

Advisory Committee for Children's Voluntary Services

Meeting Minutes

DATE: Tuesday, December 14, 2021

TIME: 12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

PLACE: VIRTUAL - Zoom meeting

PRESENT: Sharon Oberkrieser, Marie Boleman, Staci Thorkildsen, Tracy Gehrke, Linda Pierron, Kathy Schumacher, Amy Stack, Tim Gantz, Terri St. Lawrence, Emily Paschen, Tara Brzezinski, Annie Muelmans, Maryann Dilling, Emily Paschen

STAFF PRESENT: Elizabeth Wagner, Wendy Hein, Mitch Cornils

Sharon Oberkrieser called the meeting to order at approximately 12:32 pm.

1. Approval of Minutes from September 14, 2021 Meeting:

Sharon Oberkrieser moved for approval of the minutes of the last meeting, seconded by Staci Thorkildsen and carried.

2. Presentation – Thrive Music Therapy – Annie Meulemans:

- **Annie Meulemans** is the owner and sole music therapist with Thrive Music Therapy which is based out of the north side of the Fox Cities. Annie provides services in the community including Winnebago County. Her specialty is working with youth and teens with developmental and intellectual disabilities.
- As a general overview, Annie stated that music therapy is a clinical evidence-based use of music. A plethora of goals are worked on including motor, communication, academic skills, sensory, and/or emotional, depending on the child's needs.
- Annie stated that a great referral for music therapy might be someone who is having difficulties in other disciplines. Music therapy can be a way to target some goals as music is inherently fun and motivating for a lot of children. Referrals can be made to help with coping with certain emotions or as a way of expressing themselves.
- Services are provided in-home and are typically 45 minutes to an hour in length, once per week.
- To start sessions, an assessment is conducted. A formal treatment plan is created outlining the goals and objectives that will be targeted within music therapy services. After this, sessions are provided once a week depending on the client's needs and the parents wishes.

- A typical session begins with a greeting song to help the child transition into the session, which is a great way to practice social greeting skills. This is followed by interventions that may include movement, working on motor goals, song writing, working on social or behavioral skills. In addition, a session may involve coping with negative emotions through a social story/song, instrument play, working on sustained attention, impulse control, or singing together to work on speech and language skills. Sessions end with a farewell song to transition out of music therapy.
- To make a referral, Annie is available by phone or email. Elizabeth will provide Annie's contact information in her follow-up email to the group. This service can be funded by Children's Long-Term Support, as appropriate.
- Sharon Oberkrieser asked Annie how long she has been providing these services. Annie responded that she has been working as a music therapist for five years working with youth with special needs. Sharon stated as a parent of 16-year old with Down's Syndrome who responds beautifully to music, she would be very interested in music therapy services for her son.
- Sharon asked Elizabeth Wagner if the CLTS funds music therapy to which Elizabeth indicated that CLTS can fund this when appropriate. This is similar to how the CLTS program works with other music therapists such as Kathy Schumacher of Music Therapy LLC in Oshkosh or Expressive Therapies in Appleton.
- Kathy Schumacher of Music Therapy LLC stated she is renting some clinic space inside the second Trio Academy building in Oshkosh and also sees people in-home depending on the client's needs.
- Annie stated that, for now, she is a provider only for CLTS and does not have any other insurance providers she is in network with. She stated some organizations such as Inclusa, an adult program Long Term Care provider, have funded music therapy services; however, she has not had any inquiries thus far.

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

- **Marie Boleman** oversees children's services at the Oshkosh Public Library. Masks are being required through end of December and likely through the end of January. The library is looking at planning story times for youth who are on the Autism spectrum. Lastly, the library is looking into making a quiet corner / area for families who might need a break while visiting the library.
- **Staci Thorkildsen** is a Family Resource Specialist with UW-Oshkosh Headstart. In-person classes continue and they continue to accept applications. The official school year registration will be February to March.
- **Traci Gehrke** is a Public Health Nurse with Winnebago County. She reported the following:
 - Traci stated most of her time is spent on COVID response to childcare closings.
 - A car seat fitting station is often available on the first Wednesday of the month but can change based on COVID. Anyone in need of this service can call the Health Department to schedule a time for that day. Fittings are typically offered in the garage area at the Sheriff's Office in the morning from 9-11 AM. Voucher seats still are available for families that do not have means to purchase a seat. Typically, vouchers are issued through the WIC program, as these families

qualify. WIC serves youth through age five; however, families with a need for a car seat can call the Health Department and a voucher can be issued. The voucher is based on the child's age.

