

**The TIER System:**  
*A Trauma-Informed Effective Reinforcement System for Clients in Residential Placements*

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**Presented by:**  
Christina Cicero &  
Tammy Rothschild

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What are you hoping to learn?



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Let's talk about some of the programs you've worked in!

- How did you correct behavior? Redirect behavior?
- What are some of the "rules" you had in place and which ones are the most difficult to enforce? Why?
- What are the things you rewarded clients for? How did you recognize or reward accomplishments?

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## What Can TIER Do?

Promote safe behaviors that are reinforced

Negative, destructive behaviors are diminished through supportive techniques that teach clients the necessary skills to manage their own challenging feelings, thoughts and attitudes.

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## What Makes TIER Unique?

- Gives clients the power of **CHOICE**
- Aids in the **healing** process due to past traumas
- Helps educate staff and residents on what trauma is and the many forms it takes
- Provides clients opportunities to:
  - grow, learn and change by acquiring new skills and insights into their own choices and behaviors.

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MYTHS

FACTS

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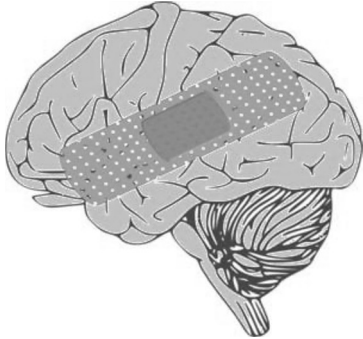
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**What Behaviors Do We See from Traumatized Individuals?**



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**Behaviors We See from Traumatized Individuals**

- Overly compliant or extremely non-compliant behavior
- Aggressive behavior
- Lack of trust
- Extraordinary fear of males or females
- Self-abusing behaviors
- Suicidal behaviors
- Depression
- Lack of boundaries
- Power struggles



(From *Girls and Victimization*, NIC 2000)  
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**TIER and Trauma-Informed Basics**



 ACKNOWLEDGE CULTURE	 BE RESPECTFUL, HONEST, KIND, AND FAIR	 ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE	 BE CALM AND CALMING
 ASK QUESTIONS	 EMPOWER THEM	 PROMOTE SELF-CARE	

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### TIER and A Relational Approach

Relational Practices: → foster a collaborative process between staff and clients

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### Incorporating Strengths-based Practice

- Acknowledge all aspects of who each client is
- Discover together what is good, positive, and pro-social in each client
- Help clients learn to identify their own strengths
- Uncover ways to use their strengths to address challenges

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### Media Messages

**Key points to convey:**

- Media messages are everywhere (e.g., in music, television, Facebook, Instagram, movies and advertising).
- Media messages give limited views based on what they want you to see and how they want you to feel about certain topics.
- Media messages can make us feel bad about who we are.
- Media messages can give us a distorted view of other individuals, other cultures...

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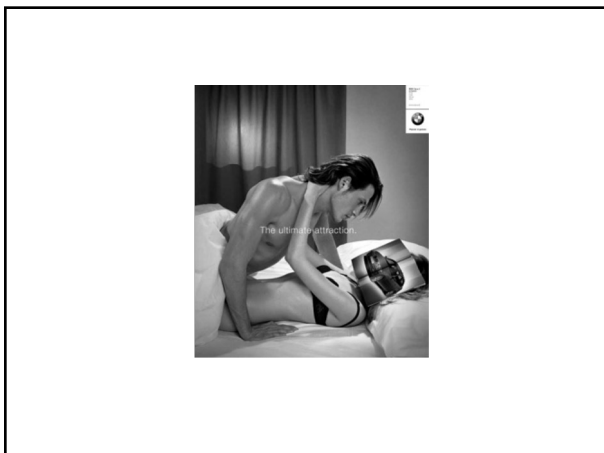
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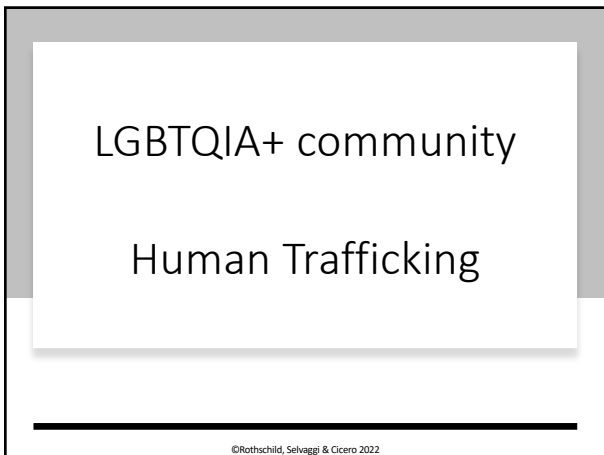
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**How does this information connect to what we do?**

