

Belmont Wellness Coalition (BWC)
DFC Grant SPO-80659-02
Meeting Minutes
Monday, February 24, 2020 at 3:30 – 5:00 PM
Fire Department HQ Conference Room, Belmont, MA

BWC Members Present:

Lisa Gibalerio (Wayside), David Frizzell (Fire Chief), Melissa O'Connor (BHS SRO), Sue Morris (Chair of the Youth Commission), Traci Doherty (parent, nurse), Anne Wang (EDC, Grant Evaluator), Mike Crowley (School Committee, parent, Belmont Media Center), Wendy Conroy (Chair, Sexuality Educator), Kim Raubenheimer (parent, nutritionist), Michelle Drolsbaugh (Minding Your Mind), Elizabeth Brown (parent, Public Health Evaluator), Veera Mylapore (parent), Ellie Lesser (CMS grade 8 student), Analia Barrantes Karma (parent)

BWC Members Absent:

Stephanie Sunderland (Wayside), Pam Palmucci (Wayside Intern), Rev. Joe Zarro (Clergy, parent), Leah Lesser (parent), Beth Rumley (Nursing Director), Annie Gladfelter (BASEC), Pam Eagar (Town Meeting Member), Sara Masucci (Teacher), Julie Crockett (TMM, parent), Jonna Logan (Nurse, parent), Lily Sama (Youth), Jane Fox (Public Health Professional, parent), Portia Thompson (Parent), Janice Darius (Assistant Superintendent), Wesley Chin (Director, Health Department), Diana Ekman (Assistant Director, Health Department), Jeff Hansell (Media Specialist), Patti Forte (parent), Kate Bowen (School Committee member, parent), Kristine Pugliese (CMS SRO), Elizabeth Dionne (Warrant Committee/TMM member, parent), Corinne Jackman (Belmont High School Nurse), Barbara Bulfoni (Chenery PTO, parent), Julia Patriciu (parent), Caroline Dustin (Youth)

1. Introductions and Welcome:

2. Updates:

a.) Student Focus Group (SFG) at BHS (Feb. 5)

Lisa and Wendy provided some background information on the SFG, i.e., its main goal was to gather information from the students on the structure/goals of what a Peer Leadership program might look like at BHS. Lisa noted that stress reduction and mental health were two topics of interest to the students. Wendy added that peer mentorship was also of interest (e.g., forming a student led hotline, having student led peer mentorship with Chenery kids, etc.)

BWC members discussed the student feedback, specifically the notion of meeting during Wellness class time (grades 9 and 10) or on Wednesdays at 1:30, when school is dismissed an hour early.

b.) Next Steps concerning Youth Development

Elizabeth noted that it might be interesting for students to collect some data (at a

table during lunch, for example), on what the students might actually focus on if such a group were created. Wendy proposed an idea using large sheets of rolled out paper where students could write their ideas on the paper. Anne noted that the 2/5 SFG data was skewed toward Juniors (who are experiencing intense academic stress), so it might make sense to get the perspective of ninth graders and younger. Deep diving into issues by grade levels was discussed in the SFG. Ellie spoke to the overall stress of 8th graders, e.g., choosing classes for 9th grade, social stress, transitioning to the high school, etc.

Traci liked off the alternative way of getting data from students, i.e., using the large roll of paper/markers and students fill in a question. It has an “off the cuff” aspect to it. She also suggested we might visit health classes to get additional information from students.

Concerning the Middle School focus group notion, the Coalition agreed that it might make sense to reach out to MS students get their ideas on structure/goals of a peer leadership program. Anne noted that this data could be shared with Janice, etc.

Wendy suggested we talk with Lisa Hurtubise, BHS faculty, about her young woman’s group, maybe called the *Girlhood Project*.

To Dos:

1. Reach out to Lisa Hurtubise to learn more about that youth group
2. Reach out to CMS about a way to get data from students there
3. Reach out to CMS/BHS nurses to see how many of student visits are mental health related
4. Reach out to CMS/BHS guidance office to see how many student visits are mental health related (Lisa remembered that last year we collected some data on guidance visits, she will check this data out)

Melissa noted that issues related to mental health comprise 90 percent (!) of what she handles at the high school all day.

The Coalition discussed that the absence of a social worker at BHS is very concerning.

Anne discussed the long term work of Coalition and its sustainability goals, e.g., raising funding for staff, grant writing, etc. These efforts will sustain the Coalition over the long-term and sustainability is a goal of the grant (and is a part of the Strategic Prevention Framework, which guides the work of the Coalition).

The Coalition explored the notion of identifying the “one caring adult” for students - as this is an evidenced based protective factor for youth. Wendy discussed the Advisory Program at BHS, starting in the fall, where one adult (faculty or staff) will be assigned to a group of students and will meet with them over the year. Lisa noted that the Chenery started Community Block this year, with a similar goal of fostering a closer relationship of students with teachers. Ellie provided some interesting Community Block feedback: it is not really fostering closer teacher relationships with kids. It often becomes a time for kids to do homework or to socialize. The Community Block content is very teacher dependent.

Analia discussed the possibility of having senior students take an elective course where they are trained to help other students, i.e., they receive training in mental health awareness, peer education. Anne mentioned that the Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) training, for peers to help peers, will be available soon. (Currently one has to be age 18 or over to take the six hour training.)

3. Upcoming Events:

- **BHS Diversity Day** – Wednesday, March 4
Lisa and Wendy each doing workshops.
- **BHS all school presentation**, April 9: **Chris Herren**
- **CMS Mykee Fowlin** (May 29 - tentative)
- **CMS Coffee with Parents** (Lisa and Wendy):
 - Thursday, March 5 8:00 – 9:30 a.m.
 - Monday, April 13 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
- **YMHFA training in Belmont** (all are invited to take this free, six hour, training: church group leaders, Rec. Department, Guidance Departments, School Nurses, etc.) **(Sat., April 18, 9:00 – 3:00, at the Library.)**
- **YRBS deeper dive with CMS faculty/staff (April 15)**. After the YRBS presentation, faculty will break into smaller groups to discuss root causes, etc.

4. Youth Updates:

Ellie noted that it would be most useful for school staff to have the YMHFA training.

5. Belmont's SEL (Social Emotional Learning) Framework

- How to impart Belmont's SEL Framework to parents?
- Potential BWC Subcommittee – Spring/Summer planning, roll out in fall 2020

Anne elaborated on the importance of reinforcing the SEL framework for youth in all aspects of their lives, i.e., that faculty/staff, families, employers, coaches, etc. are familiar with the concepts and the language.

****An Idea!** -- Thread SEL tips geared toward parents/care givers, into email blasts from the school or from the Superintendent. For example, in the Principal's weekly email, include something like: *"Listen more to your children, talk less..."* or *"Model the behavior you seek. Apologize when you have made a mistake."*

To Do: Float this idea by Janice.

Michelle noted that some towns are getting designated as “SEL Towns” and schools are now offering Mindfulness classes, etc.

6. Set Next Meeting

- Lisa will send a scheduling doodle for the March meeting.