

Advisory Committee for Children's Voluntary Services

Meeting Minutes

DATE: Tuesday, September 14, 2021

TIME: 12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

PLACE: VIRTUAL - Zoom meeting

PRESENT: Wendy Hein, Stefanie Doszak, Staci Thorkildsen, Linda Pierron, Kathy Schumacher

STAFF PRESENT: Elizabeth Wagner, Cristie Siebenaller, Madalyn Fero, Kristel Stepke, Liz Riley, Mitch Cornils, Jennifer Long, Bridget Shimon

Elizabeth Wagner called the meeting to order at approximately 12:32 pm.

1. Approval of Minutes for the May 11, 2021 Meeting:

Cristie Siebenaller moved for approval of the minutes of the last meeting, seconded by Wendy Hein and carried.

2. Presentation – Emily (Brittany) Paschen of NOVA:

- NOVA will be opening November 1st. It is an in-center ABA therapy program for children on the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other disabilities. Emily has been in the field of ABA for eight years and has been a board-certified behavior analyst for 2 ½ years. She and her husband have decided to create their own center because she had been making the drive to Stevens Points to the Arrow Academy, where she is currently employed, and wanted create their own business offering similar services in their hometown of Appleton.
- NOVA is located behind Old Navy by the Fox River Mall at 4797 West Grande Market Drive in Appleton, which was the old Sprint store.
- What is Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)? Applied=meaningful to society and lives. Behavior=anything an organism does. Analysis=demonstrating the functional relationship between the environment and behavior change. ABA uses evidence-based practices from B.F. Skinner's *Principles of Behavior* to increase socially significant skills and behavior. Some examples of when youth may benefit from this service are: if a child is struggling in school, their morning routine is difficult, parents are struggling with how best to support and respond to their child, supporting expanded communication and assistance with increasing social skills. ABA is not: counseling or talk therapy, childcare,

or bribery. Instead, positive reinforcement strategies are utilized which are gradually phased out over time as the child gains skills.

- What age ranges and diagnoses served at NOVA? An ASD diagnosis is not required to access this service. The age ranges are typically 1 ½-2 years old to age 15, but can vary depending on the need of the child. Emily shared that she will accept clients who have not yet been diagnosed, especially younger children who are on a waitlist to be tested. Insurance does allow therapy services to begin as long as a tentative diagnosis date is listed on the prior authorization Emily submits. Early intervention is very important and the time waiting for a diagnosis should not be lost as many children can begin to learn to talk within that period of time, if that is the concern. ADHD, ODD, and Down's Syndrome are examples of diagnoses that can be covered depending on the behaviors the child exhibits. Emily is also able to support older youth by focusing on in school or home behavior concerns, transitions, and after school activities/homework.
- Which insurance companies are in-network? Emily indicated she is currently in network with Forward Health/Medicaid and is hoping to work with Blue Cross-Blue Shield, Humana, Optum, Aetna, United Health, and Network Health. As children come in with different insurances, she is open to getting into network with their insurances, as well.
- What does NOVA offer?
 - Emily has worked with families whose child may refuse to go to school or have a major problem behavior only being exhibited in the school environment. In these cases, NOVA would want to work with the child at the school as to not bring the problem behaviors into additional environments.
 - Coping skills for stressors –NOVA teaches skills to cope with stressors such as deep breathing, walking away, or jumping on trampoline after skills completion.
 - Communication skills – Emily enjoys working with children by "shaping behavior." Group participation skills in class environments are introduced to prepare young children for preschool. Children are taught to imitate their peers and how to listen to a teacher so that once that child arrives at school, they may not need as much support.
 - Medical examination tolerance skills – Emily stated they are working on getting a doctor's office-type setting to help children tolerate exams through daily practice of skills. Medical examinations work on toleration skills of checking of the throat, ears, etc. by utilization of positive reinforcement. Additional skills could include opening mouth while talking, not biting, and not engaging in problem behavior.
 - In-center services offered:
 - ABA therapy ranging from 10-40 hours per week dependent on individualized need.
 - Collaboration on an at least monthly basis with schools, county case managers, SLP's, OT's, and any other services the client receives.
 - Parent training courses are offered when children begin therapy. This consists of a Power Point slideshow explaining what to expect and some in-home visits to ensure things are going well in the home.
 - Emily does complete an evaluation for each child to determine needs. In rare instances, if the child is not in need of services, the parents may receive free parent training skills.

