



Greetings. My name is Melanei Blow, I am the Executive Director of the Stop Abuse Campaign, an organization dedicated to helping prevent child abuse and trauma, and helping those affected by it. This year, I am asking you to **invest 4.4 million dollars in the Trauma Focused Recidivism Reduction Project**, a novel project that will improve the mental health and quality of life for hundreds of people and will lead the way in making New York healthier and safer for all.

We know that most people involved in the criminal justice system experience significant trauma as children. And this tends to lead to adulthoods filled with more trauma and instability. Specific, trauma-focused therapy allows trauma sufferers to reprocess traumatic memories and avoid the regular barrage of PTSD symptoms and the anger, dissociation and need for self-soothing through chemical or behavioral addiction. Unfortunately, this therapy is hard for anyone to access and virtually impossible for folks on Medicaid. And even when someone can access it, people with extensive trauma histories rooted in childhood need approximately 40 hours of therapeutic treatment, which is difficult to achieve for people with chaotic lives. I have attached testimony from a survivor of severe trauma about the challenges she has had receiving trauma therapy.

Trauma sufferers who receive more common types of therapy don't have their symptoms ameliorated, instead they learn how to manage them. This is certainly better than not learning how to manage them, but for someone who has experienced extreme trauma and is always having those symptoms reactivated, it can be exhausting, slow, and relies on the trauma sufferer being very motivated. Last year I was guiding a sexual assault survivor through some grounding exercises when they were in the middle of a bad PTSD flashback. I had done this many times with this survivor, and it always worked. But that time, they said "Why do I have to do all these mental gymnastics to feel OK? Someone did this to me". And that is another important argument for changing the way we help trauma survivors- eliminating their symptoms is simply more fair.

Trauma-specific therapies that ameliorate trauma symptoms can be delivered safely in about a week's worth of all-day, individual sessions. Intensive Trauma Focused Therapy is a safe, effective, proven way to ameliorate PTSD symptoms, so that the patient doesn't need to cope with them- they're gone. We are piloting a way to provide people already involved in the criminal justice system with ITFT, as well as case management, in order to help people heal, break out of the cycle of re-arrest and crime, and improve the community for everyone.

We are asking for an investment of \$4.4 million to pilot a way to reduce crime and recidivism, to help people who badly need it, and to make communities more healthy and just.

