i></p> <p>Sabrina Ryan – Wondering what sort of budget there is for this program to reach the most people? Mila Tschursin – the facilitated comms budget is attached to victim services budget.</p> <p>Sarah Leon– When considering VOD, can there be a discussion in opening the travel options for these? Dianne Doonan – Haven’t thought about and it has not been brought up. We do currently have a proposal to the LTAP and get with committee who is working on it and see if we can bring to the secretary.</p> <p>Greg Mansfield – If you look in OMNI on the notifications, there are victims but there are some others that are not really the victims – who is notified when II is released Mila Tschursin - Who get notified is who the RCW tells us who needs to be notified. Witnesses are included in those people as a notified party. We will send an invite letter to all under RCW</p> <p>Daphne Nolte – Are you able to do a follow up and know how this program has been beneficial or what challenges? Mila Tschursin – First things we did, created outcomes measure we send to everyone after the VOD has taken place to all parties, and a survey on what happened and how it was. This helps us on what can be improved, recommend the process, and what went well. Daphne Nolte - For the two received, was it positive? Mila Tschursin – seems to be and it is hard to determine success. With not really knowing how the impact would be. Out of one instance, both parties were wanting to be involved in the process and how it was successful.</p> <p>Sarah Leon – What are the desired outcomes? Mila Tschursin – Outcomes are subjected, what we hope for is that people walk away fulfilled and was beneficial in some way. There is some level of closure and be able to move on.</p> <p>Lori Pittman – What is the cost benefit? Have some resources and references to the cost benefit? Why does the name of this service use the name of Offender? Mila Tschursin – Victim Services will provide same service in terms of safety planning to II as well. Reason for name is the VOD is a national program and is identified as such across the nation and will continue to use that, it may change down the road, but will be consistent with colleagues across the nation.</p>

Roundtable open discussion

Topic	Discussion/Key Points
	<p>Lori Pittman- Why some of us can use the chat feature and other cant. Ask Ms. Strange about her vision where she is headed and how that is being communicated – upheld with the new appointment. First time attending SFC – did not know the rules about asking the question.</p>
	<p>Greg Mansfield – denied at SCCC on DV history reasons, denied at facility before it went to EFV review committee. Can the facility deny based on DV history and not being considered by EFV committee. Lorne Spooner – Each one of the EFV packets are examined on a case by case basis. They are welcome to utilize the appeal process for the case to be heard at a higher level</p>
	<p>Ellen Hargrove – Bandwidth status? James Key – Action Item: We can look at that and make it a concern to look into. UPDATE: If there is an issue at a facility, its reported to the liaison and then Securus. WIFI is 10 times better than what we had with Jay. Information shows that WIFI is working and with more than 3 million messages, calls and video visits being completed.</p>
	<p>Scarlett Williams – Because there are so many issues with DOC and Community Custody, could there be a family council for community custody? James Key – Currently there is not a process or policy for this type of forum for CCD. But for this group we can have someone come and speak to CCD.</p>