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- LGB youth who come from highly rejecting families are 8.4 times as likely to have attempted suicide as LGB peers who reported no or low levels of family rejection. [4]
- Suicide attempts by LGB youth and questioning youth are 4 to 6 times more likely to result in injury, poisoning, or overdose that requires treatment from a doctor or nurse, compared to their straight peers. [2]
- The rate of suicide attempts is 4 times greater for LGB youth and 2 times greater for questioning youth than that of straight youth. [2]
- In a national study, 40% of transgender adults reported having made a suicide attempt. 92% of these individuals reported having attempted suicide before the age of 25. [3]

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**LGBTQI+ PEOPLE BEHIND BARS**

- LGBTQI+ who are incarcerated face horrifying rates of sexual abuse and other forms of violence by staff and other prison residents.
- Federal data indicates that the rate of sexual assault in 2019 was about three times higher for non-heterosexual prison residents and about 10 times higher for transgender residents.
- Transgender women housed in men’s prisons are at especially high risk for sexual abuse.
- One California study found that transgender women who were housed with male prison residents were 13 times more likely to be sexually assaulted than the men in the same facility.

© National Center for Transgender Equality, 2020

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When you hear “human trafficking”, what comes to mind?



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Human Trafficking

Sexual Exploitation

Forced Labor

Child Marriage

Organ Trafficking

Domestic Violence

Human Smuggling

Financial Slavery

Immigration Slavery

Sexual Slavery

Family Conflict/Instability

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Over 42,000 Human Trafficking Hotline Cases Identified & Responded To (12/2007-5/2018)

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How do we put it all together?!

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**TIER System Components**

- New Communication Skills for Staff
- Daily Responsibilities & Daily Progress Reviews
- TLC Memberships
- TIER Staff Interventions
- Community Theme of the Day/Week
- Social Issues Sunday
- The Gatherings
- Personal Coach

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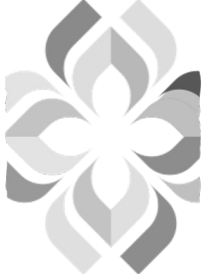
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### TIER System Framework

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- **Myself**
  - Teach clients the value of “self” by helping them explore and identify who they are, where they want to go, and how they want to get there
- **My Relationships**
  - Help clients access the fulfillment that healthy relationships can and should bring
- **My Community**
  - Help clients learn to be part of and contribute to a safe and empowering program culture

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### The TIER System Behavior Motivation Components

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- Daily Progress Reviews
- Daily Responsibilities
- Memberships
- TIER Formulas

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### Daily Responsibilities

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This reframes “rules” into meaningful responsibilities that clients are responsible for each day.

**Myself**

- Demonstrated respect for myself, learning to value my strengths, and taking care of my personal responsibilities
- Completed my hygiene routine
- Attended all groups and activities
- Asked for help when I was struggling

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## My Relationships

Working toward building healthy relationships, improving my non-verbal communication, and learning healthy verbal communication skills

- Demonstrated respect for staff and peers
- Refrained from rolling my eyes or using disrespectful facial expressions
- Assisted another resident with a task



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## My Community

Demonstrated respect for the physical space of the program and made contributions toward a safe, healthy program culture.

