

SUPPORT SYSTEMIC CHANGE WITHIN THE DIVISION OF YOUTH CORRECTIONS

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In the wake of increased violence in NYC which endangers youth and staff, there is a need for broad cultural change. Despite the best intentions of leadership and increased staff and funding, the violence in NYC continues. Legislative action is needed to accomplish the following:

1. **Rename the Division of Youth Corrections the Division of Youth Services and redefine the purpose;** to include protecting public safety and the safety of youth and staff by providing therapeutic and rehabilitative care in a humane, violence free environment to help young people make the behavioral changes needed to successfully return to our communities.
2. **Initiate a two year pilot program with at least 20 youth;** the pilot could provide a template for division-wide transformation from a punitive and violent culture to a therapeutic and rehabilitative one. It will be facilitated by an outside consulting organization with expertise in reduction of violence in youth corrections facilities through relationship-based, group-centered and trauma-informed treatment of young people. Over the course of a year, the program will phase out the use of restraints, (except handcuffs) and physical management that harm youth. Data will be rigorously collected during the pilot to allow assessment of its efficacy.
3. **Require an independent, system wide assessment and audit of NYC** evaluating physical management practices, violence and injuries in facilities, effectiveness of NYC's provision of rehabilitative care and their fidelity to best practices of trauma informed care, PBIS, restorative justice and all other youth centered policies.
4. **Mandate greater transparency of NYC** by requiring NYC to make public its use of force against youth, as well as injury to both youth and staff.
5. **Expand the mandate of the Youth Seclusion Work Group** to include reviewing and advising NYC on its use of physical management techniques and mechanical restraints.
6. **Establish Community Boards** of local citizens to increase transparency and provide youth with adult role models to help connect them with the communities to which they will return.