- Services will be mostly center-based, but in some cases a limited number of hours will be spent in the home to address behaviors in that environment.
- Emily can provide behavioral consults and will maximize insurance when possible but consults also may be funded by CLTS when insurance is not an option.
- She can be contacted through her website at <https://www.novaaba.org>, Facebook, or Instagram.

3. Introduce new Family Support Team Members: Madalyn Fero and Kristel Stepke

- Madalyn Fero filled the position left vacant by Rozlyn Fox. Madalyn started in July 2021 with Lutheran Social Services (LSS) and started working with families in September. Madalyn shared that she has some previous experience working in CCS in Milwaukee.
- Kristel Stepke began her employment with LSS August 2021 and will begin working with families in October. Kristel's position was newly created to meet continued demand for CLTS needs in Winnebago County.

4. Member Sharing:

- Stefanie Doszak from Fox Valley Autism Treatment Program (FVATP) stated that they provide in-home ABA therapy. In person social groups have resumed after being on hold due to the pandemic. FVATP was able to start offering a Healthy Relationships class for older youth.
- Mitch Cornils, Child Welfare Supervisor in Oshkosh, stated he is taking over for Mary Salzer, Youth Justice Supervisor, on this committee. He reported that the Department of Children and Families is now preparing to roll out the Family First Prevention Services Act which is a federal act signed in 2018. This act will focus on maintaining youth in their family homes utilizing evidence-based programming in an effort to prevent removal of children into foster care or into other placements. There is also an effort in improving qualified residential treatment programs (QRTP). Information regarding the Family First Act is available on the DCFS website: [Strategic Transformation | Wisconsin Department of Children and Families](#).
- Staci Thorkildsen is a Family Resource Specialist with Head Start. She shared Head Start is at full enrollment this school year. They are still taking applications; however, believes the classrooms in Oshkosh are full. When at full capacity, applications are accepted for the waitlist in case a student leaves the program.
- Linda Pierron, of Oshkosh Area School Districts, shared that Oshkosh schools are in session five days a week and focused on ensuring students who could not attend school virtually could attend in person whenever possible. She believes that will be the goal of the new superintendent as well so even as some classrooms quarantine or go virtual, she anticipates they will strongly advocate and work with other personnel on how best to maintain safe school environments. Safety and welfare come first, but Linda recognizes having some students in-person is crucial to their academic success.
- Kathy Schumacher is a board-certified music therapist in Oshkosh. Approximately 80 percent of her work is one-on-one therapy with youth. She also offers early childhood music classes. She has put together an online learning class called *Literacy for Littles*

using music to develop reading and communication skills. Kathy has presented this information to others virtually and one class size reached 250 people including individuals from the United Kingdom and Australia. Classes are pre-recorded and can be taken any timeline.

<https://www.musicforkiddos.com/store/j7akm3gn4rlll4i7n2sau7kbfout6q>

- Elizabeth Wagner, Winnebago County Family Support Team Supervisor, shared several handouts:
 - Healthy Relationships - offered through Fox Valley Autism Treatment Program. It was previously for children supported in ABA services but now is being expanded further for youth who may benefit from this class but are not utilizing ABA services through FVATP.
 - Two trainings offered by Children and Youth with Special Healthcare Needs relating to youth transitions to adult services. One training is focused on supported decision making as an alternative to guardianship for someone who wants support with making decisions, but can still retain the capacity to make those decisions on their own. Sign-up is available online and is free. The second training is also a transition-focused training on *What's After High School?* for interested individuals aged 14-21.
 - Kiwanis Cops N' Kids reading and bingo event which is scheduled for October 8.
 - State of Wisconsin's CLTS newsletter entailing the Deciding Together approach of discussing the needs and outcomes of children on the CLTS program and how to achieve those outcomes as well as what steps families can take if not in agreement with a decision. In addition, there is information on going back to school during COVID-19 with tips on how to prepare. These newsletters can be shared with anyone and are available online:
<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/library/akids21.htm>
 - Aging and Disability Resource's newsletter that is published monthly. The ADRC's newsletter shares information on subjects such as cooking, evidence-based classes, upcoming community events, dementia resources, cultural programs, and information on funding available for grandparents caring for grandchildren. In addition, there is information on the Adult Long Term Care programs of Family Care and IRIS. ADRC newsletters can be available online:
<https://www.co.winnebago.wi.us/adrc/adrc-newsletter>
 - State of Wisconsin Birth to 3 Program Newsletter link:
<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/library/akidsb-3-2021.htm>