	<p>Caitlin Robertson – If someone is on GRE or parenting alternative – OCO has the oversight of that. There may be a lack of oversight in the CCD, If the I/I is under the oversight we can look at issues those I/I are having.</p>
	<p>Lori Pittman – I/I are unable to tell their family what the problems are with Securus and the carriers or learn tricks to make it work. The lack of communication with family members and should be a consideration when the contract comes back up for review.</p> <p>James Key - Send issue to Charissa and we can work with Securus and get something out to family councils and the population. Can it be posted on the website?</p> <p>James Key - Yes we can look into that.</p> <p>Sarah Leon– will send message to Keith about what we can send out.</p> <p>UPDATE: Keith DeFlitch will be a part of the next contract negotiations and will have this as the discussion item for that. This is a topic that is currently being discussed.</p>
	<p>Daphne Nolte – mentioned iDOC and how to find it.</p> <p>James Key – The public website is the public website and iDOC is for staff.</p>
	<p>Sarah Leon – Taking visitors off the visit list? Why and how much time is being spent?</p> <p>Lorne Key – Currently we are making use of the outage in technology we have that is affecting the entire state. If visitors have not visited within ten years we are adjusting the visit lists – Look at policy. A lot of times that some of the visitors are deceased or have no desire to visit like former spouses. And to follow policy</p>
	<p>Daphne Nolte – I/I that received the memo could send a kiosk to be reinstated on their visit.</p> <p>Lorne Spooner – I/I can request to have people removed from their visit list. Some people have been removed, but the I/I can have the opportunity to have them reinstated and have the opportunity has they are not aware of policy.</p>
	<p>Catherine Antee – If EFV denied – we could appeal it?</p> <p>Lorne Spooner – There is no form and would be sent to the DOC in an email or written letter and it would go through the appeal process, and it would go to VMDT to look at the denial.</p>
	<p>Greg Mansfield– Curious about appeal process, if there are multiple reasons for denial, does the II appeal or does the family member appeal?</p> <p>Lorne Spooner– Either the II or family member can appeal. Part of the application is that the family member would have had to visit at least 6 times either in person or virtual.</p>
	<p>Sarah Leon – what was the policy</p> <p>Lorne Spooner - 450.300 section 6 subsec F</p> <p>Sarah Leon – for volunteer requirements do they have to have SSN?</p> <p>Lorne Spooner – I will need to follow up on that, but we are working on that policy currently and we are looking at forms and policy for consistency and ease of application. The last revision was an emergency one this is the normal policy revision.</p> <p>UPDATE: It is for the criminal history check; on the updated application we ask for only the last four digits of the SSN. This is especially important when you have a name such as John Smith or a name where there are a number of possible/similar hits.</p> <p>James Key– SSN are looked at as an identified to ensure we are looking at the right person.</p>
	<p>Gwen McIlveen – you have to send in divorce decree and marriage license. Why when you are legally married?</p> <p>Lorne – This is to show kinship, and if there are children in common the marriage license or divorce decree would show familial relation.</p>
James Key	<p>Thank you to Sarah on the great job in Co- Chair and Greg for coming into the roles and our newly elected member Elise McKinnon and Sarah taking on the role as co secretary. Working hard to get the meeting minutes to get them out.</p>
Sarah Leon	<p>Thank you for having me as the SFC Co- Chair. Appreciate the collaborative nature. We had twice as many people in the election during this year’s election meeting. It was a better election process. Grateful for Greg and Elise coming up.</p>
Greg Mansfield	<p>Thank you for Sarah and happy to have her as the secretary coming on and Elise will do wonderful.</p>

Next meeting location: Virtual – MS Teams Date: 01/25/2025 Time: 10 am – 3 pm

Comments: _____

The contents of this document may be eligible for public disclosure. Social Security Numbers are considered confidential information and will be redacted in the event of such a request. This form is governed by Executive Order 16-01, RCW 42.56, and RCW 40.14.

Distribution: **ORIGINAL** - Family council co-chairs



Behavioral Health
Services: Washington
State Department of
Corrections (WADOC)

11/16/2024

Ryan Quirk, PhD
Interim Director of Behavioral
Health

Agenda

- Screening for mental health services
- Access to mental health services
- Available mental health services
- Residential Treatment Units (RTU's)
- Questions

Screening for Mental Health Services

All individuals received at a department facility (e.g., from courts, jail, Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration, hospital, out-of-state, newly sentenced, community supervision violators or alternative sentence revocations) will receive an initial health screening to evaluate their health status within 16 hours of arrival.

-Mental health screenings will be conducted within one business day of arrival to determine subsequent need for further mental health evaluation. Current mental health status will be documented on DOC 13-349 (Intersystem/Restrictive Housing Mental Health Screening) and as an encounter in health services section of the individual's electronic file.

-Based on screening response, initial mental health PULHES "S" and suicidal history "R" codes will be assigned.

-Concerns that an individual may be suicidal will be addressed immediately per Suicide Prevention and Response policy.

-Patients with emergent needs will receive clinical follow up. Full assessment will be completed as soon as possible after the patient is stabilized.

