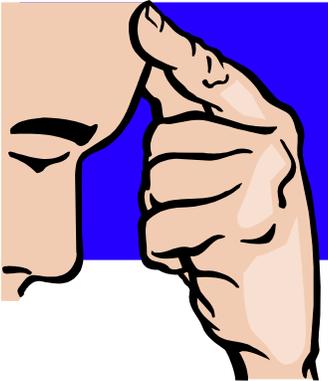


# The Chronicle

State of Connecticut Judicial Branch  
Court Support Services Division  
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## Forensic CBT Graduation



On December 2, 2013, at Central Connecticut State University (CCSU), 21 Judicial Branch CSSD Adult Probation Officers were recognized as the first cohort to complete training in *Forensic Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT)*, a new risk reduction and assessment tool that is being integrated with current practices. (See previous *Chronicle Forensic CBT Added to CSSD Evi-*

*dence-based Practices*.) Celebrating the officers' hard work was newly appointed Executive Director Stephen Grant, Director of Adult Services Gary Roberge, CSSD Regional Managers, and other guests. The program developers and trainers of this project, CCSU Professors Raymond Tafrate, Ph.D, Damon Mitchell, Ph.D., Stephen Cox, Ph.D, were also in attendance along with CSSD Program Manager Susan Glass.

The CSSD Cohort I graduating officers included:

Pat Odell (Bantam)  
Cynthia Jamison (Bridgeport)  
Sarah Wexler (Bristol)  
Sara Basford (Danbury)  
Samantha Morrissette and Sara Stone (Danielson)  
Heather Cato and Catalina Rosado (Hartford)  
Jennifer Belfort and Christie Filanowski (Meriden)  
Lisa Correa and Michael Sullivan (Middletown)  
Jesus Alex Diaz (New Britain)  
Margarita Gonzalez and Richard Sutterlin (New Haven)  
Reginald Stanford and John Watts (New London)  
Bethany Stone (Norwich)  
Gina Mital and Andres Roman (Stamford)  
Terri Johnson (Waterbury)

Executive Director Grant praised everyone involved for their hard work. "I would first like to recognize the stellar efforts of

the participants and the Central Office staff, as well as the longstanding and collegial rapport we share with CCSU," said Grant. "This initiative reflects the ongoing commitment of the Judicial Branch CSSD to provide quality services that achieve positive outcomes and behavior change. By investing in our Probation Officers' capacity to work with an increasingly more complex client population, we build upon the strengths of our workforce, which is already considered to be in the top tier nationally, as well as enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of our work."

Director Roberge echoed Grant's sentiments. "I would like to congratulate the officers who participated in this very important project," said Roberge. "Professors Tafrate, Mitchell, and Cox were extremely impressed with the skill set of each of the officers involved. Forensic CBT will be an additional tool to assist officers in furthering our overall mission of risk reduction."

**Goals and Outcomes**—The goal of *Forensic CBT* is to make supervision sessions more focused, efficient, and productive by introducing clients to probation in a manner most conducive to cognitive transformation. This involves getting clients to assess the thinking patterns that influence their anti-social decision-making, provide focused feedback to enhance the client's understanding of those patterns, and build a desire in the client to work

on eliminating them. Probation officers use interpersonal exercises to help client's realign their thought processes to create new, positive models of thinking.

CBT probation officers met every other week at CCSU for several hours of training. Each session introduced a new concept, along with correlating scripts and tools, for officers to use on select clients. These intervention techniques were recorded by the officers for peer and trainer review during subsequent class sessions. Officers used the feedback to strengthen their communication skills and help elicit positive change talk from their clients.



CSSD Cohort I Forensic CBT graduates

**A better understanding of client behavior**—Officers who participated in the first cohort developed a better understanding of common criminal risk variables and how they related to their clients' patterns of anti-social behavior. Many officers reported their clients responded favorably to the approach. Some officers also indicated the approach gave them a greater sense of accomplishment during supervision contact.

"The Forensic CBT class was awesome," said PO Reginald Stanford. "I really like how we were able to incorporate the new material into our supervision style and make progress with our offenders. This training would be great if it was part of training for newly hired probation officers." PO Catalina Rosada also found value in the training and noted, "The constructive feedback received by the professors at CCSU, and other Probation Officers, allowed me to improve my techniques and to learn from their own experience."

The officers' training does not stop with graduation. As with any newly acquired skill set, practice and sustained learning is paramount to success. Supportive feedback with CBT practitioners will be ongoing, and new material will be presented to officers that emphasizes ongoing practice and skill building.

A second cohort of officers is scheduled to begin training in late March or early April of 2014. Several members of the recent graduating class of CBT probation officers, along with other trainers, are in the process of being selected to develop and deliver the next installment of the *Forensic CBT* curriculum.

For more information on *Forensic CBT*, please contact CSSD Program Manager Susan Glass at [Susan.Glass@jud.ct.gov](mailto:Susan.Glass@jud.ct.gov) or Dr. Stephen Cox at [coxs@mail.ccsu.edu](mailto:coxs@mail.ccsu.edu)

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*The Chronicle* is a regular publication of information and news about the Judicial Branch Court Support Services Division. Questions or comments on this edition, or suggestions for future articles, can be directed to [Linda.Grzeika@jud.ct.gov](mailto:Linda.Grzeika@jud.ct.gov)