

**Belmont Wellness Coalition (BWC)**  
**Meeting Minutes (Virtual)**  
**Thursday, September 29, 2022 from 9:00 – 10:00 AM**

***BWC members present:*** Lisa Gibalerio (Wayside), Maeve Kennelly (Wayside), Wendy Conroy (BWC Chair, Sexuality Educator), Melissa O'Connor (BHS SRO), Janice Darias (Assistant Superintendent), Mike Crowley (School Committee, Belmont Media Center), Kim Raubenheimer (Nutritionist and trainer), Samantha Resnick (BHS Social Worker), Lizzie MacLellan (NAN Project), Karla Flores (BiLingual Care Coordinator-NAN Project), April (NAN Project Care Coordinator), Leah Lesser (Belmont parent, Emerson Health marketing), Hannah Lee (Young Adult Library)

1. **Welcome [Introductions, Check-Ins]**

Those present introduced themselves. Lisa noted that Maeve has joined the BWC team!

2. **Summer Work Updates:**

→ **Updating SEL Documents:** Lisa reviewed where we are with the SEL (Social Emotional Learning) documents. The BWC had in 2020 created two summary documents; one for staff and one for families. We updated the staff document (which was disseminated to faculty/staff) and are in the process of updating the family document. When both documents are complete, she will send to BWC members.

→ **Increasing BWC's Visibility:** Lisa and Diana met to brainstorm ways to increase BWC's visibility throughout Belmont. Lisa shared what the outcome of the meeting was and shared that we still need to improve our visibility.

3. **Fall Programming:**

● **Library      *Youth Mental Health*      **Wed. OCT. 19, 6:30 – 7:30 PM****

Lisa shared what we would be covering in the fall library program, invited members to help publicize the event, Janice offered to send out the flier to elementary/middle schools and link it to the website as well as including it in the newsletter.

● **Narcan Training      in Watertown      **Mon. OCT. 17, 6:00 – 7:00 PM****

(Watertown Free Library-Facilitated by Lt. Dan Unsworth, Watertown PD)

Lisa reviewed the Narcan training details. Mike asked who the training was targeted to, Lisa answered to anyone 18+ who wanted to have the knowledge. Leah suggested getting the BHS guidance department involved to see if any seniors would like to participate. Lisa will explore if there is an age cutoff for training to see who we can include.

**UPDATE** - Any high school student (grades 9 and up) and any Belmont or Watertown resident is welcome to attend the training.

#### 4. **Student Ambassador Updates:**

- SA Survey Results - Maeve summarized the feedback from the survey.

When asked: “*What topics would you like to focus on?*” (students were allowed to pick more than 1 topic)

- **6 said** “mental health-learning what the symptoms are, how to get help”
- **4 said** “preventing substance misuse (vaping, weed, alcohol, etc)”
- **4 said** “identifying coping skills (both for self-use and other students),
- **4 said** “overwhelming stress (in and out of school)”
- **2 said** “supporting historically marginalized groups (students of color, LGBTQ+ students),

When asked: “*What activities would you like to focus on?*” (students were allowed to pick more than 1 topic)

- **6 said** supporting BWC’s work by giving feedback and attending focus groups
- **5 said** collaborating with other clubs at the school and guidance counselors to support student mental health
- **4 said** planning and leading events related to mental health and substance abuse
- **2 said** creating social media campaigns or materials regarding mental health and substance misuse

- **The NAN Project -**

Lisa introduced Lizzie MacLellan from the NAN Project - which works with schools to promote mental health awareness and suicide prevention programs for youth. Lisa noted that the BWC invited Lizzie here today to learn how they might be able to work with our Student Ambassadors.

Lizzie provided an overview of The NAN Project, which is currently in 65 schools in MA-college campuses and middle schools. The model is working with high school students and Peer Mentors – which are people ages 18-25 who have lived experience with mental health and substance misuse to share their “comeback stories” with students, discuss coping strategies, and therapeutic experiences. She explained that they mainly try to work around mental health curriculum in schools/community, spend 45 min-1 hour with students.

Topics they cover include:

- ❖ signs of depression
- ❖ the importance of checking in with friends
- ❖ supporting friends to bring issues to trusted adults
- ❖ identify student led projects to promote mental health awareness
- ❖ resource visibility
- ❖ offer professional development to staff and parent resources, as well

Questions:

Janice asked if the NAN Project gives presentations/programs for parents and students together? (They have not done so much, but would be willing to.)

Mike shared how impressed he was with the work the NAN Project is doing, he is excited for Belmont schools to hopefully partner with them.

Janice shared that due to budget cuts, there is no one to oversee the NAN Project in the schools as part of the school day via the health/wellness curriculum, but mentioned if they wanted to work with BWC, that may be an option. Also, she stated that this would be a good project for the Student Ambassadors to be a part of.

Sam shared students are very interested in supporting each other and that there are a lot of clubs surrounding and supporting mental health.

Janice shared she would be interested in doing PD (Professional Development) for staff by the NAN Project.

Lisa summarized that the NAN team will likely not be a part of health/wellness classes for this academic year (2022-2023) because the curriculum is already set, but that the BWC can focus with NAN on working with the Student Am. program, a parent education program, and work together with Janice on PD for faculty/staff.

5. **Youth Feedback Follow Up:** Lisa reviewed feedback from Ellie's youth perspective information from the June BWC Meeting:

- a) Create Quiet/Break Room
- b) Involve students in Responding More to Hate Speech/Incidents
- c) Access to Social Workers and Distinguish SW with Guidance Dept.
  - Sam noted that she and the other social worker had a "meet the social workers" info table at back-to-school night. She shared that it feels a little uncomfortable to widely publicize the social work role because the role is not funded for next year. Janice agreed, mentioned herself, Mike Crowley and other school members have an interest in keeping the social workers in the school, but will need to see what the FY24 budget looks like.
  - Melissa noted social workers are invaluable asset to staff and the school in crisis situations.
- d) *Monthly* Homework Free Weekends
  - Leah shared that Homework Free Weekends are all on holiday weekends and winter vacation, there are no random weekends off
  - Wendy brought up the concept of "homework passes" and suggested that maybe those might work better, may be better for student and teacher

schedules and allow for more flexibility - some teachers are already doing this or being reasonable around deadlines

#### 6. **BWC Housekeeping:**

- *Should BWC meetings stay remote or consider meeting in person?*

Most seemed good with staying remote, most shared that remote works best for convenience. Mike shared other committees have moved to hybrid and he is willing to participate in that.

- *BWC will host periodic evening meetings with youth.*

Lisa noted that she will schedule an evening Coalition meeting before the holidays and invite youth so as to check in on their feedback; all BWC members are invited to attend and hear directly from BHS students.

Date/time/place: TBD

#### 7. **Closing Thoughts and other Updates**

- Guidance Department Survey (February 2023)

Lisa shared that this year's staff survey will include nurses and social workers as well as the guidance dept. This will be a way to gather some student data as there is no new YRBS survey data to dive into this fall.

The survey will be very simple and will ask: "*What are the main reasons students see you?*"

**Next BWC Meeting:** Maeve will send a scheduling doodle!