



**Region 2 Suicide Advisory Board (RSAB) Meeting Agenda**  
**Time: Tuesday, October 15, 2024 12 PM - 3:30 PM**  
**Meriden Public Library, Room 6 – 105 Miller St. Meriden, CT 06450**

**Facilitators:** Taylor Gainey - APW, Kara Sepulveda-Fonseca - APW

**Attendees:** Gerry Baird - Clifford Beers, Erica Skoutas - Bridges, Qualina Cooper - Jayvyn's Journey, Odali Rodriguez - Wallingford Health Dept, Nina Robinson - Wallingford Health Dept, Kathy Grega - Clinton Human Services, Ben Eaves - Clinton Human Services, Joe Carapella - Clinton Human Services, Elizabeth DeMerchant - Meriden Health Dept, Lisa Trupp - Naugatuck Valley Health Dept, Taylor Setzler - East Haddam YFS, Mikhela Hull - Carelon, Rob Bibbiani - Tri Town YSB, Alli Benke – Haddam Killingworth YFS, Mike Fumiatti - New Haven Police Dept, Daisy Hernandez - Middletown Health Dept, Nicole Shea - VA, Sadie Witherspoon - Center for School Safety, Stephanie Masella - Meriden Police Dept

**Meeting objectives:** By the end of this meeting, we will:

- Brainstorm creative ways to put mental health on the map in various settings
- Determine gaps and barriers for us to address throughout the year
- Review local data to identify areas of need & high-risk populations

**Welcome**

**Lunch & Learn [30 minutes]**

- "Postvention is Prevention" discussion with Kathy Hanley, Behavioral Health Program Manager, Western CT Coalition
- Kathy walked us through the process she adopted to start a Postvention Intervention Network with the New Fairfield LPC.
  - o Started conversations with leadership (first selectman, fire chief, police, assessing current strategies)
  - o Relationship building through letters communicating intent
    - Establishing roles vs. specific points of contacts
  - o Assessed resources being left behind (where can people go for support)
    - Brochure to be left behind "Help & Support after a suicide", understanding why, coping with grief, talking to kids)
    - Messaging in papers & social service messaging
      - Business card size messaging
      - 988 campaign
  - o Navigated challenges of addressing untimely deaths – HIPPA, family privacy
  - o Being fair & equitable following a death
    - The group requested a list of appropriate ways to remember someone who passed

- Discussed misperceptions specific to the 211 and crisis response functions
- Distinguishing when to call 911, 211 or 988 (graphic available)
- Kathy shared a Google Drive link with items specific to their efforts (folder passed around) as well as their website that houses their efforts for community engagement.
  - This google drive folder contains all the New Fairfield printed materials: [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1WEV5O1R\\_K9m1yQMIDbV\\_qlJNtpQLhSKY?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1WEV5O1R_K9m1yQMIDbV_qlJNtpQLhSKY?usp=sharing)
  - This is the link to their website: <https://www.newfairfield.org/community/suicide-prevention-and-postvention>

**Break** [15 minutes]

**Introductions** [10 minutes]

**Accomplishments** [60 minutes]

- **Themes shared:**
  - **Trainings:**
    - Offering continuing edu. credits for training participation (VA)
    - Mental Health First Aid (Adult & Youth) more than 700 people trained
    - Question Persuade Refer (QPR) more than 675 community members certified
      - Now offering in Spanish targeting 18–25-year-olds
      - School district efforts in Ansonia, Shelton, Middletown
      - Camp counselors in Middletown
      - Micro credentialing youth
      - Targeting parents
    - Mandatory mental health trainings for school staff
  - **Community Conversations:**
    - Launched in 9 different communities discussing how they can generate change
      - Young adult focused
  - **Data to Action Presentations**
    - Sharing survey data with town and school leadership with a post survey to drive action
  - **Building Capacity:**
    - Energize and emphasize youth coalition
    - Prevention position established
    - Building relationships with various sectors
    - Fully staffed crisis teams, improving postvention communication
    - DFA Connect Grant – ensuring schools have toolkits (220 schools received)
    - Connecting to Care CT website (funding solidified) - [Behavioral Health for Families in CT | Connecting to Care \(connectingtocarect.org\)](https://www.behavioralhealthforfamiliesinct.org/)

