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My name is Arlene Duff and I am the Program Director at MCF-Togo for the Substance Use Disorders Program. I have worked in the Chemical Health field for 16 years. The past 7 ½ years have been with the Challenge Incarceration Program at Togo. This is the best program by far that I have ever been involved with. People’s lives are changed and the outcomes are long lasting.

It has been well understood in the profession, that problematic Alcohol and Drug use is a symptom of underlying issues.

I have worked with thousands of clients over the years and the overall, the most common connection is childhood trauma. ACE’s, or (Adverse Childhood Effects) is well documented and studied. Children who by no fault of their own that have experienced neglect, trauma, or abuse, experience mental health, addiction, and interpersonal challenges at a much higher rate than the median population.

Children who experience these traumas often believe they have no value and worth and tend to grow up engaging in high risk behaviors. Their poor choices and behaviors lead to crimes, jail and/or prison sentences.

Our prisons are filled with many of these wounded children who are now adults. Society in general has very strong, negative and punitive attitudes towards the incarcerated, therefore reinforcing the thoughts and feelings of “little or no value and worth”. Without interventions, we cannot expect any other outcome than a likely return to crime, prisons, or premature death.

CIP Staff are committed to those interventions and are invested in their success when they reenter society. Men are treated with dignity and respect in a program that demands the best from them while they are learning new life skills and personal accountability. Part of their success is due to the natural environment of the Northwood’s that allows for quiet time, reflection, and peace of mind. This cannot be replicated inside larger facilities.

Much of Treatment is focused on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. Identifying how ones thoughts dictates their feelings and behaviors. One of the assignments given is called the Ripple Effect. It is an intensive assignment where clients are asked to write out in detail their crime, who they hurt, how they hurt them and the impact their crime had on others.

They are also asked to write a Victim Impact letter to those they have harmed. This is often the first time that clients really put together how their thoughts led to their behaviors and how these behaviors truly impacted others on a human level.

With effective interventions we have the ability to help future generations break the cycles of trauma, addiction, poverty, neglect, abuse, and criminal behaviors. The Ripple Effect in this regard is exponential and will impact thousands in a positive way. People Can and Do change.

I would like to ask all of you to think about someone you love dearly….now I would like for you to put a dollar amount on what they are worth…I hope you are unable to do so…. I believe we as human beings are priceless…we cannot put a dollar amount on each other. We have equal value and worth, regardless of our external circumstances. Please make sure Togo and WR CIP Programs are funded. Thank you for your time and consideration.