- Due to COVID, no other services have been resumed at this time. Most staff are doing COVID response or are at Sunnyview Expo administering vaccines at various clinics throughout the community. Elizabeth Wagner stated that the Health Department's website lists various options where vaccines can be obtained such as Sunnyview Expo and Oshkosh Public Library. Traci stated there are always "Walk-in Wednesdays" from 1-6 at Sunnyview Expo in Oshkosh.
- Amy Stack asked if the boosters for the 16-17 age group are being provided. Traci believed that approval had been received from the State and indicated to contact Jayne Tebon to inquire more.
- **Mitch Cornils** is the CPS Ongoing Supervisor in the Oshkosh Office. He stated he is interested in improving the car seat training for staff and foster parents in the new year. Mitch indicated that foster parents will get WIC and asked Traci whether the voucher program would also work for them. Traci indicated that as foster parents are automatically in the WIC program, they will qualify for a car seat voucher.
- **Kathy Schumacher** stated today she is finishing a 12-week session of early childhood classes. She has a chiropractor in the area who has been sending referrals to her. She stated therapy wise, that is about 90 percent of what she does and has a waitlist for those services, so it is great to have Annie in the area. Kathy stated when she cannot take someone on one-on-one, she has Birth to 6 classes that she can offer. She has four different times right now and is attempting to add two more starting in February on Tuesdays and Fridays. She is also thinking about starting a teen session for February depending if families are ready for that. Other than that, she has been doing some presentations for her literacy work. Kathy indicated referenced her website <https://www.tunefulteaching.com/> to learn more on classes and registration.
- **Terri St. Lawrence** from United Way Oshkosh reported looking forward to rolling into 2022 with 42 funded programs in Oshkosh. Terri reported working diligently on marketing initiatives and social media presence. She asked that members "like" the United Way page where a lot of information, events, and great community information is shared.
- **Emily Paschen** of NOVA presented at the last meeting and stated that they currently have a waitlist for afterschool children thus are working on hiring staff. There are also one or two spots open for daytime services. NOVA has been open for about a month now and Emily reported it has been going very smoothly.
- **Linda Pierron** of the Oshkosh Area School District reported that staff are needed including substitute teachers. Today, there were 108 absences with about 1/3 of those unfilled. Linda shared that substitute teachers, paraprofessionals, and emergency licensed teachers are needed. Linda also shared there was an article in the Oshkosh Herald about Project Life and Project Search. Those transition programs provide opportunities for participants to find meaningful work that allows them to be within their community by providing participants with experiential education and community-based work experiences.
- **Amy Stack** is the parent of a daughter with CP who is currently in seventh grade at Webster. Amy stated it has been great to have in-person learning back. Amy shared

her daughter's speech has fallen a little behind and expressed interest to Kathy regarding the teen class.

- **Tara Brzezinski** is the parent of a child with autism and other health impairments. She reports over break they are transitioning services from ABA over to a new program called Fundamentals owned by Steven Baker. Tara also reported there is another service that was called Moving Forward. Tara reported that her child has reached the age where ABA was not covered any longer; but still has goals that need to be accomplished. Tara reported she has also found that Wisconsin Sibs offers three to five-year-olds a "sib pack" and are piloting an app for that age group. In a future meeting, Tara will share how the Wisconsin Sibs app is working as she will be piloting the app.
- **Elizabeth Wagner** elaborated that for some families struggling with the limitations of what ABA can offer, they are looking at how some of these other CLTS services could meet a need in a different way than what ABA has historically been able to meet. There are many theories on how to best support a child with varying diagnoses, so it good there are many options to support families and children with their unique needs such as music therapy, coaching strategies, daily living skills, social groups, etc.
- **Sharon Oberkrieser** has a 16-year-old son who has Downs Syndrome along with a few other complicated medical issues. Being back in school in-person is very helpful as he is getting back out in the community; however, he is still trying to catch up on some areas where he has fallen behind. Sharon is happy to report she has a new four-week old granddaughter.
- **Elizabeth Wagner** screenshared the following documents with the committee and will also send out documents in a follow up email:
 - Easter Seals Wisconsin "Recreational Opportunities for youth and young adults with special needs Fox Valley Region 2021-2022 Edition" containing various classes, camps, etc. in the area. Elizabeth stated not all are funded by CLTS.
 - "Love the Mess" is being offered out of the Hooper Community Center in Oshkosh. This is a free support group open to parents and caregivers of any age with disabilities and/or mental health challenges. Groups are on 12/7 and 12/16 from 6-7 PM.
 - YMCA of the Fox Cities is hosting a benefit dated 12/23/2021 at 7:30 PM held at the Fox Cities Performing Art Center. Cost is \$35, plus service fee.
 - The Winnebago County "Youth Transitions" booklet has recently been updated by Kristin Cox of the ADRC and can be shared with schools, parents, anyone who is trying to better understand the transition steps for a child who has needs that may require support when turning 18. The booklet provides information on establishing disability benefits at age 18, rights and responsibilities of becoming an adult, registering for the selective service, voting rights, engaging in the adult healthcare system, decision making needs, healthcare power of attorney, supported decision making, guardianships, health insurance options, applying for SSI, steps to engaging in the adult long-term care programs, financial decision making, post-secondary education, DVR, the importance of keeping records, and resources available.

