



Mission: Prevent and reduce youth substance use and abuse in the communities of Madison, Chatham Borough and Chatham Township through collaboration, education and community-wide change.

Madison Chatham Coalition Membership Meeting

October 15, 2024- 9:30 am In-Person/Hybrid Meeting

Meeting Minutes/Summary

Attendees:

Allison Bardon (MCC director), Vicky Bukey (PCP), Samantha Dooley (Healthcare), Sue Heffernan (parent), Alex Mandala (CMS SAC), Kathy Martini (YMCA), Christine McIntyre (PCP), Diana Russo (MHS SAC), Gabe Suarez (MCC staff), Ken Shannon (MPD), Det. Fin (MPD), Rozella Clyde

9:30 Meeting is called to order (Allison Bardon)

- Allison opens the meeting and thanks everyone for coming.
- She explains that sector spotlight is back with Samantha Dooley, who is a LCSW with the Morris County Sexual Trauma Center, and we are very happy to have her here to speak to us. Then, we will do MCC updates and Sue Heffernan will speak about a project she has recently been working on.
- Allison also mentions that she wants to take time to celebrate year 7 and acknowledge the most successful year yet. She is trying to be mindful of that when moving onto year 8.

9:32 Sector Spotlight- Samantha Dooley (Morris County Sexual Trauma Center)

- Samantha thanks MCC for having her here to speak. She explains she works for the Morris County Sexual Trauma Center under Atlantic Health. Sam adds that she does group and individual therapy and also educational outreach and prevention efforts. She has slides to share with the group but also wants to have an interactive conversation throughout the meeting.
- There is a sexual violence support program in every county of New Jersey and the goal is that every person has services and support 24 hours a day no matter where they live. The services are completely free and confidential. They service people who are 13 and older who live in Morris County.
- She also mentions that talking about sexual violence can be hard and she encourages everyone to do whatever they feel comfortable with during this presentation.
- They offer individual counseling that does not require a referral. It is short-term individual counseling that goes for 12-24 weeks typically. They also offer group therapy which has a weekly support group, family and friends support group, LGBTQ+ support groups, and creative expressions group.
- There is also a 24/7 Hotline that has emotional support, crisis support, and resources/information available for whoever needs it. This can be to help someone who had a nightmare, watched something on the news, or saw a movie that triggered them. They also offer 24/7 legal and forensic exam accompaniment. This gives someone a partner to go to the police station, court, or the hospital with if they want support.
- *A member asks if the court service is new to the program.* Sam responds that this is new but there is a bigger need for it now since the new protective order laws in New Jersey and there will likely be more people going to court that may want assistance.

- *Another member asks how large the staff is.* She replies that there are only four of them. One of them only does clinical work which helps in having no wait list. There is a program director, volunteer programming, and then the outreach coordinator. She adds that it is nice to fall under Atlantic Health Behavioral Center because if someone needs more intensive assistance, they are able to access that.
- *A member asks if they connect or communicate with the other NJ county centers.* Sam explains that the only thing is referrals, like if someone calls from a different county they will refer them to the other county. They are not able to collaborate as much because of grant funding and restrictions with that.
- *Another member asks how they are funded.* Sam shares that they are not funded by Atlantic Health at all. They receive their funding from the Department of Children and Families through the Division of Women.
- Sam talks about community education that focuses on prevention. They speak to youth about healthy relationships, sexual violence, consent, and sexual intimacy. They also go to organizations to give presentations like this one or talk about trauma informed care with healthcare and law enforcement workers. They also have a sexual violence prevention coalition that works on community collaboration and prevention.
- They also work as part of the sexual assault response team for Morris County. This includes law enforcement, forensic nurse, and a confidential sexual violence advocate. The services for SART are for people over the age of 13, under 13 goes to the child advocacy center. They can receive an exam within a week of the incident occurring. They can go to a police station, hospital, or call the hotline for assistance. It is a free exam to treat survivors and collect evidence if the person wants to report to law enforcement. In New Jersey, evidence can be held for up to 20 years, so a survivor can decide to go to law enforcement anytime within those 20 years. This gives the person the time to decide what they want to do.
- Sam defines sexual violence as any unwanted sexual contact which can include words or actions of a sexual nature. This can include sexual harassment, abuse, trafficking, exploitation, or any unwanted contact. In the US, 44% of women and 25% of men have reported some form of sexual violence in their life. Most times it is by someone they know and their first experience of it is between 11-25. Most people do not report sexual violence.
- *A member asks if they have a language service for anyone that needs assistance that does not speak English.* Sam shares that they have a 24-hour language hotline and that is also available at the hospital.
- Sam moves on to talk about sexual violence at intersections. Women with disabilities are affected 2x as much and 86% of incarcerated women are survivors of sexual violence. About 50% of transgender women experience sexual violence in their lifetime and 6 in 10 women who have immigrated experience sexual violence. *A member asks if there are specific disabilities or if it is just a general number.* Sam responds that it is all disabilities, but men that are deaf are extremely high risk for sexual violence. This goes to show that people that intend to cause harm exploit disabilities.
- A member asks Sam if she knows if schools are talking about bodily autonomy and sexual violence. Sam tells them that in New Jersey, there is Aaron's Law which mandates that schools talk about domestic violence and sexual abuse. However, it is up to the schools since they are not being very monitored and it is up to them how it is carried out. It is also complicated because it means asking a health and wellness teacher to have hard conversations that they might not be trained to have. There are some schools that prioritize this education while others do not.
- Sam shares that we all play a part in ending sexual violence. Survivors are never at fault for what has happened to them and as a society, we need to understand this and destigmatize it. This stigma often causes survivors to feel additional guilt and shame.