- Demonstrated respect for the program environment
- I actively participated in community gatherings
- I contributed something positive to the program



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## Daily Progress Review

- **Purpose/Frequency:** weekly
- **Process:**
  - Very conversational
  - Staff identify additional positive behaviors
  - Discuss areas where they struggled
  - Staff restate some of their strengths of the week
  - Staff and client determine what they have earned in that domain



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**DAILY PROGRESS REVIEW**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ My Accomplishments for this week: [Dates] \_\_\_\_\_

**MYSELF** - Mark each box that applies with a T, L, or a C - N/A if not applicable:

SA	S	M	T	W	TH	FR	
							<b>I Did the following work on my treatment plan goal:</b>
							<b>Today I earned a T - L - C in this domain</b>

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**DAILY PROGRESS REVIEW (DPR)**

S	M	T	W	TH	FR	
						Completed hygiene routines on schedule - T=did not complete hygiene, L=Completed hygiene late, C=Completed on schedule
						Asked for support or help when I was struggling - T=did not ask for support, L=took help but didn't ask, C=sought out support I needed N/A=Did not need support today
						Attended all groups, recreation and other activities - T=did not attend anything required, L=attended but was late, C=attended all and was on time
						I participated in all groups, recreation and other activities - T=I did not participate at all, L=I had minimal participation, C=I participated fully
						I cleaned my room - T=I did not clean my room, L=I partially cleaned my room, C=I cleaned my room thoroughly
						I was productive and on task in school today - T=I did not do my school work today and was not focused, L=I stayed on task most of the day, C=I was productive and stayed on task for the entire day, N/A - no school today

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**TIER System Memberships**



- Thinking:
  - I need to think more about completing my responsibilities
- Learning:
  - I am learning how to do well with my responsibilities
- Contributing:
  - I am making contributions to the safety of this program

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## Addressing Challenging Behaviors

**TIER Behavior Interventions are a framework of staff responses that ensures consistency.**

- Assists staff in responding to behaviors based on the level of severity of the behavior

**Behaviors are broken down into TIERS; behavior types are associated with staff response.**

- Staff work together to understand what behaviors constitute a specific response.
- Behavioral responses are aligned with Best Practices

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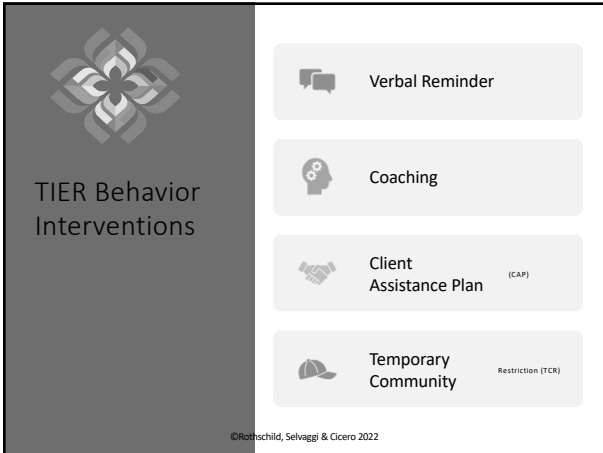
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### TIER Behavior Interventions

-  Verbal Reminder
-  Coaching
-  Client Assistance Plan (CAP)
-  Temporary Community Restriction (TCR)

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## Verbal Reminder



- Purpose:**
  - To address minor behavioral issues with a simple verbal reminder.
- Process:**
  - Staff acknowledge the minor behavior and remind the client to refrain from doing it.
  - Swearing
  - Disrespectful body language