5. Children's COP and CLTS Program Updates:

Service and Program Updates

- In the month of May there were 19 new referrals. This is high compared to previous years. In June, there were 16 referrals, 11 referrals in July, 11 referrals in August, and a handful of referrals have already been received in September. There are usually extra referrals when school begins.
- Katie Beckett is a type of Medicaid that some children can access when they have a disability determination or have a need for long term care disability benefits. SSI is the option that lower income individuals might go through; however, for those not eligible for SSI as a family, a child can still get a disability determination by going

through the Katie Beckett instead. A State initiative is to continue to streamline access to Functional Screens for youth who need assistance, therefore, when Katie Beckett completes a screen with an eligible child, the family learns about other disability related programs that may benefit that child, such as CLTS. This change occurred over summer 2021 so when children need insurance they are also connected with supports when that is necessary. Most families that qualify opt to utilize the CLTS program after a referral from Katie Beckett as the monthly connection with a service coordinator is helpful.

- The current caseload size right now for the team is at about 43 ½ cases per service coordinator
- Enrollments into the program: 15 in May, 12 in June, 11 in July, 14 in August, and a handful so far in September.
- There were 7 closures in May, 5 in June, 4 in July, 5 in August, and a couple so far in September.
- Service coordinators continue to enroll youth at a fast pace into the CLTS program. Winnebago County has continued to add more Lutheran Social Services positions as referral numbers continue to increase so service coordinators can continue to enroll at a rapid pace to meet the need in our community. Winnebago County is typically able to enroll children within a month and a half after receiving the referral.

Operations during COVID-19

- Early in the pandemic, there was a slow down of youth transitioning out of the program to adult services as the State did not want youth to lose necessary services under CLTS that may not be available under adult services due to the pandemic. Shortly after, the State began allowing transitions to occur as long as youth were able to access necessary services prior to closing with CLTS. CLTS has needed to remain open longer with some youth due to transition related issues with adult services over the past year.
- The majority of case closures are due to youth transitioning out of the program. CLTS continues to follow pandemic guidance so youth are only closed under the following circumstances: family requests to be closed, the family moves out of the state, or the case has been successfully transitioned to an adult program.
- In-home visits continue to be offered and preferred but families are able to continue to choose virtual visits. The State had been intending to revert back to requiring in person home visits twice a year starting in 2022 but it is unknown if this will ultimately occur with continued concerns relating to the pandemic.
- Most of the service providers are continuing to offer in-person services as well as some are also offering group services. Some children have tested positive for COVID so the anticipation is that more adjustments for virtual services will likely be needed in the future. There is flexibility to shift services that are usually in-person to virtual on a given day.
- As far as service gaps, there continues to be a lack of overnight respite options primarily due to licensing requirements the State put in place. Some entities provide longer day services to families who may not be able to access overnight care and would benefit. Foster homes continue to be one of the approved CLTS options for

overnight care but residential services are primarily offered over respite so that is limited in availability.

- Provider agencies are struggling to find staff as is Winnebago County DHS.

Waitlist Updates

- The waitlist currently has 5 youth who are in process of being enrolled but do not yet have set start date. There are also 11 referrals in process that are likely be added to the waitlist.
- In July 2021, the State changed when a youth could be enrolled from the state CLTS waitlist. Previously, the child would be added to the waitlist by the service coordinator and then the following month the State would deem that child enrollable. In July, the service coordinator is now able to enroll the child right away after adding that child to the waitlist. This is working out well for the team and is allowing them to be efficient by moving directly to enrollment. After a referral is received, there is a 45-day timeline for the assessment to be completed. There are some allowances in the pandemic so screen results are not delayed due to lack of access to medical records or formal diagnoses.

