What Nevada Decision Makers Should Know!

BY: CHARLENE FROST, CPSP

There is a sign in the community that states “Children are 30% of the population, but 100% of the FUTURE!” It is up to the community to provide a path for the success and inclusion of children so that we have a successful future society. Children need to have good mental health if they are going to live up to their potential and live a life of good and positive experiences. Everyone should be willing to do what is best for themselves and the people around them.

There are a lot of factors that affect a child’s mental health status both positively and negatively. Mental health often impacts physical health, and vice-versa. The first tier of decision making affecting a child’s mental health is the family. Families know their children best and care for them the most. Family members sense if there are difficulties with mental health status of a child and are in the best spot to ask for help. Recognizing these difficulties early and getting the help the child and family needs, is necessary to assure good outcomes.

All children and youth have a right to lead happy and healthy lives; and deserve access to effective care to prevent or treat any mental health issues. Over the past five years in Nevada, we have seen the number of families seeking mental health treatment for their child increase by approximately 20% each year. The second tier of decision making involves public agencies and private providers whose role it is to provide effective children’s mental health services. This tier also involves public agencies utilizing accountability tools to ensure that families have access to quality mental health services provided by professional, licensed providers who are using best practice models.

The funding of quality children’s mental health care is both a private and public decision. The third tier of decision making is the responsibility of the family, the professional providers and the elected officials. It is important that the public voice of families is heard by those in Nevada who make the funding decisions. Although, the Nevada Legislature is responsible for enacting the laws that govern mental health in our state, ultimately they do not act without input from those who use the systems and those who provide the services. Legislative committees meet during the regular session but also between sessions. Families can impact decisions that affect their families by providing public comment during committee meetings or by writing letters, emails and contacting elected representatives to express concerns and give suggestions about improving the system of children’s mental health in Nevada.

Children’s mental health is everyone’s responsibility! More information about Interim Committees and Legislators can be found at www.leg.state.nv.us.

MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN

BY: DORITHIA COLEMAN, CPSP

Many of us have personal experiences that are unique and yet similar to experiences that other families are experiencing. These similar experiences can bring us together as a community in order to express satisfaction or to express the need for change. Many families experience multiple barriers in attempting to get help for their children and family. Some families may give up after repeated attempts that result in no change for the better. Persistence is key to obtaining help for our families. That same kind of persistence can lead to positive changes in policies and systems that now may seem unfriendly and uncaring to us.

Changes may not happen quickly; they may not happen in the manner that we expect. But changes that have families requested can be very important and meaningful. One example of positive change is the development and implementation of Mobile Crisis Response Teams, the utilization of the Wraparound Model to coordinate and monitor services for families of children with serious emotional disturbance, and the movement away from a medical model of service delivery to a family driven delivery system which is known as System of Care. Recently families, professionals, and students came together to discuss community needs, community successes, stigma and other topics related to children’s mental health. The attendance was overwhelming and even unexpected to some. Discussions of this kind take place every month across the state on a smaller scale at Children’s Mental Health Consortia committees. There are four Consortia that meet to discuss and brainstorm ways to make the systems that support children who have mental health needs across the state. The Clark, Rural, and Washoe Consortia each submit recommendations to state policy makers to assist them in making decisions that will benefit children and their families. The Nevada Children’s Behavioral Health Consortium brings all three of the regional consortium together and to effectively advocate for system changes that will make life better for children and families.

The consortium meetings are an excellent opportunity for family members who want to impact policy. Often, families are also needed to voice their concerns directly to the policy makers either by testifying in front of a legislative committee, writing or calling legislators, or by attending a forum. There are many ways that the “Family Voice” is needed to make systems work more effectively. Families can contact Nevada PEP for more information on how they can become involved and make a difference.
NEIGHBORHOOD FAMILY SERVICE CENTER

BY: CHARLENE FROST, CPSP

Update

Anxiety is the most common mental health concern for children and adults because anxious children and teens are often quiet and withdrawn, however, their symptoms frequently go unnoticed by their parents and teachers because they’re not acting out in a way that typically causes alarm. As a result, many never receive the help they desperately need.

If you live in the North Las Vegas area the North Neighborhood Care Center can assist you in getting the help, services and support that you may need. There are psychiatric case workers and therapists that can work to identify strengths of your child and family to start addressing any behavioral and/or mental health challenges that your family might be struggling with. These services are offered at no charge for families with no insurance or Medicaid Fee For Service up to age 18. The Neighborhood Care Center is an excellent community resource to assist families in getting the help that they need and can also help connect families to other resources in the community to help in other areas of the family's life.

