

Advisory Committee for Children's Voluntary Services

Meeting Minutes

DATE: Tuesday, May 10, 2022

TIME: 12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

PLACE: VIRTUAL - Zoom meeting

PRESENT: Tara Brzezinski, Linda Pierron, Amy Stack, Lindsay Reuer, Tracy Gehrke, Emily Paschen, Cristie Siebenaller, Angela Wade, Staci Thorkildsen, Shanah Zastera, Heather Ifft

STAFF PRESENT: Elizabeth Wagner, Wendy Hein, Liz Riley

Wendy Hein called the meeting to order at approximately 12:30 pm.

1. **Approval of Minutes from February 8, 2022 Meeting:** Tracy Gehrke moved for approval of the minutes of the last meeting, seconded by Cristie Siebenaller and carried.
2. **Presentation – Balanced Behavioral Services – Heather Ifft:**
 - Heather stated she is a BCBA in the Fox Valley area. She is located in Appleton and serves Outagamie, Calumet, and Winnebago Counties. Heather reported she has over ten years' experience working in the field of ABA; specifically working with children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. Heather stated her main mission is to provide families with tools and knowledge so they feel better supported in raising their neurodivergent children.
 - Heather typically works each week teaching caregivers various parenting strategies utilizing a trauma-informed approach. This helps parents create a more balanced relationship with their child as well as an understanding of their child's behaviors which allows the home to run smoother.
 - Heather hears from families that home can feel stressful and like they are walking on eggshells, or are unsure how to get rid of negative behaviors and increase positive behaviors. Heather stated there are a lot of children who may not be communicating very well and behaviors exhibited may relate to their communication.
 - Heather reported working in-home with families once or twice a week. Usually a topic is chosen as the focus for the week and families are able to have one-on-one time dedicated to learning more about their parenting style, what they want their parenting to look like, and some basic strategies to implement within the home to help the child in their relationships.
 - Heather reported she works with a lot of families that are on waiting lists waiting for intensive ABA services or families that have been through ABA and behaviors may have come up after discharge and the family is feeling stuck as to what else they can try.
 - Heather stated she also helps families learn more about autism spectrum disorder and how it relates specifically to their child.
 - Heather shared that some parents she has worked with have gone through ABA services in the past; however, feel they did not receive enough parent training and express that they wish to focus more on that at home. This is especially the case for children who received services in the school as parents often feel the progress made in school did not generalize to home.

- Some common concerns parents report looking for support include: tantrum behaviors, minimal communication, unwillingness to participate in daily routines such as sitting at the table, interaction issues with family members, sibling conflict, boundary setting, or that telling the child no results in tantrum behaviors.
- Topics typically covered consist of: positive parenting and discipline, communication, increasing tolerance to parental instruction, child-led play, setting healthy boundaries, working on modeling coping skills for both parents and child, and teaching replacement skills.
- Heather offers different assessments when starting with the family to determine their understanding of different parenting types in order to get a gauge of where they are at and knowing how to work with the family moving forward. For more authoritative parenting styles, she determines what kinds of discipline are being utilized as well as what methods they are open to learning more about. This may include methods utilized in the past, the parenting styles of other regular caregivers and how they may conflict with the primary caregiver style. Heather stated she also asks questions related to the parent's confidence level in terms of preventing and reacting to problem behavior. This gives her an idea of what those situations look like and how the parent responds.
- Heather may work with the family and find they need different types of support than can be provided by ABA at which time she would talk with the family to help connect them to resources that are a better fit. This may include services for the child or the parent, such as mental health supports.
- Heather's services are funded through CLTS. She has a basic referral form and then will connect with the family to learn how best to offer support.
- Heather's website is also available for additional information regarding the ABA therapy services she provides including her mission, patient promise, model, and "About us" information: <https://balancedbehavioralservices.godaddysites.com/>

