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Inmates at SMCI Graduate ‘Trauma Talks’ Program

LEAKESVILLE – Several incarcerated men at the South Mississippi Correctional Institution (SMCI) in Leakesville graduated from the Compassion Prison Project’s (CPP) Trauma Talks curriculum.

The ceremony marked the completion of a 16-part series designed to address some of the underlying causes of behavior that lead to incarceration.

By exploring the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), graduates gained critical tools to regulate their nervous systems, resolve self-limiting beliefs, and develop empathy for themselves and others.

The Trauma Talks curriculum, founded by Fritzi Horstman, uses a combination of educational videos, interactive workbooks, and peer-led "circles" to foster accountability and vulnerability.

At SMCI—a facility housing nearly 3,000 men—this program provides a vital pathway for residents to break cycles of violence and prepare for successful reentry into their communities.

“When people realize their inherent value, they don’t just transform themselves; they create a ripple effect that makes the entire prison environment safer,” said a CPP representative. The graduation is another example of the Mississippi Department of Corrections' commitment to prioritizing rehabilitation.

