

**TNP Coalition Meeting Minutes**  
**March 29, 2023**  
**At Norwalk Public Library**

**Present:** Daniella Arias (The Hub); Tonia Dinbo (HSC); AnaVivian Estrella (City of Norwalk - Human Services Director); Katie Gallo (Daydream Communications, Norwalk Parent); Jodi Giorlando & Denise (CT Counseling Centers); Brian Weeks & Jahliah Green (Norwalk Health Dept); Lisa Gregory & Jihana Quintanilla (Norwalk Hospital - CCT); Nicole Hampton, (CPRS, RCP, Woman in Recovery and parent); Ginger Katz (Courage to Speak Foundation); Jim Martinez (Norwalk Public Schools); Anamilena Moreno (Norwalk ACTS); Dale Kesten (CT Renaissance); Jess Vivenzio (Family & Children's Agency); Dajuan Wiggins (Youth Business Initiative); Diamond Sead (HSC & parent); Ben Fitzgerald (AmeriCorps member & PTECH '21); Margaret Watt (Positive Directions & parent); Nina Chanana (TNP Project evaluator Evaluator)

**1. Welcome/Introductions**

- a. New members introduced themselves: Tonia Dinbo, Denise, Dale Kesten, Jessica Vivenzio, Jihana Quintanilla
- b. Leadership team members identified themselves.

**2. Coalition updates**

- a. Members reported back on how their organizations plan to use our 2022 Norwalk Youth Survey results (presented in January 2023).
  - i. Diamond is organizing a meeting for Margaret or Nina to present the youth data (e.g. data on sexual activity) to nurses & school-based health center staff.
  - ii. Anamilena had student advocates look through data to gain a youth perspective on the results.
  - iii. The Norwalk Strong Clubs created announcements/flyers to share youth survey data for National Drug & Alcohol Facts Week. They plan to create content to display in the school cafeterias.
  - iv. Margaret, Dayna, and Ben delivered a Hidden in Plain Sight presentation at WRMS where they emphasized our local data.

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**About Us:** Our coalition seeks diverse representation from the many cultures and groups that make up Norwalk, including youth and families, individuals in recovery, schools, community and volunteer groups, municipal services, business, faith-based groups, treatment providers, law enforcement & others. We are funded by the federal **Drug-Free Communities** grant to **Positive Directions** and the state's **Local Prevention Council** grant to the **Human Services Council**.

- v. Jim shared that the city is using the youth survey results for intervention planning. NPS is using it for their gender policy for LGBTQ+ population, given its higher risk rates. School officials reference youth survey data frequently throughout this work.
- vi. Dale reminded everyone of CT Renaissance’s adolescent IOP, which could address the mental health issues addressed in the survey.
  - 1. Margaret identified Norwalk Hospital and Turnbridge as other new adolescent IOPs
- b. AnaVivian shared that funding for our Teen Nights Out initiative (\$50,000) was unanimously approved at the Common Council meeting.
  - i. We have already identified the first two Teen Nights Out for April. We are hosting a youth planning meeting at “The Hive” this Friday to gather teen input into other events and identify teens who want to be a regular part of the planning team.
  - ii. Dajuan asked whether TNO serves middle schoolers. Margaret explained that TNP plans to primarily serve high schoolers, based on their higher risks (identified in our survey). AnaVivian clarified that the verbiage is open to permit middle school programming, but someone would need to lead a middle school-specific TNO initiative. Diamond mentioned past discussions of having one or two middle school-specific events mixed in with high school events.
  - iii. Jessica asked if there was a specific location for events. Margaret said that the programs would be held in different locations to attract different student populations.
  - iv. Dale suggested emphasizing the difference between tweens and teens in our advertising.
- c. Anamilena shared that Riverbrook YMCA is collaborating with us on the NorWALK for Mental Health. This year’s event will again feature an awareness walk along with a wellness fair. It is scheduled for Saturday May 6th, 9AM-12PM, raindate Saturday May 13th. Providers are asked to arrive by 8:30AM. The event will serve both youth and adults and is based on the Eight Dimensions of Wellness.
  - i. Diamond emphasized that we should include as many Norwalk organizations as possible to show unity. Margaret added that we will be doing related mental health/substance misuse programming for the entire month; Denique is organizing a calendar of events.
  - ii. To have a table at the event or host a program during May, let Denique know:  
[dlewis@norwalkacts.org](mailto:dlewis@norwalkacts.org)

- d. Margaret discussed upcoming parent/community education programs being offered by TNP coalition members & flyers were shared. These include:
  - i. Power of Parents: Half-hour online presentation about drunk driving delivered by MADD for TNP on Apr 24, 2023
  - ii. Today's Marijuana: What Families Should Know - presented by Positive Directions on April 26, held at the Norwalk Public Library
  - iii. Ben is conducting two Narcan trainings: one at Positive Directions and another for CT Counseling. Dale asked whether community members could obtain free Narcan kits. Margaret recommended that his clients attend Ben's training (April 21st) and connected him to Daniella at The Hub.
  - iv. Ginger is delivering Courageous Parenting 101 in English in April and in Spanish in May.
  - v. Positive Directions and YBI are restarting a new free 10-week support group for high school aged boys on April 19. HSC is continuing to offer the SMART Recovery support group for teen boys & girls.
  - vi. Positive Directions offers an online stress management group for high schoolers every Wednesday.

3. **Featured presentation & discussion:** Emergency Room visits by Norwalk residents due to substance misuse (Brian Weeks, Norwalk Health Dept).

- a. Brian presented a deep dive into the data; please see attached slideshow.
- b. Brian offered to add coalition members to the ODMAP alert system, which notifies members about upticks in the county's OD rate

4. **Upcoming events & activities**

- a. Spanish forum on Mental Health & Substance Use, 3/31, 5-7pm at NPS Family Center
- b. Hidden in Plain Sight, 4/3 (English) and 4/19 (Spanish) at Ben Franklin School
- c. Courageous Parenting 101, 4/20 5pm (English) and 5/25 5pm (Spanish) at NPS Family Center
- d. Overdose awareness + Narcan training, 4/21, 4-5pm at Positive Directions
- e. What families should know about marijuana in CT, 4/26, 7pm, at Norwalk Public Library
- f. 2nd annual NorWALK for Mental Health, 5/6/23 on Town Green (rain date 5/13)

### **ACTION STEPS:**

1. **Everyone** should focus on data about transgender populations, which our youth survey showed were at a higher risk
2. **Coalition members** should promote Teen Nights Out by posting TNO flyers, display lawn signs, and speak to teens you work with, particularly those you feel can benefit from supervised social events.
3. **Coalition members** who have been background-checked are encouraged to volunteer as chaperones for Teen Nights Out.
4. **Coalition members** should notify Margaret or Anamilena if you or someone you know offers an activity related to the eight dimensions of wellness that they would like to provide at the WALK event. Also reach out if you're interested in soliciting donations for the raffle or helping with planning in some other way.