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October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

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Keith Murphy (right) and Kate Desmond discuss how they are implementing trauma-informed practices at the Multnomah County Department of Community Justice. Murphy, a parole and probationary caseworker for the county, says that the new practices allow him to slow down and be more empathetic with his justice-involved clients.

Offender rehabilitation takes mental health into account

BY ZACHARY SENN
 THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A new type of parole and probationary care is being exercised in Multnomah County. Called trauma-informed practices, it seeks to rehabilitate people based on how their personal experiences and brain development have shaped them, with the aim of

Trauma and Justice

helping the county reduce its reliance on the jail system. The Smart Supervision Project is a pilot

program that has incorporated trauma-informed practices into the supervision of offenders who are between 15 and 25 years

of age. Dr. Alisha Moreland-Capuia, a psychiatrist from Portland's African American community and who specializes in trauma-informed practices, says that it is necessary to recognize the role trauma plays in people facing the consequences of their behavior.

"If you were to take a look at persons who have been entangled with the law, one consistent thing that you will find is trauma," Moreland-Capuia told the Portland Observer.

Trauma from long-term stresses, like racism and poverty, can adversely affect the development of the brain, she said, describing people who have experienced significant amounts of trauma as having difficulty accessing their cortex, which is the portion of the brain responsible for

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