

RECOVERY AROUND THE SOUND

North Sound Mental Health Administration



June 2013



Joe's Corner

Inside this issue:

- Joe's Corner
- Island County School-Based Mental Health Program
- Canoe Journey ~Life's Journey

Visit Us:

<http://www.nsmha.org>

Contact Us:

aroundthesound@nsmha.org

North Sound Mental
Health Administration
117 N 1st St Ste 8
Mt Vernon, WA 98273

360.416.7013
800.684.3555

Fax: 360-416-7017

There were 5 of them seated around the table, leaning over in intense discussion, scribbling ideas on post-it notes and large sheets of flip chart paper.

There was a parent, a school counselor, a mental health professional, a children's advocate, and a county human services administrator. Many different disciplines and different viewpoints; but one goal – how to improve public supports to children and families with mental health service needs. The NSMHA Children's Mental Health Coordinator, Julie de Losada, moved from table to table harvesting the post-it notes and prompting the discussion with more questions. Arrayed along the walls of the meeting room was a panoply of flip charts festooned with those brightly colored post-it notes summarizing some of the challenges families face in accessing services. Soon the groups would be asked to brainstorm creative ways of addressing those challenges. In a period of just a few hours, the outlines of a plan to improve mental health services to children would begin to emerge.

Over the last several months, NSMHA has co-hosted with our county human service agencies children's behavioral

health forums called "Have Your Say Cafes". Using a method of interactive group forums called "World Cafes", participants have the opportunity to address multiple issues and synthesize key findings and recommendations within a very short period of time. NSMHA is using the forums to get broad community input into the design of our planned expansion of intensive Children's Mental Health Services. Although the state is expanding intensive children's mental health services in response to a statewide lawsuit, NSMHA is taking the opportunity for expansion to better address the unique needs of families in each of our diverse communities throughout the region. To date, we have held forums in Everett, Monroe, Darrington, Coupeville, and Friday Harbor. A final forum is planned to be held in Bellingham on June 3. Over 132 persons have participated plus another 165 people have provided input via an on-line survey. Some clear themes have emerged, that will guide our development of the next round of RFPs for intensive children's mental health services. These include: providing a single point of access for families needing

help; providing better access to specialty services such as psychiatry and special education services; making outpatient service more accessible in rural communities; improving access to services for working families by expanding the availability of appointments in evenings; and improving the communication and coordination between the multiple organizations who may be involved with the same family. Another common theme that has emerged is that families and even other child serving professionals may not be aware of the full array of services in their own community or how to navigate through the complicated set of eligibility requirements to access these services. Clearly, in our design of children's mental health services, we need to pay more attention to a "family-friendly" access point and do a better job of marketing the services. One of the best ways to help families access services is to



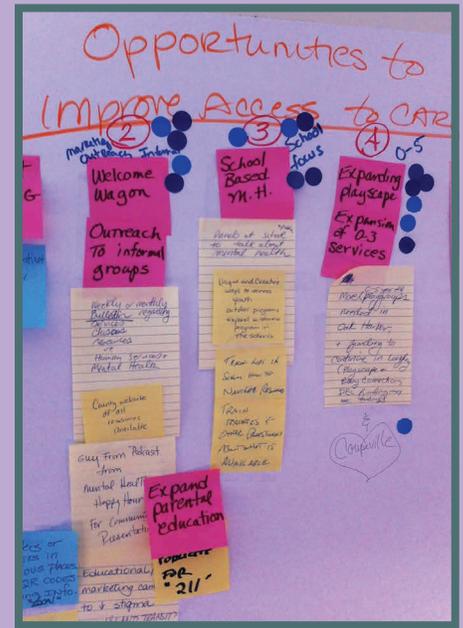
(Continued from page 1)
 take the services to where children and families are – in the schools. We have included in this newsletter one such example of comprehensive school based services being provided through a partnership with Island County Human Services and 4 Island County School Districts. NSMHA is currently in the process of providing new funding for school based mental health services through contracts we are developing with the Northwest Educational Services District and the “Center for Human Services”. This will allow us to begin using Medicaid dollars to fund school based or school connected services throughout the five counties of the North Sound region.

Investing in better supports for our children is one of the most important –

and effective – social service investments we can make. During the month of May, the national “Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration” [SAMHSA] has launched a “Caring for Every Child’s Mental Health” public awareness effort. The goal of the effort is to stimulate support for a comprehensive system of care approach to children’s mental health services. Our joint effort with our county human service agencies to expand intensive children’s mental health services in a way that is responsive to local community needs is our way of advancing this effort.

