Minutes
May 5, 2021

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<tr>
<td>Dan Dow</td>
<td>Robert Reyes</td>
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<td>Jim Roberts</td>
<td>Lisa Fraser</td>
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<td>Melinda Sokolowski</td>
<td>Kayla Plourde-Reynolds</td>
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<td>Devin Drake</td>
<td>Mike Hill</td>
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<td>Anne Robin</td>
<td>Ian Parkinson</td>
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<td>Dawn Ortiz-Legg</td>
<td>Jill Bolster-White</td>
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<td>Laurel Weir</td>
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<td>Dr. Kristina Benson</td>
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<td>Belinda Benassi</td>
<td>Cherie Fields</td>
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<td>Jessica Thomas</td>
<td>Mariana Gutierrez</td>
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| Staff:               |                      |
| Linda Belch          | Cherise Day          |
| Laurel Weir          |                      |

| Guests:              |                      |
| Tim Murphy           |                      |
| Dr. Kristina Benson  |                      |
| Belinda Benassi      |                      |
| Jessica Thomas       |                      |

Introductions, Announcements, Critical Issues and Additions to the Agenda:
Dan Dow welcomed Supervisor Dawn Ortiz-Legg as the newest member of the Children’s Services Network.

Public Comments: Anne Robin wants to invite all to attend a virtual Mental Health Town Hall Meeting: “Investing in Youth Mental Health” on May 13, from 6:00pm–7:30pm. Behavior Health is partnering with the Office of Education and you can visit www.slocounty.ca.gov/MayMH for more information.

Action Items:
1. Approval of CSN February 3, 2021 Minutes
   Motion: Mike Hill
   Second: No motions to amend, the minutes were deemed approved.
   Motion Passed: No vote

Presentation: F.O.C.U.S.– Jessica Thomas and Dr. Kristina Benson
F.O.C.U.S. is an acronym for “Focusing on Children Under Stress”, which is a simple communication system designed to help first responders alert schools when a child has been exposed to a traumatic incident. The first responder will send a notification directly to the child’s school district, where it remains confidential, alerting only that the child has experienced a traumatic event. Teachers are then notified of a possible trauma, advising them to observe the child’s behavior and performance. When needed, the teachers will allow homework forgiveness, periods of rest, test postponement, tutoring or make-up opportunities as needed. In addition, they’re advised to monitor nutritional and counseling needs. Please refer to the attached F.O.C.U.S. PowerPoint presentation for full details of the program.

Presentation: Pandemic Impacts to Youth and Families: Melinda Sokolowski and Cherie Fields
This presentation is focused on teen pregnancy trends within San Luis Obispo County from 2018 to 2021. While SLO has seen teen pregnancy trends decrease since 2018, there has been a recent increase of 5.5% in teen pregnancies. Teen parenting referral rates have also seen an increase, from 9.3% in Fiscal Year 19/20 to 14.8% for Fiscal Year 20/21. While overall referrals have decreased during the pandemic, the number of teens who have become pregnant or parenting has somewhat increased, which appeared as the difference in referrals.
The Teen Academic Parenting Program (T.A.P.P.) referrals have increased due to COVID-19 and are notably higher in North and South Counties. Community outreach, specifically with the school district and hospitals, has made eligibility is easier. Current at-risk factors include homeless unaccompanied youth, attendance, and mental health. The Reproductive Health Unit is open with a drive-through clinic, including North and South Counties and via “Telehealth”.

**Information/Discussion Items:** Child Abuse Prevention Plan Update – Lisa Fraser and Linda Belch

Linda reports: Child abuse prevention is multi-layered and involves collaboration with various agencies to create a workable plan for the County. There’s often confusion with who we serve and how Child Welfare referrals come into our agency, so we’ve compiled some data for clarity:

- In 2020 we received a total of 3,124 allegations of child abuse, which translates to 260 per month. Of the referrals received, only 1,683 met the criteria to have an in-person response, which is 53%. And due to criteria, we were only able to respond to half. Of those we responded to, there were 283 who had a substantiated finding, which is 16.8%. The numbers of those we can serve can quickly become very small, since they don’t rise to the permittable intervention services criteria and leaves many families unserved. In addition, domestic violence continues to be one of our top contributing factors, followed by mental health and substance abuse, which all contribute to our ability to serve families. While Child Welfare is a system here to serve, we’re definitely a system of last resort, not prevention, thus we’re often limited due to regulations.