6. Birth-to-Three:

- Currently, there is one open position for a sleep and language pathologist primarily working in the Appleton and Menasha area.
- 274 children are currently enrolled with 114 from Winnebago County and the other 160 from Outagamie County.
- A high number of referrals were received early in the year which has now tapered off to typical ranges. There were 89 referrals this month and the last few months have been in the 90s. 21 of the 89 referrals were re-referrals for children who were not enrolled the first time due to the family declining services, the child was ineligible, or having been a screen-out at the intake following their first referral.
- Every year the Department of State Health Services reviews data and determines whether compliance has been achieved for certain indicators. Recent communication from DHS confirms Winnebago County and Outagamie County were both 100 percent compliant.
- Since the last meeting, a shared position has been developed between Birth to Three and Help Me Grow. Amy Wilson is a half time team leader for Birth to 3 and also a half time service navigator for Help Me Grow. Her job is to work the families who are not being enrolled in Early Intervention Birth to Three and provide follow-up, resources, and connections to other programs. When the paperwork is gathered for Birth to 3 enrollments, a consent is obtained from parents to be able to share information to allow enrollment in the Help Me Grow Program. Resource navigators from the Help Me Grow Program then reach out to families to check-in to see if there is a need for resources, connections, information, and/or developmental screenings.

Operations during COVID-19:

- There continue to be quite a few cancellations partly due to health and exposure screenings prior to each in-person visit. Virtual visits continue to be available when necessary.

7. CCS/CST Youth Services:

- Jennifer Long reported that as a result of a recent grant, the Comprehensive Services Team (CST) has been able to open approximately four voluntary cases that are strictly CST cases, since the last committee meeting. The team is hoping to open more families and provide a service facilitator as well as some skill development services. Eventually, some of those youth may go on to CCS, which includes assignment of a therapist.
- An intensive in-home case manager has been hired however an intensive in-home therapist position remains open. The original requirements included having a license; however, now the posting has been opened up to candidates who have completed the MSW or LPC degree but have not yet completed their 2000-3000 hours of clinical training. That position is then called a Qualified Therapist in Training (QTT). The hope is that change will spark more interested applicants.

Operations during COVID-19:

- All staff returned to the office on August 1st and are back to seeing the majority of consumers in-person.

8. 2021 Focus Areas and Committee Role:

- The committee is focusing on determining what autism-related service gaps exist in the community. This includes looking at the gaps that ABA and CLTS providers are seeing in services they cannot cover. Also, the committee will be looking at transition-focused outcomes to enable youth to be as successful and independent as possible.
- Stefanie Doszak stated she has worked quite a bit with Pam DeLap, a member of this committee who was unavailable to attend today's meetings, to share Pam's input on how DHS has eliminated waitlists for programs but this, in turn, has created waitlists at the provider level on top of the staffing shortages already present.
- Medicaid and insurance company's funding of ABA services had in the past considered to be an ongoing service. Now Medicaid and many insurances want to see transition planning and discharge criteria already in the first plan submitted. Instead of seeing children receiving ABA services for longer periods of time, they are now being limited to two to four years. ABA services were initially intended to be a short-term service where parent skills are taught so they can apply their own strategies. The problem with that is autism is a developmental disability where there are different challenges within every age range. When children are taught only in terms of milestones, it can become an issue a few years later when new issues arise. Discharges used to be at the age of 12-14; however, now children seem to have to be discharged closer to age 6-8. Clients then need to reapply for services at which time end up back on a waitlist. There are few services available that bridge the gap between the ABA services and when the individual can start adult services. Fox Valley is looking for additional transition services to add to the list of options for families trying to find that middle ground between the ABA intensive services/treatment and those at a less intensive level.
- Input from committee in what kinds of services would be helpful in these gaps:
 - There is a skill development need; however, the staffing issue of having qualified people is difficult. There are some daily living skills and healthy relationships classes available; however, again the age range for that is for older children.
 - Services are needed between ABA and finding skilled respite.

- Determining ways to find safe social relationships to maintain or improve mental health and social connectedness especially as youth transition and friends graduate and leave the area.
- There is a need for parents to understand why it is imperative for schools and CLTS to begin talking about transition planning at age 14 to allow their child extra time to learn independence skills which can lead to less need for supportive services from others in adulthood.

9. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the Advisory Committee for Children's Voluntary Services has been scheduled for **Tuesday, December 14, 2021** from 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. via Zoom.

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