HELPFUL TIP: As a parent, remember that you are the most influential person in your child’s life!

Inspirational THOUGHT

I’ve missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I’ve lost almost 300 games. 26 times I’ve been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I’ve failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.

– Michael Jordan

BY: MAGDALENA RUIZ, CPSP

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

Mental health and substance abuse disorders can impact children, youth, young adults, and their families; at school, at home, at work, and in their communities. Recent National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) data shows that 1 in 10 children and youth will have a serious mental health condition, with 50 percent of all lifetime cases beginning by the age of 14 and 75 percent by the age of 24. This is one reason that Youth Mental Health First Aid was developed and is being utilized nationwide.

Youth Mental Health First Aid is designed to teach community members how to help a young person (age 12-18) who is experiencing a mental health or addiction challenge or is experiencing a crisis. Youth Mental Health First Aid is primarily designed for adults who regularly interact with young people, such as parents, family members, caregivers, teachers, school staff, peers, neighbors, and health & human services workers. The course introduces common mental health challenges for youth, reviews typical adolescent development, and teaches a 5-step action plan for how to help young people in both crisis and non-crisis situations. Topics covered include anxiety, depression, substance abuse, disorders in which psychosis may occur, disruptive behavior disorders (including AD/HD), and eating disorders.

The trainings are ongoing around the state and there is a need for more instructors. To get more information about upcoming trainings in your area or if you would like to become a trainer go to http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs/take-a-course/course-types/youth/.
Family-To-Family Support

BY: CHERI DAY, CPSP

Family Voices is a family-led organization that promotes quality health care for all children and youth, particularly those with special needs. Veteran families of children with special health care needs volunteer to assist other families who are new to their child’s diagnosis with everything from finding providers to explaining Medicaid rules.

In Nevada, our Family Voices program is called Family Ties of Nevada. Family Ties of Nevada has a Parent Support Program. The program pairs parents with a “trained parent” who has experienced similar situations. These trained parents provide emotional support and information to families of individuals with special needs. Trained parents help reduce feelings of isolation for the families that they work with as well as a safe listening environment for families.

For more information about Family Ties, go to www.familytiesnv.org or call 1.866.326.8437.

The National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) also provides family-to-family support for family members of individuals who are living with a mental health condition. NAMI Family-to-Family provides mutual support and shared impact. Family members can experience compassion and reinforcement from others who understand their situation as well as helping others who may be going through similar situations.

NAMI Family-to-Family helps family members learn how to manage crises & solve problems, self-care and stress management strategies, developing confidence and stamina to provide support with compassion, finding and using local supports & services, information on mental health conditions and their effects on the brain, current treatments and the impact of mental illness on the entire family.

For more information about a NAMI chapter in your area go to http://naminevada.org or call 800.273.8255.
Upcoming Events

LAS VEGAS/HENDERSON

City of Las Vegas, Adaptive Recreation Division
250 N. Eastern Ave., 89101
Through the city’s Adaptive Recreation Division, community-based therapeutic recreation services provide opportunities for individuals to become and to stay active in the community. Individuals of all ages and ability levels will find a variety of recreational activities to enrich their leisure time. Contact: Cindy Moyes 702.229.4902 or cmoyes@lasvegasnevada.gov

Down Syndrome Organization of Southern Nevada
Contact Deann Cline 702.648.1990 for information, activities and supports visit www.dsosn.org

FEAT of Southern Nevada
(Families for Early Autism Treatment)
Provide support, encouragement, and guidance to parents and create an opportunity for them to benefit from contact with other parents with similar needs and concerns. 7055 Windy St. Ste. B Las Vegas, NV 89119 or call Jennifer Strobel 702.368.3328.

Give Me A Break, Inc. (GAB)
Respite days are the 3rd Saturday of each month. You must RSVP to reserve a spot toll free 866.486.2275.

