

Summary of Wellness Goal

One of the major goals of the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) is related to the wellness of staff. It is our belief that wellness of staff will help lead to a healthier agency and a stronger and more coordinated system of care for Rhode Island's children, youth and families.

Our Objectives include:

- a. To make DCYF a healthy agency
- b. To ensure a true understanding of the existence and affects of secondary trauma on the work force
- c. To ensure the provision of a climate of awareness, understanding, support, respect and compassion
- d. To make DCYF a place that attracts and retains quality staff
- e. To make DCYF a strong partner with the community and other agencies to work as a team on systems issues and service delivery

Background – Staff related: Recruitment of staff is extremely difficult. Individuals offered employment are turning down jobs here because of the stress level and the feeling that it is difficult to live a normal life that balances work and personal life when employed for DCYF. New staff participating in the six month orientation and probationary period are dropping out in record numbers and/or are unable to sufficiently demonstrate their ability to handle the stresses and content of the job. We desperately need a healthy and stable workforce and need to do whatever we can to make this a reality.

Background – Community related: The system of care for children, youth and families is a partnership which relies on collaboration with community partners, the courts and other state and local agencies and service providers. Enhanced partnerships and team work can only help us to accomplish the camaraderie/shared ownership that is needed to become stronger individually and as an agency. Also, there is a great deal of professional expertise in the community in terms of trauma related issues we need to access that expertise to the benefit of DCYF staff and ultimately, the families we serve.

A culture change is not easy but the will is here now to make it happen. Once we are a more healthy agency with a strong and vibrant work force, maintaining the health of the agency will be built into the management and operations. A strong commitment exists at all levels.