- She moves on to discuss the connection between sexual violence and substance use. Someone who is dealing with substance use and it may make them more vulnerable to experiencing sexual violence. People who cause harm prey on people with vulnerabilities.
- Sam continues by explaining that substance use is a risk factor for experiencing it but also for perpetrating it. This can create a really difficult cycle for people, which Sam explains brings a lot of people shame. Many people she works with wonder why this keeps happening to them, and they have to explain it is not anything they have done wrong but a part of a large societal problem.
- Sam asks what the most common substance is in drug-facilitated sexual assault. She shares that it is usually alcohol since it is the hardest to detect and is accessible, and most people will take it willingly.
- Substance use can also impact disclosure and stigma. A study of women who had experienced alcohol-facilitated sexual assault showed that more than half of them experienced victimizing or stigmatizing responses when they disclosed. Of 311 men, over 45% of them indicated that some kind of substance intoxication was involved in their assault. 1/3 of survivors in the study didn't report the assault because they were scared law enforcement would treat them poorly. Sam adds that many won't share it with family or friends if a substance is involved.
- Sam explains that when it comes to preventing substance use and sexual violence, the same work is being done. Many of the protective and risk factors for both are the exact same.
- If we zoom out from the individual level, we see how the community can make an impact on the individual. Prevention work is moving more towards changing the community atmosphere and providing resources and opportunities for people, so there are less inequities.
- *A member shares that at her son's orientation for parents, they showed a video of having a person over for a cup of tea. It went over consent and how you would treat someone if they were coming over for a cup of tea.*
- *Another member shares that the coalition is central to this work because it is focusing on support along with the 12 sectors that can offer healing for someone that doesn't know that they have resources available to them.*
- Sam explains that MCC is violence prevention in so many ways. *Allison adds that our grant is housed under the Center for Injury Prevention. MCC plays a role in focusing on ACES and helping to prevent them. Allison continues that when someone is intoxicated, they cannot give consent and MCC plays a role in informing and educating teens about this.*
- *A member mentions that it is great we do this work in Madison and Chatham, but Morris County is extremely wide. She wonders if they offer this outreach in other towns.* Sam replies that Morris County has a lot of affluence, but within the affluence are people who are struggling much more because they are not as affluent. They try and spread their reach but focus their efforts on going into neighborhoods who are most in need with the highest food insecurity and dropout rates.
- *A member explains that the Y does a lot of work in Dover. They offer an almost universal preschool program. Allison adds that NJ4S has a lot of access in Dover compared to Madison and Chatham. Those communities are receiving resources and education from NJ4S.*
- Sam thanks everyone for having her and for the great conversation. She lets everyone know she is happy to talk and answer any questions in the future.

10:10 Member Spotlight- Sue Heffernan

- Allison introduces Sue as the "imagination person" for the coalition. She had reached out before Bottle Hill Day about a campaign that focuses on cannabis with the teen population. It was a quick turn around because we wanted it to be the focus of the Bottle Hill table and it was only a week away. Allison passes out the handout they developed.
- Sue explains that she had cannabis items that she had collected over time. She adds that she had trouble with her teens and substance use. She noticed how the potency has increased

significantly over time. They wanted to showcase the variation but all vaping products are very high so they added in Delta-8 products.