Heart & Soul Discussion Group
For families with children diagnosed with a heart condition. Meetings are the 2nd Friday of each month at, The Children’s Heart Center, 3006 S. Maryland Parkway, from 5:30pm-6:30pm. Contact 702.967.3522 or visit the website for events activities calendar www.chfn.org

Nevada PEP Family Support Group
We meet the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 7211 W Charleston Blvd. Contact Nevada PEP for schedule go to www.nvpep.org/training-calendar or call 702.388.8899

Nevada PEP Grupo de Apoyo Familiar
Reunir el ultimo Miércoles de cada mes, en 7211 West Charleston Blvd. Contacto Nevada PEP por el horario www.nvpep.org/training-calendar 702.388.8899

Positive Supports for Children
Specific intervention to promote social, emotional behavioral functioning. Contact Christy Buckingham-Martin at 702.367.0306 or email: ps4children@lvcoxmail.com

Recreation and Experience Club (R.E.C.)
Year-round after school program for young people with disabilities, grades 9th-12th. Contact Sheri Cordray at 702.267.4065

Southern Nevada Hands and Voices
A statewide non-profit organization dedicated to supporting families and their children who are deaf or hard of hearing, as well as the professionals who serve them. Contact Southern Nevada Region-Summer Wright 702.769.5566 (voice/text) summer@nvhandsandvoices.org or visit www.nvhandsandvoices.org

Special Olympics of Southern Nevada
A variety of athletic activities for children with disabilities. Area Director Harry Mong 702.474.0690 harry@sonv.org

RENO/SPARKS

Applied Behavior Technologies (ABT)
ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) In-home services provide your child or young adult with one on one ABA therapy to target social skills, independence and problem behaviors in a convenient setting for your family. We specialize in providing parents and other caregivers with the tools they need to be successful with their child in all settings. Ages 8+ Contact Christine Benedetti at 775.354.1380 or visit www.appliedbehavioraltechnologies.com

Asperger's Support Group
Meets every other Tuesday at Starbucks on the corner of California and Virginia from 6:30pm-8pm. For more information contact John Maes 775.787.2904.

City of Reno Parks & Recreation
Recreation program for children with disabilities. Contact April Wolfe at 775.334.2262 or Wolf@reno.gov

Cerebral Palsy Parent Network
Contact Noran Behrens 775.832.6890

Down Syndrome Network of Northern Nevada Family Support Group
Monthly meetings the first Tuesday of every month from 5:45 PM - 7:30 PM. At Nevada Early Intervention Services 1301 Cordone Ave. Suite 190. For more information call 775.828.5159 or email dsnnninfo@gmail.com

Down Syndrome Network of Northern Nevada Family Support Group
Nos reunimos el primer martes de cada mes 5:45pm-7:30pm.

Down Syndrome Network of Northern Nevada
Area Director for Washoe Tanja Ramacciotti 775.772.7034 washosho@gmail.com

The Solace Tree
A support group for families grieving from a personal loss. Call 775.324.7723 email info@solacetree.org or visit www.solacetree.org.

RURALS

F.E.A.T.
(Families for Effective Autism Treatment) of the Carson Valley-Minden, F.E.A.T. is an organization in the Carson Valley that was formed to support and help families with children who have received the diagnosis of Autism. We offer a network of support where families can meet and discuss issues surrounding autism and treatment options. We want to be active in raising awareness in our community. And we will be strong advocates for our children in helping to find EFFECTIVE treatments. Visit www.feaatcv.org for more information.

Ron Woods Family Resource Center
We create lasting community-wide cooperative effort between the private sector and governmental agencies to promote healthy family relationships through education and support services. We currently offer a vast array of services that range from basic needs assistance to parenting classes and after school programs. 2621 Northgate Ln. Ste. 62 Carson City, 89706. Contact Wendy at 775.884.2269 info@carson-family.org
Recently it was announced that the State of Nevada Division of Child & Family Services received a System of Care Expansion Grant designed to expand System of Care values and principles to communities across the state. The Clark County Children’s Mental Health Consortium has been working diligently to partner with the state in designing a plan that will benefit children with mental health needs and their families by continuing to reach out for input from families. The Clark County Children’s Mental Health Consortium is a multi-agency collaboration of community members and state government representatives that are building the strategic plan and the communication plan for the grant.

Meanwhile, Consortium members and other community stakeholders are also working on developing the priorities for Clark County Children’s Mental Health. The priorities help set the stage for developing the status report for the next legislative session as well as presenting what’s working and what’s not to our state government. For example, for many years Clark County Children’s Mental Health Consortium saw the need for a Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT) to help prevent unnecessary hospitalizations and keep children in their homes with supports. In January 2014, funding was found to start a small MCRT and the outcomes from this small demonstration led to an expansion of these services in October 2014. They have shown success in diverting kids from hospitals and providing intensive short term stabilization services in their homes and communities.

The Consortium also actively supported the Clark County School District in developing a Mental Health Transition Team that is there to support families and youth who are transitioning back to school after being hospitalized in a mental health hospital setting. This team is designed to help better support students as they come back to school and help ensure a successful transition. Parents and community members are always welcome to attend Consortium meetings. For more information about the Clark County Children’s Mental Health Consortium and workgroups including dates and times of upcoming meetings, please contact Lori Brown at Lori.Brown@dcfs.nv.gov.

