

STATE OF NEW YORK

6649

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

March 6, 2025

Introduced by M. of A. GIBBS, CUNNINGHAM -- read once and referred to the Committee on Correction

AN ACT to amend the correction law, in relation to enacting the PTSD awareness and rehabilitation act

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as
2 the "PTSD awareness and rehabilitation act".

3 § 2. Legislative findings and intent. The legislature finds that post-
4 traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is prevalent among incarcerated indi-
5 viduals, often stemming from prior trauma, systemic inequalities, and
6 the conditions of incarceration itself. Without adequate mental health
7 support, individuals with untreated PTSD are more likely to experience
8 recidivism, difficulty reintegrating into society, and worsened mental
9 and physical health outcomes.

10 The intent of this act is to mandate PTSD screening, provide trauma-
11 informed education, and implement evidence-based rehabilitation programs
12 to ensure incarcerated individuals receive proper support for mental
13 health challenges. By addressing PTSD within the correctional system,
14 New York state aims to reduce recidivism, improve public safety, and
15 foster successful reentry into society.

16 § 3. The correction law is amended by adding a new section 12 to read
17 as follows:

18 § 12. PTSD screening and training requirements. 1. As used in this
19 section, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

20 (a) "Post-traumatic stress disorder" or "PTSD" means a mental health
21 condition triggered by exposure to traumatic events, characterized by
22 symptoms such as flashbacks, nightmares, severe anxiety, and emotional
23 distress.

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 (b) "Trauma-informed care" means an approach that recognizes the wide-
2 spread impact of trauma and integrates knowledge about trauma into poli-
3 cies, procedures, and practices to promote healing.

4 2. (a) The department shall implement mandatory PTSD screenings for
5 all incarcerated individuals upon intake to a correctional facility and
6 periodically throughout their incarceration.

7 (b) Screenings shall be conducted by licensed mental health profes-
8 sionals trained in trauma-informed care.

9 (c) Individuals identified as experiencing PTSD shall receive appro-
10 priate clinical treatment, including therapy and counseling services.

11 3. (a) The department shall develop and implement a mandatory PTSD
12 education program for all incarcerated individuals, covering:

13 (i) understanding PTSD and its symptoms;

14 (ii) coping strategies for managing PTSD;

15 (iii) the impact of trauma on mental and physical health; and

16 (iv) available resources for support.

17 (b) The education program established pursuant to this subdivision
18 shall be provided to an incarcerated individual within the first sixty
19 days of incarceration and repeated periodically throughout the sentence
20 at a frequency to be determined by the department.

21 4. (a) The department shall integrate trauma-informed rehabilitation
22 programs into existing correctional education and vocational training.

23 (b) Programs integrated pursuant to this subdivision shall include,
24 but not be limited to, evidence-based therapy such as cognitive-beha-
25 vioural therapy (CBT), mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR), and
26 peer support groups.

27 (c) Special consideration shall be given to programs for veterans,
28 survivors of violence and other vulnerable populations.

29 5. (a) All correctional officers, mental health professionals working
30 in correctional facilities, and administrators shall receive annual
31 training on:

32 (i) recognizing PTSD symptoms in incarcerated individuals;

33 (ii) de-escalation techniques and trauma-informed crisis intervention;
34 and

35 (iii) referral procedures for mental health treatment and support
36 services.

37 (b) Training programs to implement the provisions of this subdivision
38 shall be developed by the department in collaboration with mental health
39 experts, advocacy organizations and formerly incarcerated individuals
40 with lived experience.

41 6. (a) The department shall maintain data on PTSD screenings, educa-
42 tion program participation, and mental health treatment outcomes.

43 (b) The department shall submit an annual report to the governor and
44 the legislature summarizing:

45 (i) the number of incarcerated individuals screened for PTSD;

46 (ii) the number receiving PTSD-related treatment and services; and

47 (iii) recommendations for program improvements.

48 7. In addition to any state funds appropriated for the purposes of
49 this section, the department shall secure and utilize funding which may
50 be available through federal grants or partnerships with mental health
51 organizations.

52 § 4. This act shall take effect on the one hundred eightieth day after
53 it shall have become a law. Effective immediately, the addition, amend-
54 ment and/or repeal of any rule or regulation necessary for the implemen-
55 tation of this act on its effective date are authorized to be made and
56 completed on or before such effective date.