- Sue says that the poster they designed with the information brought a lot of attention because it is colorful. She runs through the information on the handout at the meeting that included information about live resin, edibles, vapes, and more.
- It created conversation because families were coming over after seeing the fruit loops, but they are edibles. They explained to children that anytime they see the marijuana plant drawing on the package, they should not take it.
- She added that it was important to not judge by age. Gabe talked to more teens and young adults, while she spoke to more adults. They spoke to one man who had a cart with him, but he explained how he was upset about teens using more high potency products.
- Sue continues that the campaign is called Potency Matters and people were very receptive to it.
- *A member asks if she can explain all of the information on the poster because she is not as informed on it.* Sue says yes and mentions this is a good point because we are more involved in this information, but many community members are completely removed.
- She says that although it is newly legal in New Jersey, there are so many products. Sue went to a vape shop because she didn't have any delta-8 products and there was such a wide variety of things and options.
- Sue continues that years ago, she was clueless and had no idea what things were when she found them. There were drinks that looked so much like a can of soda and she wanted to have conversations about how well it can be concealed. She also showed parents a punch bar which resembles a Hershey bar. She explained that it is a small bar, but it is 225 milligrams when you are only supposed to have 10.
- Sue has a lot of ideas on how to display everything for the community in the future. She also wants to do a poster about nicotine because a vape can have the same amount of nicotine as a pack of cigarettes. She also shares she hadn't heard about Zyns before, but it is the new version of chewing tobacco essentially.
- Her goal is to advertise against the advertisers. She mentions Mom Water which is flat water with vodka in it. *Rozella Clyde mentions how these companies are marketing to make money and they do not care about the impact it is making on the community.*
- She also presents an idea about having business cards with Allison or her phone number to be a starting point for parents. She says she was so confused as a parent and no amount of reading could help you prepare or know what to do. *Allison mentions it could be a qr code linking to a video explaining what all the paraphernalia and materials are at the table to continue to provide them with information. It could also be a virtual dictionary and show the document. Members share what ideas they think will be the most helpful and think a virtual dictionary would be helpful for the community and people who want more information.*
- Allison adds that we created this very quickly and we want to work on making something more permanent. This is a sensitive subject since it is legal for people, but it is legal for people over the age of 21. *Vicky asks if we could do a shadow box,* but Allison replies that they have done that in the past and it has not been effective. Sue says it was also helpful because people don't necessarily have to come up to the table, they can just glance. Allison agrees that we need to consider health disparities and how this can appeal to different types of people. She also feels this needs to be made for nicotine because it is getting much more widespread and varied.
- Allison explains that there are a lot of ideas and things to consider and that she, Gabe, and Sue will work on bringing that together to give an update at the next meeting.

- A member asks Gabe if he had any other observations from the table. Gabe answers that Sue did a good job of getting people to come to the table that were shy.
- Vicky says they could do a compare the candy with edibles and the actual candy to show how similar they are.
- They discuss that this is confusing but becoming a more prevalent issue that people should be aware of.

10:30 MCC Updates- Allison Bardon

- Allison mentions how Kelli Keck has told them to be mindful of celebrating their successes. It is very easy to move from year 7 right into year 8 and the busiest part of the year for the coalition. She shares how she wants to be more mindful of taking the time to pause and reflect.
- She says that we spend our December meeting going over the metrics we produced from Year 7, but it feels weird to not continue to talk about the upcoming year. Year 7 was our most successful year numbers wise. We have engaged with more people and have spread our impact among all of the 7 strategies more than we have in the past.
- Allison says that we have three more years of funding and depending on the day that either sounds like a lot of time or no time. There are a lot of good things on the horizon that we should all be excited for.
- When she reviews the map we created, she sees three things at the center of our focus- adverse childhood experiences, health disparities, and sustainability. There has been a lot of progress since the last meeting and she wants to talk about that and not the future for the rest of the meeting.
- Project Community Pride hosted the first Hispanic Heritage Night at the Y and Christine has been working on planning this event for two years and we are happy to see it come together.
- Christine shares that it went great, and they will be doing it again next year. There were over 20 people there with teens and younger children. People brought food and we had food from Mexican Spice in Chatham. She thanks everyone for coming and it was a really amazing event that people enjoyed.
- Christine continues that Gabe did a great job going into ESL classes and pushing the event out to kids.
- Gabe expresses how much this event meant to him and it went really well and he can't wait for next year. It was so meaningful and one student won the bike they raffled off and he is going to use that bike to go to school now. He explains that his goal is community support and he wants this community connectedness.
- Christine shares there were families from Venezuela, Argentina, Colombia, and more. Everyone was so nice and eager to discuss. Allison adds that this was a good opportunity to share all of the resources that Gabe has translated in the past year. Everyone expressed how comfortable they felt at the event, which is the goal. Cultural competence is crucial to our coalition, and this was an opportunity to help. She explains that at first, she didn't know how MCC fit into the event, but it is through making people feel comfortable to access these resources.
- Sue adds that people at Bottle Hill Day recognized who Gabe was from the middle and high school. This is more than just the logo, but it is also the people helping.
- Allison mentions that we are becoming more intentional with how we market and table to students to make it more comforting and friendly look.
- *Rozella and other members express how important the Hispanic Heritage Night was in ensuring everyone has the access to resources that they need.*

- Allison explains that there are upcoming events on the newsletter and anyone with questions can reach out to her. The next meeting is November 19th and 9:30.
- *A member asks if Allison is ever going to pause* and Allison explains that every other entity is on a different schedule so she can't necessarily pause. However, taking the time with this meeting is good because it helps her be more intentional and to celebrate.
- *Rozella asks if we have support from all 12 sectors.* Allison shares that she has talked about this with Kelli Keck recently and that we have support when we need it from all of them. However, certain groups are less involved in our coalition, and there is always more work to be done to continue the connection. We cannot do initiatives for both towns at the same time, it is a slow progression of growth. We do want to spread the word of all of the organizations involved to show how thankful we are for their support already.
- *Rozella asks if we have any partnership with cannabis distilleries.* Allison explains that we don't necessarily want a partnership with them, but we want to have a relationship with them. There are no shops in Chatham or Madison. Sue shares that most times the people working at the shops are not very educated on the items.
- Allison thanks everyone for coming and thanks Sam for coming to share this information with the coalition.

Next Meeting:

November 19, 2024 @ 9:30AM

Hubbard Room

Madison Area YMCA