3. Member Sharing – Updates or news to share about your agency or child:

- **Tara Brzezinski** is the parent of a 13-year old child with autism who is transitioning to high school. Tara reported she is currently working with legislation on a topic she will share at a future meeting related to DHS and providers. Tara also reported on the lack of mental health services in the area for children. In speaking with a provider at Catalpa, Tara shared she learned that many therapists are leaving the field. Tara stated even though her family is established at Catalpa, her son was recently unable to be seen by a therapist there due to the shortage. In addition, Tara stated there were insurance issues and that she spent hours on the phone with Medicaid trying to get approval. Tara stated that they found a provider that would accept the primary insurance; however, would not accept the secondary Medicaid insurance, so it took several months to actually find the support needed.
- **Linda Pierron** of the Oshkosh Area School District shared they currently have 20+ paraprofessional openings that they have been unable to fill and many teacher openings. She shared gratitude for the collaborative efforts made by many area agencies attempting to support families facing challenges. Linda also reported that there will be a food truck coming to OASD staffed by students with disabilities and is the first ADA accessible food truck for students. <https://www.oshkosh.k12.wi.us/district/special-education/brewing-futures-mobile-cafe> Linda stated that Project Life / Project Search are going well with partnerships at the YMCA and Ascension Mercy.
- **Amy Stack** is the parent of a 13-year-old daughter with CP and two typically developing adult children. Amy reported things are going well and is thankful her daughter is still in school. Amy reported having just returned from a retreat called "A Mother's Rest" which is a nonprofit who partners with B&Bs all throughout the country to offer respite opportunities for mostly women caregivers of disabled individuals. Some male or couple retreats are also offered. This was a

great opportunity to rest and also connect with some other mothers.

<https://www.amothersrest.org/>

- **Lindsay Reuer** is from the Oshkosh Public Library where she is one of the children's librarians who focuses on early literacy. The library continues to work on a quiet space or private space in the library that caregivers or families can take their children when needed. This space could be utilized for anything from needing to nurse a baby to supporting a child who needs a break. Lindsay is spearheading an effort to revamp/refresh the library's early literacy reading program with hopes to have this ready by fall after the summer reading program is done.
- **Tracy Gehrke** is a Public Health Nurse with Winnebago County and she reported the following items:
 - Tracy stated that COVID has been the main focus for the past two years so the Public Health Department is assessing current needs in the community to learn what services may be most useful.
 - Tracy reported that she is the chair for the Back to School Fair which will be a two-day event for students in the Oshkosh School District held on August 17 and August 18. The Community Clothes Closet will be at the Back to School Fair and likely will be supplying clothes to families for future fairs. Shoe vouchers were increased to \$50 at Rogan's from \$25. Families had difficulty finding shoes that worked for them in the \$25 price range, so the vouchers now have been increased to \$50 in order to increase the number of families utilizing the service at Rogan's.
 - Tracy reported she continues to be the primary contact for childcare centers experiencing COVID related concerns. While the need for this has decreased, Tracy reported there has been a recent increase in cases. Tracy supports child care programs in other areas besides COVID and is hoping to find some sustainability in childcare in our area, especially pertaining to staffing and benefits/pay.
- **Angela Wade** of Trio Academy reported the following updates:
 - Trio is working on summer schedules at this time. Angela was happy to report having sufficient staff and they will soon be onboarding more youth waiting for their services. Trio has had an influx of referrals for young children in the last six months, so with TRIO now having two locations, this allows for greater expansion of services.
 - TRIO is considering how they may support schooling services for youth who also need frequent ABA services. She would like to have a step-down approach for youth transitioning from ABA to school rather than stopping the ABA service the child greatly needs to be successful.
- **Staci Thorkildsen** is a Family Resource Specialist with UW-Oshkosh Headstart. Staci reported that the school year is wrapping up soon and recruitment for next year has begun. For anyone with a three- or four-year-old, Annette can be contacted at 920-858-7822. Staci added they recently learned they can accept Food Share for those families that receive that for income, so more families might be able to be accepted.
- **Shanah Zastera** stated she is a Winnebago County Board Supervisor for District 32 and she was interested in learning more about this committee. She has a bachelor's degree in social work and her mother worked in the human services field for a number of years. Shanah stated her sister has a doctorate in social work and another sister has her master's degree in school counseling. Shanah stated she is licensed herself; however, inactive for 20 years. Shanah expressed an interest in a tour from Elizabeth and stated the Committee is doing a great job helping people and she appreciated the discussion.
- **Elizabeth Wagner** screenshared the following fliers which will be included in the follow-up email being sent to Committee members:

- Kathy Schumacher of Tuneful Teaching is offering summer "Learning through Song" music classes and requested Elizabeth share this resource in her absence. <https://www.tunefulteaching.com/music-classes/>
- Elizabeth stated she recently met with Kelly Brodhagen of the Fox Valley Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin and shared their "Next Steps" flier helping families navigate through the next steps following an autism diagnosis. More information can be found by emailing info@autismgreaterwi.org or on their website www.autismgreaterwi.org.
- Variety – the Children's Charity of Wisconsin located in Elm Grove can provide financial assistance for children ages 1 – 21 who reside in Wisconsin and have a special need and are unable to receive funding for a particular need or item. The organization provides funding assistance for adaptive bikes and is partnered with Chatter Matters, a program that teaches families of nonverbal children how to use a communication device. Variety also provides some assistive technology support and mobility equipment. More information can be found on their website: www.varietywi.org.
- Winnebago County Community on Transition (WCCoT) is offering a transition night for parents of students on 05/12/2022 from 4-7 PM at the Fox Valley Technical College in Oshkosh. The Family Support Team, ADRC, and DVR will have booths and offer presentations.
- The ADRC's newsletter had a flier in which the Human Services announced the opening of the new State Street Center which is a walk-in center specifically for adults who may benefit from mental health or substance use support in a non-clinical setting. The walk-in center is free of charge and is located at 206 State Street in Oshkosh, open Monday through Friday 9 AM to 3 PM. <https://www.co.winnebago.wi.us/adrc/adrc-newsletter>
- Winnebago County Human Services is hosting a free wheelchair wash and inspection on 05/25/2022 from 10 AM to 12 PM at J&R Auto Service, 629 Main Street, Oshkosh. To schedule, contact Make the Ride Happen at 920-225-1719 or mrh@lss.wis.org.
- The Winnebago County Veterans Services moved on 04/25/2022 to the Human Services Building in Oshkosh on the third floor near the ADRC.
- The Family Voices Listening Session is scheduled for 05/05/2022 from 4:00 to 5:15 PM via Zoom <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88003700765>. This listening session is to hear from families with children of special needs and what can be done to support them in various ways.

4. Children's COP and CLTS Program Updates

- **Service and Program Updates:**

- Children's Long-Term Support Program "Supports and Services at a Glance" newly updated handout was shared following approval of the next 5 year cycle for the CLTS program. Starting in January 2022, some newer services are now available for families, though there may not be a service provider offering that particular service in every area. Many new service contracts are being developed as new service providers enter the area. This handout is shared with new referrals to educate families on what CLTS can offer. Support services include: childcare, day services, respite care, personal supports (previously called supportive homecare), community competitive/integrated employment, transportation, participant and family-directed goods and services, and discovery/career planning. Teaching and skills development services include: empowerment & self-determination supports (previously called consumer education and training), counseling & therapeutic services, daily living skills training, mentoring, family/unpaid caregiver supports and services, health & wellness, safety planning & prevention, grief and bereavement counseling. Management and coordination services include: community integration services,

participant and family-direction broker services, and financial management services. Physical aids include: assistive technology, communication assistance for community inclusion, personal emergency response system, specialized medical and therapeutic supplies, vehicle modifications, and virtual equipment & supports. Housing-related services include: adult family home, children's foster care, housing support services, home modifications, and relocation services.

