

## EQ2:

### Empowering Direct Care Staff to Build Trauma-Informed Communities for Youth

**EQ2** is a program designed to support direct-care staff working with high-risk, trauma-impacted youth, particularly those who have been involved in the child welfare or juvenile detention systems. Experts increasingly understand that managing the traumatic stress reactions that system-involved youth often present with can take a profound toll on the well-being of residential staff and result in trauma symptoms which permeate the larger organization. Secondary trauma has been shown to lead to increased levels of staff stress, burnout, and turnover, as well as lowered quality of care for youth. Recently, calls for “trauma-informed systemic approaches” have been issued to help agencies respond to youth and staff trauma-related needs.

Using the term, **emotion coaching**, Lionheart’s EQ2 program begins by increasing staffs’ awareness of youth trauma behavior, helping staff build relationship-focused competencies and expanding crisis intervention knowledge. What is unique about the EQ2 approach, however, is the **focus on building staff’s own social and emotional skills** including increased awareness of their emotional state when working with youth to prevent crisis, learning personalized cognitive-behavioral strategies to help staff co-regulate with youth, learning how to return to “emotional baseline” after stressful incidents, and building stress management and resiliency skills to handle the emotional fallout that is common when working with trauma-impacted youth.