We’re excited to announce that FFPSA, the *Family First Prevention Services Act*, is arriving soon with additional funding opportunities. However, many counties are disappointed by the narrow definition of services the State is taking on eligible children, who will be subject to the “300 petition”. This leads to the very narrow 16.8% of children of which we substantiate the child abuse numbers, leaving many children ineligible and unserved. The Counties as a whole have petitioned the state to broaden the definition, allowing more children to be served under FFPSA. An additional gap was discovered in the doorway to provide services, which will be limited to evidence-based programs that are vetted at the Federal level. In addition, they’ve only selected three programs deemed as evidence-based and approvable:

1. Mental health
2. Substance Abuse
3. Parenting

However, Domestic Violence has been omitted as one of the main contributing factors. If anyone has the opportunity to support adding DV funding, please contact the State Department of Social Services. Dan Dow suggested sending a letter of support on CSN letterhead.

Lisa Fraser reports: Linda and I are here to share important data regarding the Child Welfare Service Response System, specifically recognizing the differing regional needs. We’re also looking at how CWSR is aligned with the Families First Preservation Act, the SB2083 MOU, as well as acknowledging the Family Resource Center for their positive impact on the community. We recognize that Child Welfare Services will be changing within the next 5 years, shifting toward child/family/community wellbeing, focusing on keeping families together.

The office of Child Abuse Prevention, partnering at the State level, is determining funds for prevention services outside of the Families First Preservation Act. Two examples are as follows:

1. Dept. of Developmental Services will propose a budget to include $5.3 million to contract with the Family Resource Center, specifically to implement a “Navigator Model”.
2. From the General Fund, the CA Governor’s Office will offer additional funding of $13 million to support the Family Resource Center, confirming our elevated role in primary prevention.

**Action Item:**

2. CSN to issue a letter requesting FFPSA to allow funds for a Domestic Violence program

**Motion:** Jim Roberts

**Second:** Kayla Plourde-Reynolds

**Motion Passed:** All in favor
**Standing Agenda Item:** Homeless Services for Children and Families – Laurel Weir

The new CA State Homelessness prevention funding has been launched as the “Housing is Key Program”. This rent-relief program provides partial funding for back rent owed by households in CA. Landlords who want to participate must agree to forgive 20% of back-rent owed, receiving 80% of the back-rent owed. If landlords are unwilling to participate, tenants can receive 25% of the back-rent owed, which is the amount they’re liable. In addition, tenants would receive assistance with future payments. Both renters and landlords can visit the CA COVID-19 Rent Relief at CA.gov, for additional information. Unfortunately, landlords cannot take part in the program if renters don’t agree to participate. As of April 26, 2021, San Luis Obispo Co. had 117 completed applications requesting a total of $1.573 million, with an additional 155 applications in progress. Tenants needing help with their application can call 1-833-687-0967 to set up an appointment with a local participating agency.

The State of CA is working on new data system for the Continuum of Care (COC) program for the homeless. In SLO Co., data is collected from CAPSLO, 5-Cities Homeless Coalition, ECHO and Transitions Mental Health Association. The State has asked for all COC programs to upload their data into the State-wide system in order to omit duplication and create a more exact number of people experiencing homelessness. The program is termed “HDIS”, and various information may be obtained by clicking into the site, such as demographics, sorted by County. Due to COVID-19, the shelters had a sharp decline in beds, decreasing the number of families accessing the shelters. This is possibly due to families doubling-up during the pandemic. Laurel provided the following links for additional information:
1. [https://www.bcsh.ca.gov/hcfc/hdis.html](https://www.bcsh.ca.gov/hcfc/hdis.html)
2. [https://housing.ca.gov/](https://housing.ca.gov/)
3. [https://housing.ca.gov/covid_rr/partner_resources.html](https://housing.ca.gov/covid_rr/partner_resources.html).

In addition, the project Home Key site in Paso Robles is open as emergency shelter for individuals and families, seeing higher number of families, since singles were accessing the eating program. Can serve up to 50 households per night.

- A discussion ensued regarding the possibility of Camp Roberts housing unaccompanied homeless juveniles entering the US illegally and how it might affect SLO Co. with regards to Law Enforcement, DSS, Probation, etc. More information, clarification and confirmation are needed before any decisions are made.