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## Coaching



- **Purpose:**
  - To address moderately challenging behaviors by helping clients understand why the behavior is problematic in a brief, private discussion.
- **Process:**
  - Name the unsafe/unhealthy behavior, and explain why
  - Ask why they chose to act in that manner
  - Reflect their comments back to them/validate feelings
  - Note anything they did well in the exchange or progress from a prior, similar situation
  - Discuss alternatives for future similar situations
  - Redirect and MOVE ON.
  - Swearing at someone –
  - Not following staff directives

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## Client Assistance Plan (CAP)



- **Purpose:**
  - To engage clients in a process that is designed to teach them about behavior change when behaviors are increasingly unsafe or unhealthy, and to ensure that substantive issues are documented.
- **Process:**
  - Staff facilitate a discussion with the client through a series of documented prompts. These prompts encourage the client to:
    - Verbalize their impressions of what led to the behavior, and why the behavior occurred
    - What were some of the negative outcomes that were possible?
    - Explore alternatives
    - Develop a plan to move forward

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## Temporary Community Restriction

- **Purpose:**
  - To reinforce that severe, unsafe behaviors will result in restricted access to their peers, the community, activities and privileges
- **Process:**
  - All privileges and activities are restricted
  - A Client Assistance Plan is facilitated
  - Clients may regain privileges only after restorative actions outlined in the plan are completed and the community safety has been restored.
  - Staff work with the client to safely re-engage in community activities with other clients or staff.
- **Length of TCR will depend on:**
  - The severity of the behavior; and
  - The client's readiness to modify her behavior

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TIER and Gatherings



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 Morning Gathering
  Evening Gathering

 Community Improvement Gathering
  Community Support Gathering

 Greeting Gathering
  Farewell Gathering

TIER Gatherings



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Outcome Data  
Anchorage, Alaska

- The next 4 slides represent the outcome data for Anchorage, Alaska 1 year following full TIER implementation.
- The researchers were looking for a possible reduction in numbers, as well as whether or not those numbers remained steady.




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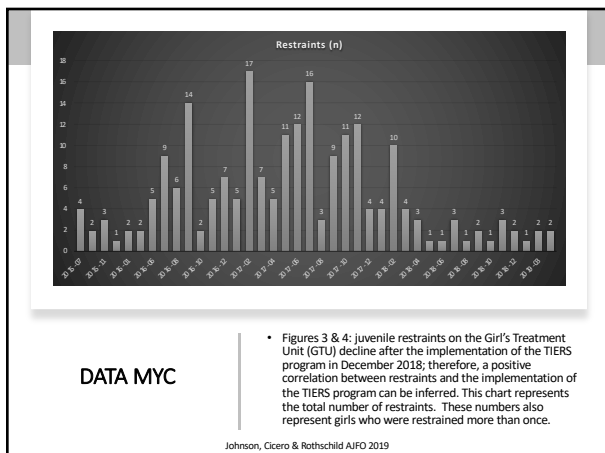
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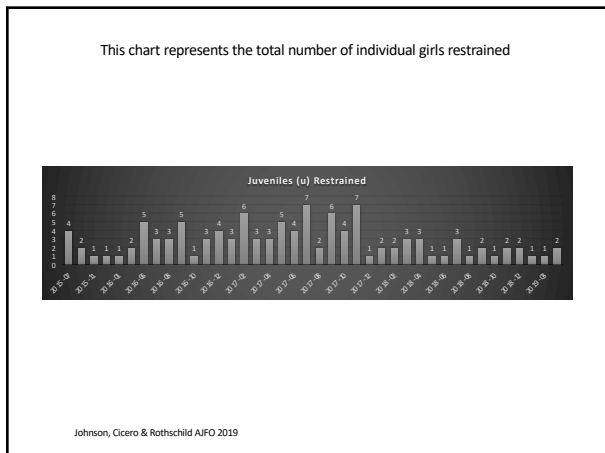
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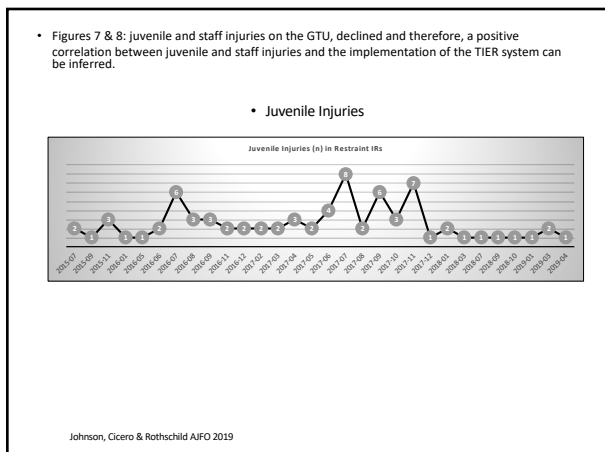
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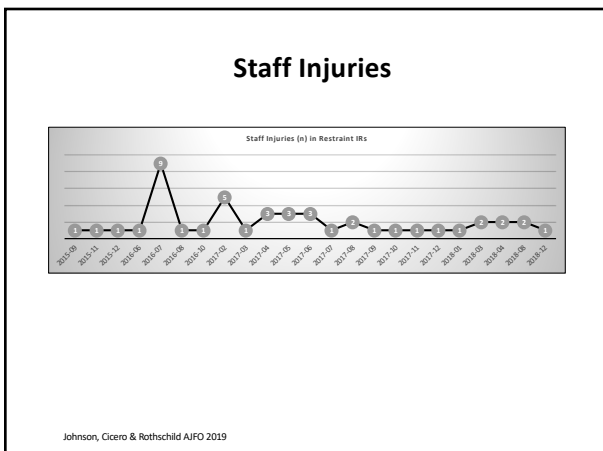
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### GTU Experience

