



Success Partnership building Success Families

Children's Mental Health Work Group

Tuesday, February 2, 2021

Meeting Minutes

Lanette Gorder welcomed everyone to the meeting, and all shared one good thing. The agenda was approved by consensus as presented. January 5, 2021 meeting minutes were approved. (Britni Joubert/Jennifer Beilke)

Presentation: Lori Vigesaa, Therapeutic Services Agency, Inc.

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Lori shared the following information on a grant-funded program that Therapeutic Services Agency received from the MN Department of Health to provide mental health services to children who are deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing:

- In its fifth year, the agency is providing culturally affirmative, linguistically specific mental health services to children and adolescents.
- They provide various services, including diagnostic assessments, special assessments, individual therapy, psychotherapy to families of deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing children, psychoeducation to families and educational staff.
- Funding for the program comes from the grant for underinsured or uninsured, private insurance plans, Medical Assistance and PMAPs. No one has turned away for lack of funding source.
- The grant also covers expenses not covered by insurance, including travel for the staff, interpreters, meetings, and presentations such as this one.
- Two programs that they also work with that are not grant related include KODAs (kids of Deaf Adults) and CODAs (children of deaf parents)
- All therapists working with the grant program are fluent in American Sign Language (ASL), or ASL is their native language. The staff has done extensive research in working with this population or has personal experience in hearing loss.
- Evidence-based programs and methods are used to be successful with this population of children and families. Appropriate assessments are completed. Treatment plans are very individualized and include modified interventions when needed. Child/family and therapist complete a workbook on the use of therapy before starting services
- Deafness usually is only one generation deep. Two percent of children diagnosed as deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing receive appropriate treatment. These children are three to five times greater risk of SMI/SED. While their use of alcohol and marijuana substances is at the same rate as their peers, their use is heavier. 65% of D/DB/HH female adolescents have suicide ideation; 30% have seriously considered suicide; 50% have been victims of sexual abuse; 42% victims of physical abuse; and 26% victims of neglect.
- Implications of living with this disability include bullying three to five more times than a typical peer, speech issues, language deprivation, reduced academic achievement, social isolation, low self-concept, identity confusion (where do I fit in), and limited vocational opportunities.

- Anxiety and depression are the most common mental health diagnoses adolescents that qualify under the deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing diagnosis experience. Children are often misdiagnosed with ADHD and Autism.
- Lori is available to do presentations on agency programs, educational presentations on working with this population, clinical consultation with mental health agencies and schools, resources, and referrals.

Agency Updates:

Head Start: Jennifer Beilke reported that they are mid-year into their programming. They are working on the transition to kindergarten for their four-year-old and five-year-old students. Information on the children is shared with the new school district by permission of the parent. Recruiting for their program is ongoing, with a waiting list developed in case a family drops out of the program can be filled immediately. School programming is provided in-person for some children and virtually for others. Home visiting programs are provided virtually at this time.

Mobile Crisis Response Program: Leslie Funk reported that the program had hired two additional professionals to work with the program. There were 87 phone supports in January, 58 stabilizations (7 in Clay County), and 36 dispatches (2 children, five adults in Clay County).

Jenna Kahly, Clay County Commissioner, shared that Governor Walz's budget proposal included additional funds in children's mental health funds and reduced funds for adult mental health programs.

Carolyn shared a legislative town hall featuring our three local legislators, Representative Keeler, Representative Marquart, and Senator Eken, held on Sunday, January 31. The live event through Facebook was well attended. The legislators hope to offer a virtual town hall meeting monthly. Carolyn will share upcoming events with this group.

Commented [CS1]:

Next meeting: Tuesday, March 2, 2021 1pm – 2:30pm