

**Belmont Wellness Coalition (BWC)**  
**DFC Grant SPO-80659-01**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, May 21, 2019 at Noon – 1:30 PM**  
**Fire Department HQ Conference Room, Belmont, MA**

**BWC Members Present:**

Lisa Gibalerio (Wayside), Anne Wang (EDC, Grant Evaluator), Beth Rumley (Nursing Director), Julie Crockett (TMM), Corinne Jackman (Belmont High School Nurse), Kristine Pugliese (CMS SRO), Kate Bowen (School Committee member), Elizabeth Dionne (Warrant Committee/TMM member), Pam Eager (Town Meeting Member), Wendy Conroy (Chair, Sexuality Educator), Jeff Hansell (Media Specialist), Melissa O'Connor (BHS SRO),

**BWC Members Absent:**

Sam Chan (Wayside), Stephanie Sunderland (Wayside), Cristina Palladino (VP Belmont Savings Bank), Rev. Joe Zarro (Clergy), Sara Masucci (Teacher), Jonna Logan (Nurse), Annie Gladfelter (BASEC), Caroline Dustin (Youth), Lily Sama (Youth), Fire Chief David Frizzell, Wesley Chin (Director, Health Department), Diana Ekman (Assistant Director, Health Department), Jane Fox (Public Health Professional), Portia Thompson (Parent), Barbara Bulfoni (PTO President, Chenery Middle School), Janice Darius (Assistant Superintendent)

**I. Introductions**

**II. Brief Review of April's meeting**

Lisa reviewed the following points covered in April:

- We reviewed new data (parent surveys, student focus group, guidance)
- We updated the Root Causes based on the data

*Top Four Root Causes:*

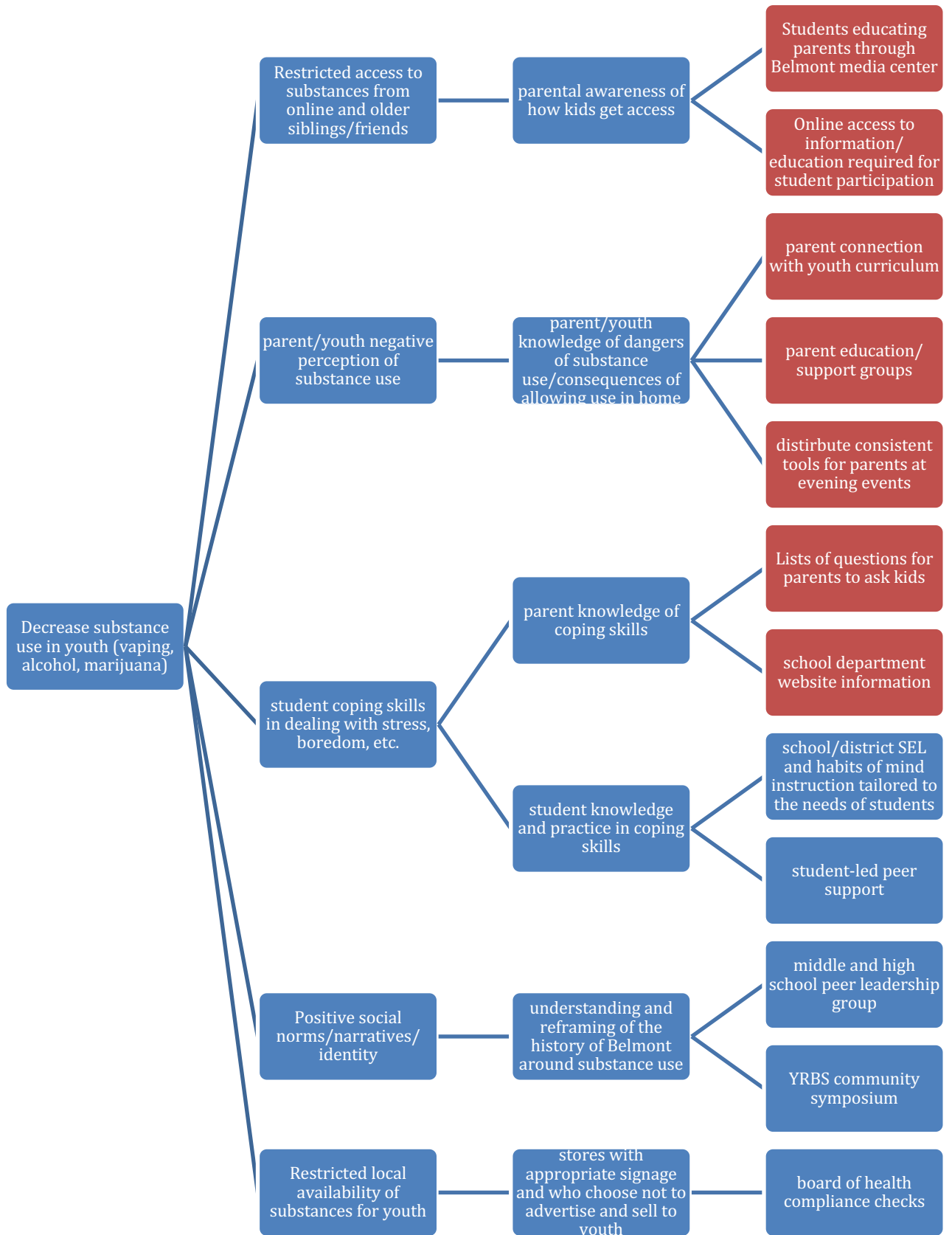
- 1 – Overwhelming academic stress/boredom (lack of coping skills)
- 2 – Low Perception of Harm Among Students (cool factor, curiosity)
- 3- Parent Permissiveness (low perception of harm)
- 4- Availability (fake IDs, internet, siblings, and older friends)

