

Belmont Wellness Coalition (BWC)
DFC Grant SPO-80659-01
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, Feb. 26, 2019 at 7:00 – 8:30 PM
Fire Department HQ Conference Room, Belmont, MA

BWC Members in Attendance:

Lisa Gibalerio (Wayside), Anne Wang (EDC, Grant Evaluator), Jane Fox (Parent, Public Health Professional), Julie Crockett (Parent), Caroline Dustin (Youth), Melissa O'Connor (BHS SRO), Jonna Logan (parent, RN)

BWC Members Absent:

Stephanie Sunderland (Wayside), Beth Rumley (Nursing Director), Barbara Bulfoni, PTO President Chenery Middle School, Corinne Jackman (Belmont High School Nurse), Sam Chan (Wayside), Kristine Pugliese (CMS SRO), Fire Chief David Frizzell, Rev. Joe Zarro (Clergy), Sara Masucci (Parent/Teacher), 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), Wendy Conroy (Chair, Parent, Sexuality Educator), Lily Sama (Youth), Portia Thompson (Parent), Wesley Chin (Director, Health Department), Diana Ekman (Assistant Health Director), Marisa Melanson (Youth Coordinator), Cristina Palladino (VP Belmont Savings Bank)

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 PM.

I. Introductions – were made around the table.

II. Brief Review of January Meeting - Root Causes

Anne reviewed the process that the BWC has engaged in thus far, including looking at all the available data (in December). Areas (substances) that rose to the top among Belmont youth include: vaping, alcohol use, and marijuana use. There is a low perception of harm in general (concerning these substances) among parents and youth. In January, the BWC engaged in a “root cause” brainstorm. There is a lot of stress/anxiety among youth, parents allow drinking in the home, and there are not a lot of places for kids to hang out in Belmont.

Melissa noted that Belmont kids are experiencing a lot of academic stress. Jonna discussed showing her own kids the Juul devices as a way of educating them and explaining the health risks. Jane asked if more could be done to educate parents concerning the health risks. Melissa noted that she is talking with Wes from the Health Department about hosting a parent education night pertaining to vaping.

Anne then explained that brainstorming root causes led to the concept of distributing a parent survey (at various events) and holding student focus groups – all in an attempt to gather more data from the community.

III. Finalize Parent Survey

The BWC members present took a minute to review the draft. Feedback was gathered and the survey was adjusted.

- Make Plan to Implement Surveys e.g., at school events: playoff basketball game, Spring Musical, a musical concert

Lisa will work on getting the School Department's approval for survey distribution at these various events. Once that is done, she will request help with disseminating the survey.

IV. Discuss Holding Student Focus Groups

Lisa distributed the *draft* focus group prompt questions. Anne noted that the prompt questions will hopefully reveal *why* kids are vaping and/or using other substances.

Anne suggested that we start with two focus groups (one at the middle school and one at the high school) and see what information is put forth and determine if that information is useful.

We brainstormed ways to hold the focus groups, e.g., in a health class or during a lunch split. Jane suggested that Starbucks gift cards be offered and a small group could meet there to explore these issues. In general, it was agreed that lunch and/or gift cards will need to be provided!

Caroline noted that the kids who need to go to this, probably would not go. Kids like to do their homework during frees.

It was suggested that Lisa/Wendy hold very mini focus groups at the end of their Diversity workshops that are being held next week.

Anne adjusted the Focus Group questions.

V. Identify Belmont Strengths

Anne explained that strengths can be used within the community as a part of the overall change strategy in Belmont. Youth strengths are identified and then built upon in creating the change strategy. The group brainstormed youth strengths:

- Town and school sports involvement
- Stellar music programs
- Amazing theater program at BHS
- Kids value academic achievement and evidence based information
- It's a small community
- Emphasis on community service
- People with expertise within Belmont (McLean)
- Proximity to Boston/Cambridge
- Students have goals for after high school
- Part of MIAA
- Outdoor pool (great for younger kids)
- Pretty open space: Habitat, Lone Tree Hill, Beaver Brook, Rock Meadow
- Charity events and fundraisers
- Town Day
- Small local business and churches (Belmont Religious Council)
- Newly resurrected Youth Commission
- Highly educated parent population
- Active and engaged Public Service Departments
- Ethnically diverse (strong cultural groups)
- Parents are active and open to education
- Good guidance counselors

The next step will be to gather more data that will inform the strategic plan.

VI. Updates, other topics of concern

- Subcommittees (fundraising [for swag, snacks for teens, etc.], youth group development, events, speakers, website development, branding, logo, etc.)

Lisa noted that the BWC may need to form subcommittees in order to address topics like the ones noted above.

Caroline suggested paring a fundraiser with an informal music program either during school or after school. Maybe create a coffee house.

VII. Set Next Meeting

Lisa will send a scheduling doodle for the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:
Lisa Gibalerio,

Prevention Specialist, Program Coordinator
Wayside Youth & Family Support Network