Screening for Mental Health Services

(continued)

The goal of the screening with a DOC 13-349 (Intersystem/Restrictive Housing Mental Health Screening) form is to triage the mental health needs of the individual, which falls into one of three categories:

1. Urgent/Emergent – the individual is in need of immediate stabilization and possible placement in the COA
2. Routine – the individual likely qualifies for mental health services and will require further evaluation (e.g., MHA)
3. Low/No MH needs – the individual is not on any mental health medications and is not in need of mental health services at present.

Screening for Mental Health Services

(continued)

- A psychiatric assessment is typically completed within 60 days of arrival when an individual is on at least one psychotropic medication and/or referred by a mental health employee/contract staff as having a priority need.
- If the individual has a verified prescription, the medication will be issued for no more than 60 days by medical practitioners per policy. Pharmaceutical management is necessary to ensure continuity of care prior to the first psychiatric appointment.

Access to Mental Health Services



**Via Initial intake
screening**



Via the request of the individual:

Health Services Kite or
declaration of a mental health
emergency



**Via staff referral or staff declared
mental health emergency**



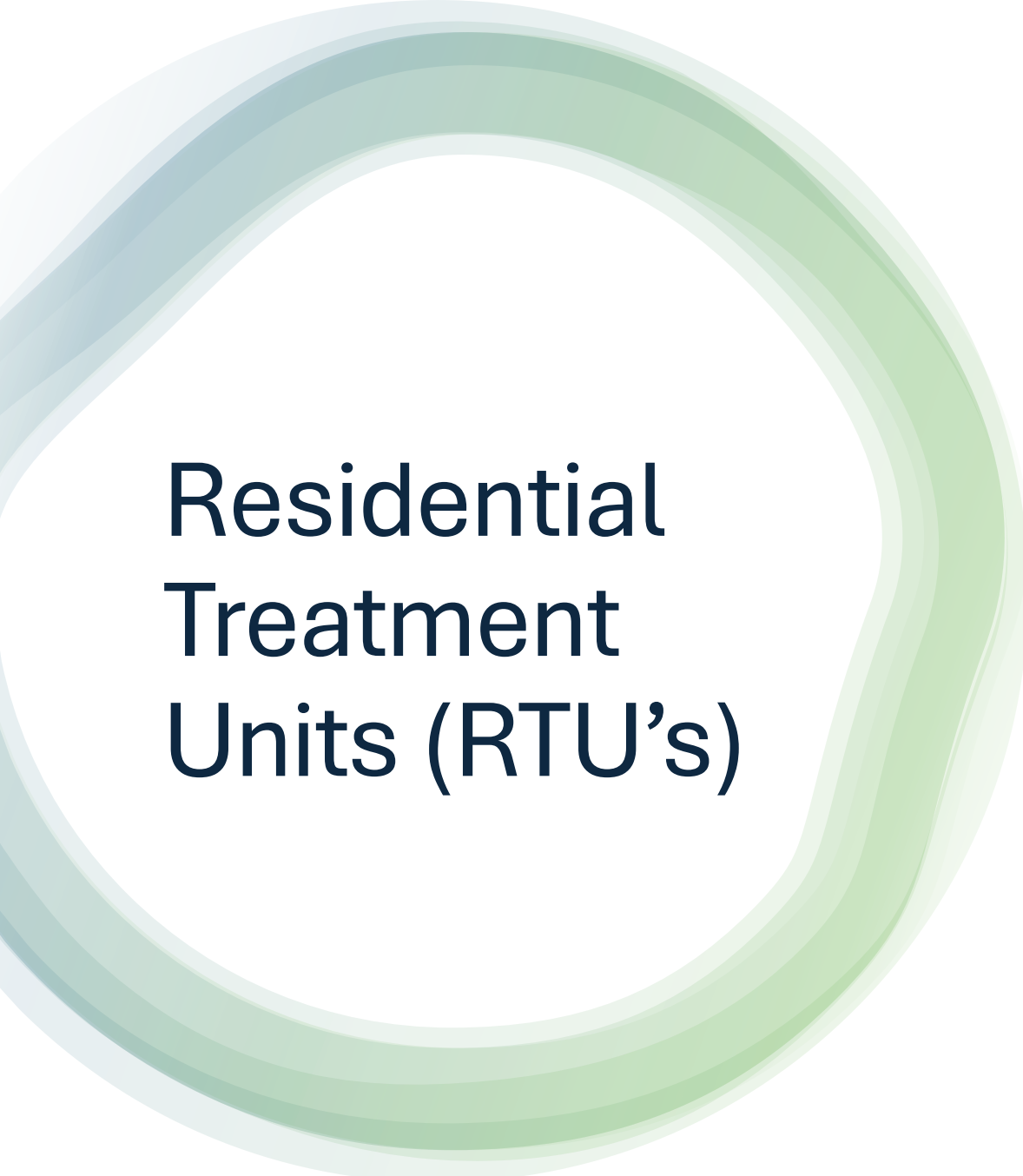
Outpatient Mental Health Services

Individuals who are designated as an “S”2 or higher are assigned a mental health Primary Therapist.

Access to care, coverage and a process for communication is established by the Health Services Manager, which is largely facilitated by kites or kiosk messages. Requests for healthcare are triaged daily and assigned a level of priority from Urgent to Routine.

Important areas include:

- obtaining informed consent
- screenings that may be conducted
- possibility of transfer to another facility in the event that critical services cannot be provided at the individual’s current location.



Residential Treatment Units (RTU's)

- A residential treatment unit (RTU) is a specialized housing unit for individuals with severe, current or chronic mental health conditions. Many of these individuals are designated as Seriously Mentally Ill (SMI) and carry diagnoses such as Schizophrenia, Bipolar Disorder and Major Depressive Disorder to name a few. They often have co-occurring substance use disorders, personality disorders and/or other complicating health disorders.
- The RTU is specialized and designed in such a way as to provide a higher level of mental health care to those that are housed in these units. There are three designated units across the State.