- "Parent to Parent of Wisconsin" is an entity that offers parent supports to other parents. This two-page document contains information regarding filling out the online application to become a support parent.

4. Children's COP and CLTS Program Updates

- Service and Program Updates:
 - **Elizabeth Wagner** provided the update that Helen Powell will be retiring as of January 4, 2022. Interviews have been conducted and Carlie Mathiebe, who is currently a service coordinator employed through Lutheran Social Services, will be taking over for Helen's position. This means that Carlie's position will need to be refilled at LSS along with adding a fifth position at LSS given the current referrals numbers.
 - The Long-Term Support Division has an intern starting in February. This intern will be providing support with outreach, gathering more information, updating resources, as well as support to staff.
 - In the past when the CCOP plan would come due, this committee would provide input on the plan and Elizabeth would then submit the plan to the state for approval. As of 2021, the State changed how the CLTS funding is provided to counties. With that change, the State sent counties a survey to explain how they intend to use the CCOP funding. Winnebago County is among several other counties who has a very large match amount that must be paid to the state each year and this includes CCOP and county dollars. CCOP funding is also used in instances where a child is not eligible for CLTS, is waiting for CLTS, or the service is a need but does not meet CLTS funding criteria. For instance, Wisconsin Sibs is not something that CLTS could fund; however, CCOP funding was utilized for a couple of siblings to attend camp over summer. Discussions continue to occur between counties and the State as to whether these match amounts, called MOEs, will continue long term as those amounts are based on historical figures that do not necessarily apply any longer.
 - Elizabeth stated there will be an increase in some CLTS service rates for 2022. The State shared a short memo, but no details have yet been provided. Not all services will be increased but the hope is for those that are, this may make those services more accessible as some rates are lower than providers will accept.
 - The CLTS program is in a renewal period with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid and this renewal will include some new services available under CLTS in 2022. More details will be shared in a future meeting on those changes.
- Operations during COVID-19:
 - **Elizabeth Wagner** reported that in-person home visits continue to be offered and are preferred; however, families do have the option to choose virtual.
 - The State has put annual reassessments of functional eligibility on pause during the pandemic and will continue to be on pause until at least March 2022. This means that no children could be accidentally disenrolled through the program if found functionally ineligible at the annual review due to lack of information or medical records. Initial eligibility screening is still required for new referrals.
- Waitlist Updates:

- **Elizabeth Wagner** reported referral numbers as: 17 in September, 26 in October, 13 in November, and 8 in December so far. At February's meeting, Elizabeth will provide a look back on 2021 referrals and enrollments.
- The current waitlist has 7 youth. The current process and timeline is: a referral is received, the assessment is completed within 45 days, the child's name is added to the state CLTS waitlist, and then within 30 days the child is enrolled onto the CLTS program. New youths enrolled: 10 in September, 6 in October, 14 in November, and 6 in December so far.
- Between September and now, there were a total of 14 youth that closed primarily due to transitioning to adult services. Two or three closures were due to families not having a need for the program at this time.
- Approximately 57 youth have been enrolled this year into CLTS. Typical caseload sizes are usually 40 to 45. With a steady stream of referrals that are expected to continue, positions will be added to meet the demand, to the extent possible.