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p02570.pdf>

- Elizabeth provided an overview of some of the new contracts for the CLTS program:
 - SOAR of Appleton has a new summer camp:
<https://soarfoxcities.com/programs/youth-services/>
 - Lakeside Packaging of Oshkosh is piloting a new summer camp they hope to continue to offer in future years. <https://lakesidepackagingplus.com/>
 - LearningRx is a local company offering services focused on supporting mind/body integration. <https://www.learningrx.com/appleton/>
 - The CP Center of Green Bay can be utilized by families for speech, occupational and physical therapy funded through insurance. CLTS can fund some therapy groups when insurance is not an option: <https://www.wearecp.org/>
 - Milestones is a provider from Brown County contracted recently for social groups. Milestones is one of only a few companies that formally offers in their center a two-staff to one-child staffing ratio for children that may not be successful with 1:1 staffing ratio. <https://www.milestoneswi.com/services>
 - Covey services are being utilized for older transition-age youth for community events and skill building. Covey used to offer respite to youth in their centers and the hope is for this to be an option in the future. <https://covey.org/>
 - Elizabeth reported there are a couple of newer virtual service providers. Mightier utilizes technology in which the child plays videogames with a corresponding watch on their wrist that provides biofeedback to support regulation. <https://www.mightier.com/>
 - Game-U provides virtual based gaming for students with a strong interest in learning about design, computers, or technology. <https://www.game-u.com/>
- **Operations during COVID-19:**
 - **Elizabeth Wagner** reported that the program completed an annual audit through MetaStar in March for calendar year 2021. Despite being in a pandemic, the final score was 91 percent. Some strengths included: timely enrollment of children into the program, provider contract requirements, having comprehensive service plans, and ensuring that parents are aware of their rights related to the program.
 - Elizabeth reported referrals numbers as follows: 27 in February, 21 in March, 17 in April. Since the start of the year, 71 more children have been enrolled onto the program and 13 have closed. Since the Public Health Emergency continues at the federal level, the CLTS program will continue to offer pandemic related flexibilities and operations.
 - Ciarra, who Elizabeth introduced in February as the newest Lutheran Social Services (LSS) hire, unfortunately chose to leave her position. Elizabeth shared this does impact operations as the current team is carrying large caseloads based on the number of referrals coming in so continued attempts to hire more Service Coordinators is paramount. All team members have approximately 52 cases when they should really be closer to 40. Fortunately, there will be two new LSS hires starting by the end of the month. Position postings will remain open as Elizabeth expects the CLTS program will need to continue to expand statewide to meet the demand of increased referrals.
 - A Human Services position was posted to add a lead position within the Family Support Team that oversees the CLTS funding to assist Elizabeth in program oversight and support. This position was accepted by team member Rhonda Reinke. Rhonda's current caseload will

need to be transferred to new or current service coordinators once some of the new hires are trained. Mallory Randall, who was employed through LSS, has been hired by Winnebago County DHS to refill Rhonda's position.

- Two interns are being utilized for a variety of needs within the Long-Term Support Division. These interns will be with the Department through September. In fall, another intern will be starting.
- Elizabeth stated that, as Linda of OASD mentioned, any partnering that can be done together helps to support families. Families are reaching out to service coordinators with greater needs; however, workers have 10-12 more families than they typically do, so workers have to triage to determine who to support and to what degree at a given moment.
- Elizabeth reported an increase in referrals from some ABA providers that perform diagnostics in the local area.
- Elizabeth reported in-person outreach events are starting to occur in the community more often as there are families who do not know about the CLTS program. Elizabeth welcomed others to reach out to Elizabeth to request a presentation, as needed.