**III. Driver Diagram to Prevent Substance Use**

Anne led the discussion of identifying the “Drivers”

**GOAL:** *To reduce substance use in youth (vaping, alcohol, marijuana), what needs to change around the root causes?*

**Driver Diagram** – Parent related activities are in orange:



- Parents' negative perception of substance abuse
- Need to teach students *coping skills* in dealing with stress/boredom (re-think the way the Positive Decision Making course is taught)
- Positive Dec. course could provide instruction in helping to increase students' perception of harm
- Positive Dec. course needs to be removed from Physical Education curriculum and put with the Science/Health curriculum (Health and Phys Ed. should not be merged)
- Parent/Sibling education – provide *knowledge of strategies* for restricting substance use
- Change the external cultural narrative (i.e. traditional rites of passage) to positive social norms
- Restrict availability of substances for youth – by doing compliance checks with convenience stores, gas stations, etc. (check their signage/ID checking, etc.)
- Ask students what they think would be helpful/effective ways to reduce substance use
- Work with Belmontonian Club in forming a Peer Leader group – Perhaps the new BHS Principal will be a resource – Understanding the effectiveness of peer to peer education – Work with new Youth Coordinator on this topic for both middle and high school

**Action Item:** Lisa will email Alice Melnikoff to learn more about the mission of the Belmontonian Club and to explore whether or not that group might be interested in doing some peer education.

#### IV. Evidence Based Prevention Strategies

Group Brainstorm on Possible Strategies:

- 1 - Parent Education Programs/Support Groups (Habits of Mind)
- 2 – Learn more about how to incorporate SEL Education so parents can reinforce it at home
- 3 - Is there a technological/electronic aspect to parent education? (YouTube, TED talks, etc.)
  - Perhaps there are cell phone apps that *parents* could use?
  - Perhaps there are cell phone apps that *students* could use?
- 4 - Use Belmont Media Center to create student educational videos for both parents and other students. (The Performing Arts Company kids may enjoy creating pithy educational videos).
- 5 – Use McLean experts to assist in parent/youth education
- 6 – Pediatricians (the school department has a physician) what are the interventions with kids? Are pediatricians also communicating with parents?
- 7 – Utilize the materials that are available for free (e.g., Dept. Public Health Clearing House)
- 8 – Nurses at the elementary schools are forming wellness clubs and doing some classroom teaching – is there a district-wide elementary curriculum?
- 9 – Use 9<sup>th</sup> grade orientation or sports requirements to get parents to view a video or some kind of education component (concerning substance use prevention) online

**Action Item:** Beth will reach out to the school's pediatrician and invite her to join the BWC.

Anne suggested distilling the possible strategies down to two – one related to parents, one that is school-based and district wide. The strategies can be fine-tuned and worked on over

the summer with potential implementation scheduled for the fall.

Lisa noted that the school department will be focused on disseminating the YRBS data to the community in the fall.

## V. BWC Subcommittees / BWC Summer Work?

Lisa raised the following as potential areas that could be worked on this summer.

**Please contact Lisa if interested in any of the following areas!**

- a. Communications (website creation, Facebook posts)
- b. Vaping – (Work with Health on Compliance Checks at stores, signage)  
[Several Mass communities have successfully banned the sale of flavored e-cigarettes!]
- c. YRBS data analysis – (As a lead up to the rollout of the data, as overseen by the School Department.)
- d. Continued work on identifying one or two prevention strategies for Belmont
- e. Capacity Building – (see below)

## VI. Updates, other topics of concern:

- **New CMS Assistant Principal is very knowledgeable on Vaping** – she could be an excellent resource for the Coalition and for the district
- **CMS is having a problem with sexting** (the middle school is considering holding an assembly in the beginning of the year) Wendy mentioned “A Thin Line” website that might be helpful
- **Screen-time, gaming, and cell phone addiction are very much on parents’ minds.** Wendy suggested bringing back the movie “Screenagers” as it has been 3 or more years since it was shown in Belmont. Lisa also suggested “Cell Out” as an excellent movie on the same topic, but geared toward high school students/parents
- **BWC Capacity Building** – Lisa noted that the Coalition does not have sector representation in the areas of *Health Care Professional* and *Other Organization Involved in Reducing Substance Abuse*. Also, the Business sector representative may be too busy to continue serving. Lisa is following up.  
**Action Item:** Lisa will follow up with Business rep. Please be thinking of possible people we could invite to join the BWC.

## VII. Set Next Meeting

Small groups will meet during the summer to move forward on several pieces of BWC work, e.g., working with Health Department on compliance checks/banning flavored vapes, strategy development for school district/parents, Coalition capacity building, BWC Website development, and Anne, Lisa (Beth and Wendy) will meet with the School Department to dive in to the YRBS data.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:44 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

Lisa Gibalerio,  
Prevention Specialist  
Wayside Youth & Family Support Network