- Client/staff satisfaction survey scores all increased in one year
- Grievances reduced
- Increase in program compliance
- Implementation bumps, bruises, successes!

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### Outcome Data Plainville, Connecticut

- The next slides represent the outcome data for Plainville, CT
- The researchers were looking for a possible reduction in numbers in:
  - Leaving without permission
  - Successful retention within the program
  - Increase in successful discharges.

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January- October 2018	January- October 2019
118	72

Left Without Permission 2018-2019

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July 2016- June 2017	July 2017- June 2018	July 2018- June 2019
11	9	8

Admittance into Program

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2018	2019
4	7

Successful Discharges

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## Overall Outcomes

- The program has seen an increase in:
  - Stabilization
  - Decrease in leaving without permission
  - Increase in referrals
- Increase in stability
- Increase in program compliance
  - Tracked through DPR's being completed
  - Successful transition to higher memberships




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### Summary of Data Collected on Washington Street Girls Detention Center

The chart below indicates survey averages from girls pre-training and one-year post training. Answers reflected are: 1 strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 agree and 4 strongly agree:

Client Question	Avg Pre-Training	Avg 1 year Post-training
1. Overall, I feel safe here physically (I feel protected from physical harm).	2.5	3.8
2. Overall, I feel safe here emotionally (I feel like my feelings are understood).	2.5	3.2
3. I feel understood here	2.7	3.6
4. Overall, I like the level/phase system here.	2.5	3.3
5. Staff members interact with all youth in the same way.	2.2	3.3
6. I know I can count on the staff here to be fair.	2.8	3.4
7. I can trust the staff here.	3.0	3.8

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Below are reductions in the following areas at pre-training and 1 year post training:

Item Reduction	Pre-Training	One year Post-Training
Monthly average of restraints	15	1
Monthly average of returns to State Detention Center for behaviors	22	7
Monthly average of room time hours given collectively for behaviors	856	23
Monthly average of use of force by staff (e.g., prone mechanicals)	59	7

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 **Wrap Up**

 **PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER!**

 **QUESTIONS?**

 **COMMENTS?**

 **CONCERNS?**

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