5. **Birth-to-Three:**

- **Operations during COVID-19:**
 - **Wendy Hein** is the director of the Early Intervention/Birth to Three Program for Outagamie and Winnebago Counties. Wendy reported that "the perfect storm" is going on in Birth to Three right now as staff are leaving at a faster rate than new staff can be recruited and hired. Current staff are struggling with very high caseloads. In 2021, Outagamie and Winnebago Counties received the largest number of referrals ever at a total of 1130 referrals. Pre-pandemic numbers averaged 80-100 referrals per month. Referrals have increased to now ranging from 100-120 per month.
 - Wendy stated there are a lot of great things happening in the community in terms of early identification and screenings. There was a dip in enrollment in 2020 for Birth to 3 statewide so the State Department of Health Services launched an outreach campaign regarding the first 1000 days and the importance of early intervention which has likely impacted the number of referrals. Wendy reported that another contributing factor is that Theda Care recently incorporated the Ages and Stages Questionnaire into their Epic System which has automated their Birth to Three referrals for any children who have a concerning screening.
 - Wendy stated there are two full-time speech and language pathologist openings as well as one full-time and one part-time special education teacher. Wendy stated she is grateful that the School District partners have summers off as she was able to hire three subs yesterday who are providers that work for area school districts.

6. **CCS/CST Youth Services:**

- **Cristie Siebenaller** is the lead CCS service facilitator at Winnebago County with the Behavioral Health Team that works with CCS (Comprehensive Community Services) and CST (Coordinated Services Team). CST is the philosophy utilized for CCS. CCS is a program used to support youth and families who are struggling with mental health.
- Cristie stated a service facilitator recently took a new position at the County on another behavioral health team as a therapist. That service facilitator position opening was then filled by Clint Thornton who had worked at Individualized Youth Services (IYS).
- Cristie stated that at the last meeting there had been a discussion about sharing some of the survey data that is gathered annually from clients who have been enrolled in CCS for at least six months to share their satisfaction in the program. Cristie screenshared a graph illustrating youth aged 13+ client satisfaction data. Data is utilized to determine areas in which improvement could be made, such as in client's perception of functioning. Cristie screenshared another graph for children

under 13 in which parents indicated their levels of satisfaction. Areas that could be improved upon include: perception of outcomes of services and perception of functioning. In both instances, perceptions were lower because less services could be offered during the pandemic.

- In 2021, 77 consumers were served in CCS. Cristie reported that she works with Elizabeth to determine when community referrals would benefit from discussing behavioral health needs and services with Cristie. This often includes connecting families to community behavioral health services. So far in 2022, 17 referrals were sent on to Behavioral Health with some added to the CCS program and others were connected with community resources.
- Cristie stated that part of their programming is to provide community-based services which can last up to a couple of years depending on the family's needs. Caseload sizes are not as high due to the expectations of being in the home to provide intensive therapy services and this often entails multiple contacts in a week. A typical caseload is anywhere between 8 and 12 depending on the needs of the cases. Cristie stated there are 8 or 9 individuals on the referral list at this time. Typical timeframe is two to four months wait for services once being placed on the referral list.

7. **2022 Focus Areas and Committee Role:**

- Gaps in Behavioral Services in the Fox Valley – **Wendy Hein** reported that a workgroup/task force was started on gaps in behavioral services in the Fox Valley. **Elizabeth Wagner** there is an ongoing entry point for members to join this taskforce and those interested should contact Elizabeth. Thus far, the task force met twice with meetings in March and April. The next meeting date for the task force is May 25th at 9:00. The group is currently working to identify issues and barriers that limit access for youth and families to necessary behavioral or mental health services in their community. So far, members have been sharing resources and are working to understand why some insurance limitations are occurring with ABA services. Elizabeth stated it can be difficult to access and engage legislators and state partners in this discussion. The hope is that as meetings go on, more connections can continually be made to help the group understand how to change the current dynamic with the gaps in behavioral services and reduce barriers to these services.

Elizabeth Wagner stated that there was a recent resolution from Winnebago County stating committees need to vote on the time meetings should be held. If the vote is not unanimous, meetings will need to be held at 3:00 PM or later. Elizabeth stated she will send a follow-up email out to members to determine if the meeting time will be altered. **Shanah Zastera** clarified this resolution was passed to allow for greater access to community members to attend committee meetings but is not required if the committee members choose to keep the time as it has been.

8. **2022 Meeting Dates:** The 2022 meetings of the Advisory Committee for Children's Voluntary Services are currently scheduled for 12:30 PM for the following dates: **September 13, December 13.**

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:45 PM.
Respectfully submitted by Elizabeth Wagner