**Standing Agenda Item:** SLO County CSEC Collaborative – Linda Belch

CSEC is continuing to serve youth, with concern that they’re not receiving as many referrals. There was 1 new referral with 2 active Child Welfare cases, identified as CSEC at-risk youth. Programmatically, CSEC is collaborating with the Office of Education to provide grade potential tutoring and cyber-safety, while also working with the Family Care Network to create a youth partner program, targeting youth as low as 4th grade, providing academic and social well-being. They’re expanding the parent-coaching program for Foster Parents, providing education and support to homes who have high-risk teens and adolescents. There are several upcoming training opportunities, which include The West Coast Children’s Center, who will be launching a virtual CSEC 101 and 102 training in August. In addition, the “Every survivor in the Center” webinar series is now being offered by Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties. This series on human trafficking focuses on how it predominantly impacts black, indigenous and people of color, providing tools to community partners and service providers, as they take a deep dive into human trafficking in all forms.

**Standing Agenda Item:** AB 2083 Report – Linda Belch

The AB2083 MOU has been finalized and is being circulated for signatures. The AB2083 team has selected a new name, “The System of Care Inter-Agency Team” or SOCIT, which is comprised of our interagency partners. The project for joint training is “Child Welfare” and the departments selected for joint training are Behavioral Health, Probation and Child Welfare. They will be exploring the role of each agency and how we might work best together. In addition, “Serving the Community” will focus on common language and how to communicate effectively.
Standing Agenda Item: Child Advocacy Center of SLO County – Lisa Fraser
Lisa wants to thank Terry O'Farrell for his leadership with the steering team for CAIT, the Child Abuse Interview Team, as well as SART, the Suspected Abuse Response Team Forensic Medical Examinations, by helping them to work in cooperation with each other and our Family Advocate. We’re also working closely with RISE, to assure youths coming through this process are receiving the services they need.

Standing Agenda Item: Board “Round Table”

1. Lisa Fraser: ACES is hosting “Bridges to Resilience”, focusing on bringing the medical community and community resources together. This is a live virtual event, and you may attend by clicking the following link: https://www.bridgestoresilience.com/.

Future Agenda Items:
None

Adjournment:
Meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm

Next Meeting:
August 4, 2021
FOCUS
Focus On Children Under Stress

KRISTINA BENSON, ED.D / SHANDON JOINT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
JESSICA THOMAS / SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION
Ten Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

What Might You Notice?

Physical Health

School/Learning

Emotional Health

Peer/Family Relationship


Resilience

Caring relationships with trusted adults

Teaching resilience through skill-building

Reduced effects of trauma and stress and healthier outcomes for our students

FOCUS Program Overview

Why:
► Trauma impacts a child’s ability to learn, meet behavioral expectations and have healthy relationships
► Experiencing a traumatic experience can have immediate effects on a child
► Often times we have no idea a child has been involved in an incident

What:
► FOCUS is a communication system designed to notify schools when a student is exposed to a traumatic incident
FOCUS Program Overview

How:

▸ The process has evolved from pen to paper to a phone application (app) submission.
▸ When a first responder encounters a child during an incident they send a FOCUS notification via the app.
▸ Once they hit submit, the notification goes directly to the designated person(s) at the child’s district and school.
▸ This simple “FOCUS Notification” alerts the district / school that this child may have been exposed to a traumatic incident.
▸ No specific details about the incident are given, just one simple request: To focus on the child and handle them with care.
▸ The designated school official notifies other staff as appropriate.
▸ Other staff can respond with
  ▸ closer monitoring of the student
  ▸ heightened compassion and patience
  ▸ readiness to refer for additional supports
Suggested Education Protocol, Initial

- Provide trauma-sensitive training to all staff
- School districts and schools should identify or create an email address specifically designated to receive FOCUS Notifications
  - Accessible by multiple designated staff (i.e. Superintendent, Principal, or counselor), ideally with one primary contact and two backup staff
- The school designee shares the FOCUS Notification with the appropriate teacher(s) and other staff, following a pre-planned process
Suggested Education Protocol, Follow-up

- Teachers will observe the child’s behavior and academic performance and utilize trauma sensitive interventions as deemed appropriate.
- Examples for initial response:
  - Homework forgiveness, leniency
  - Allowed to rest at nurse’s office
  - Postponing test
  - Providing tutoring or make-up opportunities
  - Monitoring child’s nutritional needs
- If the child exhibits problems (emotional/behavioral/academic/etc.), the child should be referred for additional interventions
  - Counseling support, assessment
  - Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools
Thank you!

If you have any further questions:
Kristina Benson
Jessica Thomas

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(805) 610-9625