**Resource Review**

**Understanding the Defiant Child, by Russell L. Barkley**

This is a 34 minute video that gives information about Oppositional Defiant Disorder. It goes over the symptoms, causes, and treatment for the disorder. Real-life scenes of family-life and interviews with parents are included to help understand the disorder.

The video makes it clear that when children are young some non-compliance and defiance is considered normal. It encourages parents who are concerned about their child’s non-compliance and defiance to consult a mental health professional to determine if the child could benefit from treatment. The video also explains that frequently when children are diagnosed with Oppositional Defiant Disorder, it is found they also have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. The video discusses the importance of early diagnosis and treatment to help prevent more serious mental health needs from developing.

This video and other resources such as DVDs, books, and handouts are available for loan at the NV PEP Resource Libraries in Las Vegas and Reno.

**Family Story**

**BY: MATT STANCIL**

My experience with Nevada PEP has gone beyond my expectations and has met my child’s needs abundantly. It all started with a phone call from a referral from my Aunt. That phone call would change my son’s life forever.

I was a single father who had just been awarded full custody of his two boys. One of the boys has special needs. I had no clue how to help him in school. This is where Nevada PEP came into my life. My Family Specialist is a true blessing from God. I met with her last year for the first time and explained my concerns to her. She informed me of my rights as a parent and showed me how to get the ball rolling on how to change my son’s IEP at school. Before I found Nevada PEP, I was just getting the run around from the school district.

My Family Specialist has taught me how to email the teachers, principal and other school staff and to use the correct format letter to get the school to respond. She has taken time and showed me how to read an IEP which was overwhelming to me as I imagine it is to others. She truly made me feel like she cared about my child’s needs and you could tell she knew her job quite well. She has been with me and as a support from Nevada PEP at various meetings and continues to encourage me and provide options.

My son’s therapist referred me to a Division of Child and Family Services program called Wraparound in Nevada. We meet once a month with everyone in my son’s life. We try to come up with ideas to help my son be more successful. I can always count on Nevada PEP to be there by my side to support me and what I want for my family.

I would highly recommend Nevada PEP to anyone who has a child with special needs. They are truly a life saver.
The Washoe County Children’s Mental Health Consortium (WCCMHC) had been very busy this year. The WCCMHC supported Nevada First Lady’s Children’s Mental Health Summit in May and Nevada PEP Run Walk Roll Against Bullying in September on top of all the regular work that the WCCMHC does each year.

There are four workgroups that are tasked with working on goals to support the WCCMHC ten year plan. The workgroups are:

Workgroup #1- Developing Access To Care Guide. Over the last year this workgroup has worked diligently on gathering input from parents, service providers and community partners on the challenges they face with accessing services and the appropriate services their children and family needs. This Access To Care Guide is intended to make it easier to access information on Medicaid such as doctors, specialists and grievances with Medicaid and or providers. The workgroup hopes to present the Guide to the full Consortium very soon.

Workgroup #2- Helping Families To Help Themselves. The workgroup has been focusing on Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA). The YMHFA is a model about connecting youth and families to supports. Currently, the workgroup is working on ways to build capacity and develop more YMHFA trainers to be better able to handle the demand for this important training.

Workgroup #3- Help Youth Succeed In School. The workgroup continued to help youth be successful in school by collaborating, planning and presenting suicide prevention, bullying prevention and LGBTQ engagement and supports workshops for Washoe County School District (WCSD) staff, parents and youth.

Workgroup #4- Youth Transitioning To Adult Services. The workgroup has been developing a plan to help youth transitioning to adult services in a more supportive way that will make the transition smoother. In order to ensure that the plan would work for youth, the youth voice was included in the planning and development of the model. Last summer, the workgroup hosted a workshop facilitated by Dr. Hewitt B. “Rusty” Clark. Dr. Clark is the Director of the National Network on Youth Transition for Behavioral Health and is a Professor Emeritus at the University of South Florida. Dr. Clark is also the developer of the Transition to Independence Process (TIP) model and was able to give feedback to the workgroup on the work that was just being started as well as some suggestions for the future. The workgroup has plans to consult with Dr. Clark once again as this plan moves closer to completion.

