

**TNP Coalition Meeting
Minutes of Meeting Held 2/22/23 Online**

Present: AnaVivian Estrella (City of Norwalk - Human Services Director); LaToya Fernandez (City of Norwalk - Chief DEI officer); Katie Gallo (Daydream Communications, Norwalk Parent); Jodi Giorlando (CT Counseling Centers); Jahliah Green & Kelley Tomlinson (Norwalk Health Department); Lisa Gregory (Norwalk Hospital - CCT); Nicole Hampton, (CPRS, RCP, Woman in Recovery and parent); Libby Huerta (Norwalk Community Health Center); Ginger Katz (Courage to Speak Foundation); Dale Kesten, (CT Renaissance); Jim Martinez (Norwalk Public Schools); Anamilena Moreno & Denique Weidema-Lewis (Norwalk ACTS); Niana Nieves (Family & Children's Agency); Vicki Oatis (Norwalk Public Library); Diana Revolus (City Council); Diamond Sead (Human Services Council / school-based health centers & parent); Tory Sullivan (Brien McMahon); David Walencyk (Director, Norwalk Youth Services); Margaret Watt (Positive Directions & parent); Nina Chanana (TNP Project evaluator Evaluator); Ben Fitzgerald (AmeriCorps member with TNP)

1. Introductions of New Participants

- a. LaToya Fernandez, City's new Chief DEI Officer
- b. Dale Kesten, new LADC, LCSW at CT Renaissance, Chief Clinical Officer - CT Ren provides psych services, MH and SUD, IOP for adolescents and adults, relapse prevention, anger management, etc. takes Medicaid and does not have waiting list

2. Community Announcements

- a. The regional health depts are presenting a mental health webinar on 3/2 6-7:30pm live or online - ensuring emotional health & resilience for adolescents and adults with a variety of speakers - please share the flyer
- b. Norwalk Mentoring Program is having an informational program at NHS auditorium tonight 2/22 7-8pm

3. Coalition Activity Update

- a. Have presented survey data to: Board of Education, Principals, Asst Principals, NHMS staff, health teachers
- b. Held two Freshman Forums with great partnership - see summary and student videos at www.thenorwalkpartnership.org/post/norwalk-s-first-freshman-forums-videos-results
- c. Provided Hidden in Plain Sight awareness program at BMHS
- d. Provided overdose awareness/Narcan trainings at Winston Prep and NCC (3 trainings)

- e. Provided QPR suicide prevention training to two Health 2 classes at CGS
- f. Scheduled upcoming presentations at NPS Family Center (Courageous Parenting 101 in English and Spanish, Spanish Freshman Forum), Norwalk Mentoring Program, Keystone House, WRMS, Norwalk ACTS, NHS Health classes
- g. Revisited alcohol retailers
- h. Working with student clubs to present information to peers
- i. Cannabis bills this week - see blog post at <https://www.thenorwalkpartnership.org/post/cannabis-advocacy-alert> -
 - i. ACTION: TNP will send reminder with additional info on how to testify.

4. Featured Initiatives

- a. Teen Nights Out - AnaVivian Estrella: Community Services interested in using ARPA funds to support this initiative through TNP since it is already a partnership collaboration with multiple partners at the table. Use the money to leverage deals with business partners. Create safe spaces for teens to go on a regular basis - healthy prosocial, substance free activities. Next step is proposal to Common Council.
 - i. ACTION: To participate in planning, contact Margaret at mwatt@positivedirections.org or Dayna dmacari@positivedirections.org to help plan
- b. NorWALK for Mental Health (awareness walk and resource fair) - Denique Weidema-Lewis: We're planning year 2 of our community awareness raising walk and wellness fair. VIRTUAL Initial planning meeting- March 1, 4:00-4:45pm. Date for event: Saturday, May 6th morning. Last year we brought out over 200 folks to the Town Green and provided resources through many community partners during the fair as well as trainings and events throughout May for Mental Health Awareness Month.
 - i. ACTION: To join planning, contact Denique at: dlewis@norwalkacts.org
 - ii. ACTION: Save the date for the event on May 6th and start putting together a walk team, planning to have a resource table

5. NPS Budget

- a. In Jim's absence, Margaret noted that the City is holding budget hearings. Opportunity to comment on the NPS budget allocations; the City is proposing to give the schools less than they asked for. See reports in Nancy on Norwalk

- b. ACTION: Budget hearing before the Finance Committee coming up 2/23/23 at 6:30pm at City Hall. See info at <https://www.nancyonnorwalk.com/category/education-beat/> and <https://www.norwalkparents.org/budgets>

6. Break-Out Discussion of Survey Results

- a. Top findings cited as good news:
 - i. Depression rates decreasing
 - ii. Anxiety, suicidal ideation rates lower than last year
 - iii. Happy to see that drug use is down- lowest community members have seen. Curious about underlying causes
 - iv. Surprised that sexuality results were low
- b. Top findings cited as concerns:
 - i. Suicide attempt rates increased
 - ii. Suicidal ideation hasn't dropped much and is still too significant
 - iii. High anxiety and how it's tied to school
 - iv. # of youth that aren't having conversations about sex
 - v. # of kids experiencing anxiety/depression/SI
 - vi. Group of youth reporting that they don't have a peer/trusted adult
 - vii. Youth reporting that they don't have an extracurricular activity
 - viii. LGBTQ students, female students, students of color, special education students affected disproportionately
- c. Most relevant for the community you work with or sector you represent:
 - i. Focus on mental health is highly needed and relevant to JRB
 - ii. Creating youth spaces at city level (mayor's youth council, youth commission, youth leadership boards)
 - iii. Reporting the questions regarding health and sexuality to community providers and sbhc/nurses
 - iv. Zip codes provide relevant context for results
 - v. Explain validity of data to partners
 - vi. All mental health issues leading to substance use in adults. Prevention. Anything that can help decrease substance misuse later in life.
 - vii. Creating framework for youth to discuss mental illness
 - viii. Library will assemble resources, include programming, provide space for events

- ix. Health Department: Engage with community partners, share data, show need to disseminate information
- x. Everything: all sectors must collaborate as a coalition
- d. Actionable steps that TNP can take related to the survey findings:
 - i. Youth Conversations (model after Darien Youth Community Conversations)- More conversations with youth- what is working? Apply more attention to those efforts that are working.
 - ii. Community partners (NPS, city communications, health department, prevention organizations, etc) should collaborate on communications strategy
 - iii. Engaging youth from Norwalk Strong Clubs and other youth groups in schools & in city in planning work
 - iv. Present results of survey back to youth, continue to explain why they're taking it - Students opinions on survey construction
 - v. Safe spaces, changes the patterns (changing norms)
 - vi. Look more into the bills that will continue to support Mental Health in schools- senate bill 2
 - vii. Opiate money should go back to the schools- safe drug free schools
 - viii. Drug and substance free graduation activities
- e. ACTION: As homework for next month, everyone is asked to bring the findings back to your organization or sector and identify actions you would like to take.