



Belmont Wellness Coalition (BWC)
Meeting Minutes (Virtual)
Mon. February 11, 2024

Lisa Gibalerio (Wayside), Maeve Kennelly (Wayside), Chantal Hoff (MXM Evaluator), Wendy Conroy (BWC Chair, Sexuality Educator), Sofia Hertz (BWC Intern), Rebecca Furth (International Public Health), Lucia Sullivan (Interim Assistant Superintendent), Maya Escobar (Teen Services Librarian), Portia Thompson (BRC, parent), Elizabeth Dionne (Belmont Select Board), Sara McPhee Lafkas (MSW, parent), Beth Rumley (Nursing Director, BPS)

1. Welcome [Introductions, Check-Ins]

Coalition members introduced themselves.

2. BWC Updates

Brief Summary of Recent Programs/Outreach. Lisa provided updates on the following Coalition initiatives that occurred recently.

- **LDS Presentation** – Youth Mental Health and Overwhelming Stress

Lisa shared that BWC presented information to the LDS community about mental health, overwhelming stress, and strategies for supporting peers. Lisa, Wendy, Maeve presented to parents, middle schoolers, and high schoolers.

- **YRBS Data Presentation** – Presented to BHS and BMS PTOs in January; about 20 parents attended.

- **Twice monthly video segments** - posted on the BWC website and on Facebook.

Lisa is still doing her health and prevention focused videos twice a month.

- **Parenting Group (meets monthly)** - Two new members in January; all are welcome.

We had a great meeting in January regarding guidelines around teens and dating. Please share this free resource with any community members/friends you think would like to join!

- **Belmont's Opioid Task Force** - various Department Heads are meeting to discuss how to appropriately plan for and spend the opioid disbursement funds.

The Opioid Task Force (members of the PD, FD, HD, BPS Nursing Director, and community stakeholders) have been discussing ways to appropriately spend this money in Belmont.

Current plans are focused on Narcan availability and consulting with people with “lived experience” - and there also needs to be a focus on primary prevention strategies.

Elizabeth Dionne noted that reported overdoses are not a huge issue in Belmont (data wise) and it might be more beneficial to spend on youth centered prevention. She also noted that there are limits on how this money can be spent.

Lisa noted that prevention education is among the spending principles for this settlement.

Rebecca Furth asked the group if these funds could be used to fund the Belmont Wellness Coalition to organize and implement programming on behalf of the town.

Chantal Hoff shared that some things we noted in the YRBS data-there is some literature that suggests what we are currently working on with the Coalition correlates to how this money can be spent.

3. **Student Mental Health Advocate (SMHA) Updates**

- **Student Resources** - Maeve shared that SMHA are currently working on compiling resources to disseminate to the student body including: Who's Who of the Guidance Department, FAQ of the Guidance Department, and How to Navigate the Tiers of mental health supports at BHS.
- **Faculty Meeting Presentation** - Students may speak at a spring faculty meeting to share their perspectives on what's going well and what is not going as well.
- **Peer Counseling (Branch Out Program)** - Maeve explained that this is another youth program offered at BHS. The School Psychologist (Dr. W) and Ms. King have trained about a dozen upper class students to act as peer supports in referring students to resources around mental health.

4. **YRBS Follow Up**

School Dept. Meeting on March 4

Consider: *What can BWC propose as a follow up to what the data reflects?*

Coalition members offered thoughts on what could be proposed as follow up work in response to the data.

5. **DARE Board**

Funding (from the DARE Board) has been made available for a grade wide assembly – any ideas for speakers? Middle School Principal Russ Kupperstein noted (at a past BWC meeting) that bullying is a concern - therefore, we are looking to see if we can identify a speaker to present at a 7th grade assembly. Looking for: neutralizing bullying, validating students, upstander strategies, and reinforcing SEL concepts.

6. **Next Parenting Group:**

Wed., Feb. 28 at 7:00 PM - Topic to be determined. All are welcome.

7. **Mark your calendars for the next BWC meeting:**

Mon., March 11 at 12:30 – 1:30