For more information on the SAMHSA children’s mental health public education campaign, visit:

<http://www.samhsa.gov/children/index.asp>



Island County School-Based Mental Health Program

Jackie Henderson, Island County Human Services

The Island County School Based Mental Health Program is an exciting collaboration between the four school districts and Island County Human Services. The model is based on a model of school social work found in other areas of the country. It is not a mental health treatment program; it emphasizes prevention and intervention through short term individual, family and group counseling, consultation, education and case management.

Island County has four unique school districts that require individualized planning with a team of administrators, school district counselors and county counselors to create a school based program that looks different in each district and school. This unique collaboration that focuses on the needs of each school is what makes this program so successful. It has been described by many as one of the best team efforts they have ever been involved with.

Eight Island County counselors provide services in fourteen Island County schools and the Juvenile Detention

Center. This year we expanded services to include an early childhood mental health program to serve identified children and families even before they enter school. Individual and group supervision and trainings for the counselors provide the necessary support to do the work in a way that encourages autonomy while also being a part of a team with a larger mission.

Counselors typically create classroom presentations or work in small groups to provide education and support to students with issues such as bullying, relationships, stress management and emotion regulation. In the districts where we serve many Navy families, we have a strong partnership with the Family Service Center and the Navy School Liaison. Many of our staff are trained and understand the impact of the deployment cycle on children and families. The program includes a crisis response plan that enables effective response to crises around the district. There is an understanding between districts that the counselors can be pulled away from their regular assign-

ments at any time to handle a crisis.

The School Based Mental Health Program provides a safe place for children, youth, and families to express their concerns and get support and tools for dealing with life challenges. Our passionate and dedicated counselors provide thousands of hours of services each school year. We believe we are making a difference in the lives of families in Island County and helping to build a better future.



Canoe Journey ~ Life's Journey 13th Annual Tribal Mental Health Conference

Angela Fraser-Powell, NSMHA



On May 14th & 15th, North Sound Mental Health Administration once again had the honor to collaborate with the North Sound Tribes to co-host the 13th annual Tribal Mental Health Conference held at the Skagit Resort in Bow, WA. This year's conference, entitled "Canoe Journey, Life's Journey", focused largely on treatment, healing, and recovery themes built around the concept of the Canoe Journey. The revival of traditional Native American practices using the Canoe Journey were seen as a metaphor for Life's Journey, where struggles and pain may be experienced, but through the community of the Canoe, healing and growth also take place.

The first day opened with, keynote speaker Diane Vendiola, a Swinomish Tribal Community elder, who presented a rich history of tribal mental health along with current programming and service provisions for Skagit County tribes. The keynote presentation was followed by four breakout sessions that repeated in the afternoon to give participants expanded opportunities to select sessions they wished to attend. Morgan Fawcett graciously shared

stories and knowledge regarding Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and the effects on tribal youth and families. He passionately spoke of his founding of the organization called "One Heart Creations" to help raise awareness about FASD. The "Two-Spirit People" session focused on the LGBTQ tribal community. Lori Hartelius and Brenda Newell delivered concentrated knowledge regarding struggles and treatment of the two-spirit

people and provided resources for participants to utilize in their work. Much was learned in the session entitled "Medication Assisted Treatment – Understanding Medications & Their Usefulness with Treatment" by Matt Magrath and Bill Dickinson. The discussion centered on the importance of medication treatment as well as providing information to tribal mental health professionals on a wider array of medication options currently available. Lastly, "Drug Trafficking Trends" with presenters Steve Freng, Bill Santos and Mark Richardson provided information on how and where certain drugs move through Washington, and focused on the impact of these drugs on the tribes. The day ended with a panel presentation "Delivering Mental Health Service in Indian Country" with June La Marr, Yoli Quevedo, Lisa Hade, Alison Bowen and Wendy Hartley that covered a wide variety of available resources for persons grappling with chemical

dependency and mental health concerns.

On the second day, Marilyn Bard of the Quinault Nation, gave a stirring and resonant presentation on the beginnings of the annual Canoe Journey, a traditional method of transportation revived in 1989 at an event entitled "Paddle to Seattle". She spoke eloquently of the rich cultural history associated with the practice of building the canoes and embarking on the canoe journey itself. Conference participants enjoyed a documentary "Canoe Way, The Sacred Journey" as well as a panel of various tribal members, Brian Porter, Eric Day, Aurelia Washington and others, who have participated in the journey, sharing personal stories of strife and healing.

Thanks to Rudy Vendiola for lending his gifts as emcee and to Michael Vendiola for moderating the Canoe Journey panel. Further thanks to all the conference presenters for sharing their knowledge and stories. And many thanks to the tribal members of the NSMHA Tribal Committee for their work in putting together another successful Tribal Conference.

