

Belmont Wellness Coalition (BWC)
Meeting Minutes (Virtual)
Monday, February 13, 2023 from 1:00 – 2:00 PM

Lisa Gibalerio (Wayside), Maeve Kennelly (Wayside), Wendy Conroy (BWC Chair, Sexuality Educator), Janice Darias (Assistant Superintendent), Megan Palmer (Parent), Melissa O'Connor (BHS SRO), Samantha Resnick (BHS Social Worker), Jess Hicks (BHS SW Intern), Hannah Lee (YA service Librarian), Mike Crowley (School Committee Member) Elizabeth Dionne (parent, town committees), Leah Lesser (Parent, Emerson Health Marketing), Lenny Rodriguez (parent)

1. Welcome [Introductions, Check-Ins]

Members present introduced themselves.

2. Student Ambassador (SA) Updates:

Maeve provided SA updates: *Trusted Adult* Initiative at BHS: sending survey to staff at BHS to identify themselves as a trusted adult for students to come to regarding mental health, overwhelming stress, peer relationships, etc.

Instagram up and running, students looking at creating other social media accounts to bring awareness about the club.

Leah asked about the electronic messaging boards and utilizing BHS's 5-Minutes Ago as vehicles for getting mental health and SA undertaking messages out to the community. This is underway.

3. 2023 YRBS

Lisa attended the Middlesex League Kick Off Meeting on January 24.

Lisa and Janice did make some edits and recommendations re: 2023 YRBS, not sure if specific dates are set yet for administration

Janice: possibly in May before AP exams etc, Dan (BHS) and Mark (CMS) have ideas on how to operationalize for students to take the YRBS on the devices during school session, which is how we get the highest response rates, hoping to add module/questions around finding out what specific substances are being vaped (nicotine or marijuana) and how marijuana is being used among the youth (vaped or edibles, etc.), also more mental health and wellness questions.

Lisa: Provided background on the YRBS for those who are just hearing about it, i.e., it's a comprehensive health and wellness survey, it provides our most comprehensive set of data, feedback guides BWC/community work.

Mike: Asked what's in core module vs add ons; asked if questions re: self harm/suicidal ideation will be on survey, when do the results become available?

Lisa: Yes, and we are looking to add additional mental health questions, specifically anxiety in middle school; the raw data becomes available in summer and then the principals and evaluators review it, Nadia will make charts, etc. before it gets presented to the community.

Janice emphasized the importance of this data and its insights.

4. **2023 Programming:**

- The NAN Project -- **Suicide Prevention FACTS (Feelings, Actions, Changes, Threats, Situations)** – Monday, March 6 at 7:00 PM - at CMS

Lisa asked Coalition members to help publicize this event – please send the flyer around widely and do plan to attend if you can!

- “Get Real”** Talk with BHS Juniors and Seniors (Tuesday, March 28 at 7:00 PM – at UU Church on Concord Ave)

Lisa: This event is for juniors and seniors at BHS to come and connect with young people and talk about and ask questions concerning sensitive topics, e.g., consent, mental health, addiction, etc.

- BHS Seniors and Parents** (Social Host, Substance Misuse strategies, etc. Tues., April 25)

Wendy and Lisa will be giving their Social Host Liability talk again this year, parents of seniors and seniors are required to attend, talked about possibly moving it to younger ages, possibly inviting parents of middle schoolers and holding a similar workshop in the fall.

5. **Vaping**

Lisa - wanted to discuss the issue (increasing prevalence) and perhaps create a BWC subcommittee to focus on this concerning issue.

The topic of vaping is important, as at both Chenery and the BHS, parents don't have access to all the information and it needs to be addressed *before* the high school level, possibly creating a subcommittee to explore: How can we combat this together? What are the best ways to educate our community and offer refusal skills to youth?

Lisa explained we do not have capacity for a Vaping program *before* May; do we think parents will come if we held something in mid-May?

Elizabeth: If we can, we should, it's very critical. However, things get so busy in May.

Lisa: Our knowledge base and materials are solid, but we don't want to carve out a lot of time creating a program that only a small number of parents (under 12) actually attend. She asked if anyone has any ideas.

Elizabeth: Suggested having something at the Suicide Prevention training, is there a way to get the information out before May in a way that's helpful?

Wendy: Has found success with very short videos (<5 minutes) on different topics, then host a more in depth program for parents, in the fall.

Lisa: Talked about the video she and Mike made already re: Vaping. But it is over 5 minutes and might be too general.

Elizabeth: 7 min is too long, she offered to possibly utilize her campaign tools/website as an education platform for disseminating helpful information.

Leah: 6/7/8th grade parents are preparing to send their children to the new BHS, so May might be a good idea to possibly include Vaping information in with all the information sent to parents regarding moving to the high school. This might be a good way to get in front of it as they prepare for high school, framing it as *"We are helping you prepare your child..."*

Wendy: Helpful to provide resources that parents can give the kids as well as tik tok, instagram, and other youth-friendly formats; this is where kids are getting their information.

Leah: Suggested having some BHS/SA students doing tik tok videos, etc?

Hannah: Oversees a very active tik tok, talks about mental health resources, could include this, as well.

Lisa: Provided a heads up on BWC summer subgroups: There will definitely be one on YRBS data, we may consider a Vaping one to lay out strategies for the school year, possibly get as much information out and then having a more in depth program in the fall.

6. Grant Updates:

- STOP Act Grant

Lisa gave updates on STOP grant, it specifically targets underage drinking, can possibly increase our capacity, there is no ask of the Coalition, at this time she is doing a lot of revision work on the Project Narrative.

- DFC (Drug Free Community) Reapplication Grant

Our work is funded by this federal DFC grant, finishing up our 5 years, this will provide our funding for the next five years, which is years 6 - 10.

Lisa briefed the Coalition on the CIA (Coalition Involvement Agreement) forms they may be receiving and asked for help possibly reviewing/reading the Project Narrative.

7. Other Updates and Upcoming Coalition meetings:

Mark your calendars for upcoming BWC meetings:

- **Mon. March 13 at Noon** - would noon be possible to accommodate a BWC member who has a standing conflict with the 1:00 time?
- Mon. April 10 at 1:00
- Mon. May 8 at 1:00

Questions/Comments:

YRBS

Janice: In March, the School Dept. will be sending out the YRBS passive consent 'opt-out' and then putting the link to the 2023 survey on the School Dept's website. She offered to add BWC to that outreach, so that members could take a look at the survey.