



## **RESOLUTION REGARDING**

### **TRAUMA-INFORMED JUVENILE AND FAMILY COURTS**

**WHEREAS**, a trauma-informed court is a system in which environments, practices, and policies are designed to reduce unnecessary stress and potential stress reactions in those who have been trauma-exposed; and

**WHEREAS**, courts and judges are uniquely positioned to identify those suffering from traumatic stress, help create safe and engaging courts and court practices, and help coordinate and monitor provision of effective treatment; and

**WHEREAS**, the court environment can be a source of toxic stress for both court consumers and court professionals; and

**WHEREAS**, research indicates trauma can have serious negative physiological, psychological, and social impact on human development and functioning over one's lifespan; and

**WHEREAS**, children, parents, and others appearing in court have likely experienced some sort of physical or psychological injury as a result of traumatic experiences; and

**WHEREAS**, recognizing and responding to trauma, comorbid disorders, and subsequent symptomology is fundamentally necessary to ensure appropriate intervention and increase the likelihood injured persons will heal; and

**WHEREAS**, conditions of healing for injured parties include safety, self-determination, and prosocial connections; and

**WHEREAS**, working within the court system can place staff at risk for experiencing vicarious trauma or secondary traumatic stress; and

**WHEREAS**, trauma-informed systems are attentive to how the interplay of practice, policy, and environment affects persons experiencing traumatic stress; and

**WHEREAS**, a public health approach to implementing trauma-informed universal precautions across court environment and practice to limit further harm and promote well-being with injured parties is a promising practice; and

**WHEREAS**, evidence-based treatment for trauma exists;

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:**

The NCJFCJ urges juvenile and family courts to be trauma-informed by engaging stakeholders – including children, parents, and other court consumers – to jointly develop and implement universal precautions at an environmental, practice, and policy level that limit stress often associated with system involvement or working within courts.

The NCJFCJ urges juvenile and family courts to be trauma-informed by responding to the deleterious effects of trauma and associated conditions through proactive and consistent efforts to reduce potential trauma reminders, ensure safety, nourish self-determination, and promote prosocial connections for both consumers and staff.

The NCJFCJ recognizes small changes to practice, policy, or environment such as reducing noise levels, posting clear signage, treating consumers with respect and soliciting their perspective may reduce trauma reminders, promote engagement, and support healing.

The NCJFCJ supports integrating into juvenile and family courts applicable trauma-informed principles and practices from tribal courts and systems of care, including hospitals and behavioral health.

The NCJFCJ supports robust judicial education on the impact of trauma on development and behavior, traumatic stress symptoms, screening for trauma, evidence-based approaches to treating trauma, and secondary traumatic stress.

The NCJFCJ supports the application of trauma science in courts to improve the administration of justice and outcomes for injured children and families.

The NCJFCJ will continue to develop and support ongoing efforts to test a conceptual and operational model of trauma-informed courts.

The NCJFCJ supports the use of evidence-base screening and treatment for trauma.

The NCJFCJ recognizes the critical role of the judge and judicial leadership in developing trauma-informed juvenile and family courts.

*Adopted by the NCJFCJ Board of Directors during their meeting July 25, 2015 in Austin, Texas.*