- Assisted Intervention Matching Tool
- **Barriers/Challenges Identified:**
  - Select sectors have their own set of trainings, not welcoming of new
  - Limited funding, resources – high demand, continuous waitlist
  - Families and children are not provided the tools and resources – needs to be available
  - Having resources available, balance for engaging individuals, cultural competency/consideration
  - Need for Spanish Facilitation and a co facilitator
  - Need for support and funding for prevention position
  - Difficulty getting those Parents to attend/register - found it beneficial once complete vs. Youth QPR was the opposite, found difficulty getting them to engage, opened up with inclusion of activities
  - Postvention, a lot of people involved, with different means of communication

### Strategy Goals [60 minutes]

- **Identifying potential goals/strategies & reviewing data for insights into needs**
  - Data Point: 10% of kids are reporting anxiety, depression, thoughts of suicide are high for our youth. (December 2023)
    - **Strategy in place:** Screenagers Screening (film)
      - Tremendous feedback, conversations following the screening with principals and educators on the panel
      - Addressing the influences of **social media** - feels the schools are ready
        - Brand ambassadors - how can we empower the youth to identify & respond?
  - State or regional monitoring efforts of **legislation** & bills coming down the pipe
    - **Suggestion:** Create a hub to capture upcoming legislative efforts that we should be paying attention to or advocating for.
    - Michaela served in a previous capacity where she navigated the legislative session – offered assistance on understanding the process
  - **Older Adults** – prioritizing this population for suicide prevention
    - **Data Source:** Surgeon General Report: [Parents Under Pressure \(hhs.gov\)](https://www.hhs.gov/parents-under-pressure)
    - **Strategy Partner:** Agency for Aging – trained staff but also need to reach their clients
  - **Strategy Partner:** Relationships with NAMI partners
    - Involved with the Shoreline chapter
    - Expanding partnerships; they are very active in the legislation part - they bring items that we should be monitoring back to the coalition
    - Local representatives - having them at the table and creating those connections
  - **Stigma:** The fear of push back from residents to target new populations is hindering efforts to do more.
    - The idea that elementary students aren't in need of mental health programming
      - Reach out to PTOs

- Counselors
  - Some communities are tough to bridge
    - Gizmo Books - potential way to get the conversations started with younger populations
- **Embracing the fear:** Community Conversations
  - Emotions are raw - go into the conversation, focus group or whatever, and letting it unfold naturally
  - It's going to be uncomfortable - embrace it, be authentic
  - Loss survivors were also a voice in that room, making it much more personal.
- **988 Promotion**
  - Success stories
  - Barriers to seeking care (explore further)
  - Youth are more likely to text and it's a subtle way for them to connect - looks more discreet and like normal behaviors
  - Confidentiality and how quick 988 may be too quick to call 911 and have people committed - request data how often is this occurring?
- Connect Care - Insurance
  - **ARPA Funding:** Any sort of social determinant of health – even if you have insurance, undocumented etc. – Funding available for any behavioral health service, substance use treatment or medications, qualifies you - request up to \$10,000 per request.
  - FASD@carelon.com - Family or provider could request this.
    - Easier for the provider to process paperwork
  - Flyer/Handout to share
- Veterans who call 988 need to press 1 - it is transferred to the VA
  - Follow up calls would be offered to the family from the VA suicide prevention team for additional support needs.

#### **Potential Meeting Topics to explore further:**

- Postvention CONNECT Training (new curriculum)
  - Including appropriate activities to offer in lieu of memorialization (Taylor)
- Navigating the System: understanding how mobile crisis works and when to call 911, 211, or 988. (Gerry)
- What resources are being left throughout the region specific to postvention supports? (Kathy strategy – survey to EMS or Gerry insights)
- Cultural Considerations: focus groups with Spanish and other minority communities to understand needs, cultural norms etc. (Rob & Clinton)
- Signage & messaging: expanding 988 and messages of hope throughout the region (Mike Fumiatti)
- Legislative Advocacy: Monitoring the legislative session and lending support for specific bills (Mikhela Hull)
- CT School Education Curriculum (Dept of State Education – minimum requirements for mental health education)
- Screening Tools Exploration: where is screening taking place, what are the referral networks in place.
- Empowering Youth As Brand Ambassadors
- NAMI – Who are they & what role do they play in the region

**Closing** [15 minutes]

- **Next meeting: Tuesday, December 3, 2024, at 10:30 AM via Zoom**
  - 12 sector worksheet (who else should be at the table)
  - 100 cups of coffee (RSAB members to begin meeting with community members/leaders; identify/standardize the questions we want to know)
  - Legislative Session Process Overview (Mikhela helps RSAB understand the timeline and actions we could support)
  - Resource gap analysis (continuum of care) & community mapping (where could we focus efforts in May to reach new audiences)