

Belmont Wellness Coalition (BWC)
DFC Grant SPO-80659-01
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2019 at 7:00 PM
Fire Department HQ Conference Room, Belmont, MA

BWC Members in Attendance:

Stephanie Sunderland (Wayside), Lisa Gibalerio (Wayside), Anne Wang (EDC, Grant Evaluator), Caroline Dustin (Youth), Melissa O'Connor (BHS SRO), Wendy Conroy (Chair, Parent, Sexuality Educator), Portia Thompson (Parent), Julie Crockett (Parent)

BWC Members Absent:

Kristine Pugliese (CMS SRO), Marisa Melanson (Youth Coordinator), Diana Ekman, Assistant Health Director, Wesley Chin (Director, Health Department), Fire Chief David Frizzell, Rev. Joe Zarro (Clergy), Sara Masucci (Parent/Teacher), Beth Rumley (Nursing Director), Asst. Police Chief Jamie MacIsaac, Brittany Taylor (Fire Department), Janet Amdur (Health Department), David Neylon (Health Department Nurse), Mike Clark (Clergy), Jasen Boyle (Substance Use Disorder Clinician), Kara Harlow (Clinician), Jeff Hansell (Media Specialist), Mark Paolillo (Board of Selectman), Jane Fox (Parent, Public Health Professional) Cristina Palladino (VP Belmont Savings Bank), Lily Sama (Youth)

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 PM.

I. Introductions

Introductions were made; Lisa reviewed the agenda.

II. Brief Review of December Meeting Data Highlights (Anne)

Anne reviewed what happened at the December meeting(s). Anne had those present read over the handout which identified the summary data points that bubbled to the top at the December meeting, e.g., vaping, alcohol use, the perception that “everyone is doing it”, low parental disapproval (concerning vaping, unsupervised parties, etc.), and the sense that students have a low perception of harm. Anne noted that the process of identifying and understanding the root causes will help inform the strategy that the BWC creates.

III. Brainstorm on Possible Root Causes of Behaviors Noted

Above

- Parental knowledge around vaping seems low
- Students are stressed and some have mental illness (anxiety/depression)
- Popularity of vaping/marijuana (edibles), alcohol
- Student knowledge concerning the dangers of vaping is low
- Overall low perception of harm among parents and students
- Access to vaping and marijuana (via social media)
- Alcohol is consumed at house parties
- Peer pressure with upper classroom
- Exposure to older kids
- Parental (tacit) approval, especially with alcohol
- Social norm perception (every one is doing it)
- Kids feel invincible (no harm will come)
- Wealth eases access to substances (can buy fake ID, etc.)
- High expectations for youth (high stress)
- Poor coping strategies
- Parents don't know how to talk with their kids about substances
- YRBS – should ask about inhalants
- Bathrooms are no longer a safe space – things are happening (substance use, sex)
- Boredom (not enough for kids to do)

Some of what has been brainstormed can be confirmed through the YRBS, but we may need to collect additional data from the schools, e.g., guidance counselors, parents, and youth to gather information about other root causes.

IV. Make a Data Collection Plan to Understand Root Causes (Group)

- Survey to parents needs to be concise and multiple choice
- Could administer survey at Freshman orientation night in March
- Also at Spring play in March
- Senior Parents Program (Pre graduation, Prom)
- Could parents volunteer to monitor a hallway?
- Belmont could become a part of Chapter 84
- Need to have some type of anonymous text line (for students) to report substance use on school grounds
- Youth focus group – ask teens why they think this is happening – understanding why might help identify the solutions
- Would be interesting to know if certain youth are more susceptible to using substances (sports, boredom, theater)
- Social Host Liability Law – never attracts many parents and those who do

- come are unlikely to be in violation
- Support Parents in supporting each other (texting each other *"kids heading to your house, are you home?"*)
 - Need to reach out to the kids, kids need to know how to reach out to each other kids, kids don't know who to reach out to if they "see" something
 - Administration could text kids, offer ways to be safe
 - could pilot a strategy for kids to use

Next BWC Meeting: analyze any additional collected data, review draft of parent/student surveys, we will make a plan for implementing parent surveys, and also identify ways to support students. We will also identify Belmont's strengths!

Adjourned at 8:31 PM

VII. Set Next Meeting

Lisa will send a scheduling doodle.