RTU's (continued)

WCCW-TEC/TEC-ACUTE

- Women's Division

WSP-BAR-RTU

- Men's Division
- Walla Walla, WA

MCC-SRTC

- Men's Division
- Monroe, WA

Transfers in the Men's Division
take place via Mental Health
Care Review Committee

Question #1 - Ratio of patients to mental health staff?

- “It depends”- housing location, staffing model, etc.
- Outpatient settings tend to have 80-100 patients per mental health staff member.
- RTU varies from 5 to 25 patients per mental health staff member.

Question #2- Grief/Loss support groups?

- Currently one grief related mental health group taking place at Stafford Creek Corrections Center (SCCC).
- Individuals may have opportunities for individual mental health therapy to focus on grief/loss.
- Excellent suggestion for a group at additional WADOC facilities.

Question #3- Does every facility have a Spanish speaking mental health staff member?

- While WADOC does have the presence of mental health staff who are fluent in Spanish at multiple facilities, not every facility has a mental staff member who is fluent in Spanish.

WADOC Policy 450.500 (Language Services for Limited English Proficient Individuals):

- H. Health Services will use a certified contracted medical interpreter. If one is unavailable or there is a medical emergency, a Department interpreter may be used.
 - 1. Department-certified interpreters/translators may translate health services kites.
 - 2. A Video Relay Interpreter (VRI) is available for medical emergencies or urgent issues after hours/weekends/holidays if a certified or contract interpreter is unavailable for individuals requesting American Sign Language (ASL).



Thank you!

VICTIM SERVICES PROGRAM
AND
FACILITATED COMMUNICATION

VICTIM SERVICES PROVIDES...

ADVANCED NOTIFICATION Pursuant to RCW 72.09.71, for eligible crimes; notify victims, witnesses and next of kin (and anyone identified by prosecuting attorney) 35 days in advance of incarcerated individual's release into community or transfer to partial confinement

ADVOCACY Conduct Safety planning; Address unwanted contact; Provide community resources and referrals; Perform community outreach and attend committee meetings

Types of Facilitated Communication at WA DOC

Accountability Letter Bank (ALB)

**Facilitated Dialogue/Victim-Offender Dialogue Meeting
(VOD or VODM)**

Accountability Letter Bank

Provides Incarcerated Individuals an opportunity to share with the victims/harmed parties, in writing, their understanding of the harm done and to acknowledge the impact of their behavior

HOW DOES IT WORK?

