



New Hampshire Department of Corrections

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NHDOC Staff and Residents trained as Choose Love Facilitators

(Concord, NH) – October 6, 2021 –The New Hampshire Department of Corrections is pleased to announce it has joined with the Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement to implement Choose Love programming to incarcerated residents. New Hampshire Department of Corrections staff collaborated with Scarlett Lewis, founder of the Choose Love Movement, Shannon Desilets, Program Director of the Choose Love Movement for the state of New Hampshire, and Amanda Bastoni, Ed.D, a Research Scientist at CAST, Inc., to bring this to fruition. The Corrections Choose Love Program incorporates the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework to ensure the material is accessible in a prison environment. The Corrections Choose Love Program will include daily activities to be implemented during the start of groups and education classes that will reinforce and support social and emotional learning skills. On Friday, October 1, 2021, five staff members and five residents of the New Hampshire Correctional Facility for Women attended training as program facilitators and peer facilitators of the Choose Love curriculum.

The Choose Love programs teach both children and adults how to thoughtfully respond with love in any situation by using the Choose Love Formula (Courage + Gratitude + Forgiveness + Compassion-in-Action), and offers ways to handle adversity, have courageous conversations, and to respond with love. It also promotes self-empowerment, resilience, connection, and optimism. Choose Love includes school programs and many other no-cost programs, including Choose Love for the Home, Communities, Athletic leadership, and the Workplace, in addition to multiple extension programs. The Choose Love programs have been accessed in all 50 states and in more than 100 countries, reaching 2 million children.

CAST is a nonprofit education research and development organization that created the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework with the goal of making learning more inclusive. Universal Design for learning (UDL) is a framework to guide the design of learning environments that are accessible and challenging for all. Ultimately, the goal of UDL is to support learners to become “expert learners” who are each in their own way, purposeful and motivated, resourceful and knowledgeable, and strategic and goal driven. **UDL aims to change the design of the environment rather than to change the learner.** When environments are intentionally designed to reduce barriers, all learners can engage in rigorous, meaningful learning. DCC is currently working with CAST in our Education Department to implement the UDL framework.

Implementing Choose Love in NHDOC facilities will improve the social and emotional learning of all participants, with the goal of improving the resident’s relationships and interactions with their families and communities, better preparing them for reentry. Through funds awarded NHDOC’s Family Connections Center from DHHS’s Community Collaborations to Strengthen and Preserve Families, Dr. Bastoni was contracted to interface the Choose Love Curriculum and practices to create a social and emotional based programming to pilot at NH Correctional Facility for Women and Shea Farm Transitional Housing Unit. The goal is to utilize Choose Love philosophy in all program offerings at NHDOC to include Education, Case Management,

Religious Services, FCC, and Transitional Housing. This will include the connection with incarcerated parents and their children as most schools throughout the State of NH have adopted Choose Love into their daily teachings.

“The NH DOC made history on Friday. Their model for Choose Love will serve as an example for other correctional facilities across the country and potentially the world. I was deeply moved to witness the profound impact Choose Love is making for the residents who will serve their peers as Choose Love facilitators, and I extend my sincerest gratitude to the NH DOC for bringing this forward,” Said Desilets.

The Choose Love Formula has been incorporated into schools, communities, and state and local departments as well as various agencies and organizations all across New Hampshire. We are proud to add the New Hampshire Department of Corrections to this list!



NHDOC staff and Residents trained as “Choose Love” Facilitators



NHCFW Residents receiving “Choose Love” Facilitator training