5. Birth-to-Three:

- Operations during COVID-19:
 - **Wendy Hein** stated B-3 is working to wrap up end-of-year duties as B-3 will be closed for two weeks over the holidays. For the team, this means a bottle-neck issue may arise before the holiday break, to meet timelines for new referrals and reschedule visits that were cancelled due to illness. B-3 enrollment is staying pretty steady around 275 this month. Pre-COVID numbers were 300 to 310, so numbers are just a little low; however, referrals are at a normal rate with 90 referrals in November.
 - Wendy reported two openings for a speech-language pathologist and two teachers out with one on extended medical leave and the other on maternity.
 - Breakfast with Santa was canceled again this year. The hope is to be able to resume this next year.
 - In regards to COVID safety measures, families are still being screened on the mornings of their visit to make sure no one in the home is ill or has been exposed. There is about a little less than 1/3 cancellation rate. Wendy stated it has been challenging trying to manage all of the cancellations and the impact on the budget as there is no reimbursement for a cancellation.

6. CCS/CST Youth Services:

- Operations during COVID-19:
 - **Elizabeth Wagner** stated that behavioral health partners were unable to attend the meeting today and also had indicated they did not have any updates to share. **Mitch Cornils** stated he believed there are two positions that Behavioral Health has been looking to fill for about a year. There are also some retirements coming up so there will be a need to hire more therapists to fill those vacated positions.

7. 2021 Focus Areas and Committee Role:

- **Elizabeth Wagner** stated that Tara had brought up the topic at an earlier meeting regarding the gap in service options for youth who graduate from ABA and learning more, as a committee, on ways to support those youth differently. Elizabeth asked if anyone had ideas or next steps that could be done at this point. Terri had mentioned

Wisconsin Facets and that they may have some information for the group. Some shared interest in having some providers who offer services that could support these gaps present to this group. Elizabeth will seek out providers who could present on this topic for a future meeting.

- **Sharon Oberkrieser** brought up there is a new autism place on South Main Street called Caravel. Elizabeth stated that Caravel has a new location and additionally WEAP has a new location with ribbon-cutting tomorrow.
- **Elizabeth Wagner** stated that some providers that were in surrounding cities are coming to the area and might be a good thought for the next meeting. Elizabeth stated that the State expects her program to wait for ABA to occur and then look at some of those other services; however, she stated that there are some ways to be flexible within some of that framework as well to meet some of those needs.
- **Sharon Oberkrieser** stated there are always parents out there who have children with special needs that do not have the autism diagnosis, but still have some of the needs that behavioral agencies can work on. Even though services are not covered, Sharon felt there would be interest to know that those kinds of services are out there, even if they have to pay for them.
- **Tara Brzezinski** stated that Acceptational Minds has several locations and provides these types of services. Services might include training and educating the child to enhance their abilities for independent routines in order to work on personal hygiene, future career training, money management, meal prep, cooking, using community resources, and mentoring. Some CLTS providers may need to change who they can serve based on the new State rulings for seclusion and restraint.
- **Kathy Schumacher** stated there is another program that one of her families works with called Focus on Freedom that works in-home with teens.
- **Elizabeth Wagner** stated Moving Forward Mentoring has been at capacity in 2021. At one point in time, he had been hoping to expand to be closer to this area, but due to the pandemic, it is unknown if he has been able to proceed with that plan. Elizabeth stated that Focus on Freedom is out of the Oshkosh area and is owned by Marla Kopecky who works with youth on skill development. Fundamentals is very new to Winnebago County, so it remains to be seen how their services may impact youth as the program is meant to be intense and lasting approximately 6 months.
- **Wendy Hein** stated that her office has been talking about having providers come together for a "lunch and learn" for staff as there are a lot of new agencies. She is interested in inviting some of her team to come to view that part of the presentation.
- **Tara Brzezinski** indicated that another ABA provider in the area is InBloom which stems from the Milwaukee area; however, have been hiring FBAs in order to bring services into this area too. Elizabeth stated that the last she had heard that InBloom did not accept Medicaid/Badger Care and only utilized private insurance.
- **Elizabeth Wagner** stated that Launch is a newer ABA company in this area, as well. A few meetings ago, Launch presented to the group regarding the ABA services their agency provides. Fox Valley Autism also provides ABA services.
- **Tara Brzezinski** added that there is The Richardson School in Appleton. Though they are not targeting autism specifically, they have hired staff with that focus, however their primary youth served are those with mental health needs or other behavioral needs.

8. **2022 Meeting Dates:** The 2022 meetings of the Advisory Committee for Children's Voluntary Services have been scheduled at 12:30 PM for the following dates: **February 8, May 10, September 13, December 13.** Elizabeth will have the website calendar updated to reflect these upcoming meeting dates.

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