1. Individuals submit their letter to VSP
2. VSP reviews the letter for content
3. If VSP identifies inappropriate content, the letter is returned to individual with suggested changes; Individual can resubmit letter
4. Once approved, letter is either sent to victim (if they have requested it) OR is banked indefinitely with VSP



What is Inappropriate Content?

- Asking for forgiveness
- Over-emphasizing or describing details of the crime
- Focusing on religious themes
- Placing primary blame on external factors (like substance abuse or difficult childhood)
- Using overly-familiar language (like nicknames or terms of endearment)

WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR DELIVERING LETTERS?

Crime victims eligible for advanced notification offered the option of receiving an ALB letter when they enroll.

When a letter is accepted into the letter bank, VSP identifies enrollees who have requested letters and contacts them.

If no enrolled party, VSP sends a letter to intended recipient inviting them to participate in advanced notification and informing them of the ALB program.

If no response, the letter remains in the bank indefinitely.

Victim-Offender Dialogue

A victim-driven process that culminates in a one-time, structured, facilitated meeting (VODM) between the victim/surviving family and the person who harmed them.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

1. A victim or surviving family member submits application to Victim Services.
2. Application reviewed and preliminary screening with the applicant occurs.
3. Victim Services meets with the incarcerated individual to explain the program and determine interest in participating.
4. Volunteer facilitators are identified and assigned.
5. Preparatory meetings are scheduled by the facilitators.
6. VODM occurs after months of preparation.

Occurs only while the Incarcerated Individual is in a DOC prison facility

- Limiting participation to those currently in a total-confinement facility better ensures the safety of participants.
- Should anything happen during the meeting that necessitates intervention, total confinement facilities are better resourced for that.
- For the victim/harmed party, knowing that the individual will not have access to the community immediately after the meeting may provide a greater feeling of safety.

BEFORE A MEETING TAKES PLACE...

- A thorough review of the incarcerated individual's crime, institutional behaviors, programming, etc.
- A review of the victim/survivor's intentions, expectations, and reasons for requesting the meeting
- A review of any significant emotional or mental health issues that may create challenges or cause further harm for either party
- The process is paused if physical or emotional safety concerns become apparent and cannot be mitigated

SAFETY AND SUPPORT

- Support for all participants is prioritized
- Debrief and follow-up meetings scheduled
- Mental health support/follow up is encouraged, when appropriate
- All cases are reviewed for potential volatility
- Meeting will not move forward if the safety or emotional stability of either party appears at risk

HISTORY OF ALB/VOD AT WA DOC

2002—Facilitated Communication established in policy (DOC 390.350).

2009—First Victim-Offender Dialogue Meeting occurred at WCCW.

2012—Accountability Letter Bank added to policy.

2022—Facilitated Communication Coordinator position created.

*Between the years 2009 and 2022, there were an estimated 6 completed VODs.

CURRENT VOD DATA

IN 2024

Two (2) completed VODs and five (5) pending.

12 cases excluded from participation.

Reasons include significant safety concerns, not enough time to complete before release date, and/or significant mental health concerns.

2 incarcerated individuals declined to participate.

5 victim/survivors never responded to follow-up communication after submitting application.

CURRENT ALB DATA

- Since 2012, there have been a total of 289 letters submitted
- In 2023 and 2024, 13 letters were successfully delivered to the intended recipients
 - 6 letters could not be delivered due to missing contact information
 - 5 letters could not be mailed due to lack of response from enrolled recipient

OUTREACH EFFORTS

In 2024, targeted outreach/education efforts began.
So far....

- 4 presentations to prison staff/counselors
- 2 ALB workshops to incarcerated population, with 5 more in process of being scheduled
- 2 videos in planning stage to educate incarcerated population about ALB and external community about Facilitated Communication

QUESTIONS?