Washoe County Children’s Mental Health Consortium invites families and youth to join us at our monthly meeting. The WCCMHC meeting are the third Thursday of each month at Northern Nevada Children’s Adolescent Services located at 2655 Enterprise Road Reno Nevada. For more information contact the WCCMHC Chair Cara Paoli at cepaoli@src.state.nv.us.

COLLABORATION

By: DORITHIA COLEMAN, CPSP

The Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT) in Clark County and Washoe County MCRT offers short-term assistance and case management services inside and outside of the home for families of youth and youth under the age of 18 who are experiencing a mental health crisis that poses a threat to their stability in the home, school and/or community. The goal of this service is to keep youth at home with their family working through the crisis when possible, avoiding in-patient psychiatric hospitalization in many circumstances. Nevada PEP works collaboratively with MCRT to provide family support during stabilization and after transition to traditional services in the community. More information can be found at www.kNOwcrisis.com including contact information and hours of operation.

Nevada Commission on Behavioral Health

BY: CHARLENE FROST, CPSP

In August 2015, it was announced that Nevada’s application to the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for a System of Care (SOC) Implementation and Expansion Grant was awarded to the state for $11 million over four years. The grant is designed to address mental health services for children with serious emotional disturbances by developing comprehensive mental health services and wraparound support to help children and their families to be successful at home, school and in the community.

The Commission on Behavioral Health has been working on a Strategic Plan and Communication Plan utilizing the Children’s System of Care Behavioral Health Subcommittee to facilitate collaboration of stakeholders in the design of both plans. Members from each Consortium were asked to be a part of the Subcommittee to ensure that all areas of the state were represented and had the opportunity to offer their unique perspectives and specific issues that affect children and families that are struggling with mental health needs. These two plans will be finalized soon and will serve as a guide to implementing the goals of the grant.
Collectively, the rural counties of Nevada account for approximately 12.3% of the state’s population spread across an expansive 87% of the state’s land mass. The goal of the Rural Children’s Mental Health Consortium (RCMHC) ten year strategic plan is to create a sustainable and accountable system of mental health care that fits the rural setting. The following are goals that the RCMHC is emphasizing.

Goal #1 Increase the Rural Mental Health Workforce by developing partnerships between higher education and mental health governance to develop a plan to align education and workforce development to encourage growth of more mental health professionals in the rural regions.

Goal #2 Increase Transitional Support to Youth Receiving Treatment in Inpatient & Residential Treatment Centers, Especially those Out-Of-State by ensuring a smooth transition for youth re-entering the community, school and family environments through strengthening discharge planning, case management and coordination of appropriate supports including respite and recreational services.

Goal #3 Provide Appropriate Mental Health Providers to Public Schools by supporting partnerships of schools, Rural Clinics and private providers to allow for access to mental health services in rural school districts.

Goal #4 Outreach using innovative solutions to address historical barriers to services in rural communities. The Consortium would like to focus on promoting greater use of technology, including telemedicine, to enhance mental health services for families and expanded use of web-based educational trainings, eliminating long travel times to receive services in other communities.

To meet these goals RCMHC members and partners continually reach out to rural communities through trainings for families and professionals, as well as other community events that promote family services. RCMHC would like to invite parents, students, youth and community members to attend their monthly meetings. The Consortium meets the second Tuesday of the month. For more information please contact Jan Marson at otplayroom@aol.com.

My child was just found eligible under Serious Emotional Disturbance. Does that mean my child will be in a special classroom?
The category that a child is found eligible under to receive special education services only determines that the child is eligible for services. The services and placement are decided upon by the IEP Team based on the student’s individual needs. Parents, teachers, and other members of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team work together to decide the most appropriate educational placement for a student with special needs.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that, to the maximum extent appropriate, every child with a disability should be educated with his or her nondisabled peers in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

Also per IDEA, “special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.”

The IEP should contain statements of the special education and related services that are required to meet the unique needs of the student, and will be the basis for providing the student with a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

For more information on eligibility or placement, please contact Nevada PEP at 1-800-216-5188 or visit our website at www.nvpep.org or consider attending a Nevada PEP training. Our training schedule, including webinars, can be found on our website as well.
Mission Statement
To increase the opportunities for home, community, and school success for children with disabilities, including those who are at risk or who have serious emotional disturbances, their families and their service providers, through education, encouragement and empowerment activities.

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- Mental Health Consortiums
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- Ask The Advocate

Nevada PEP is a participating agency for:
United Way of So. Nevada
Designated gift # 2192

United Way of No. Nevada & the Sierra
Designated gift # 27052

MGM Mirage Voice Foundation
Designated gift # 120885

Combined Federal Campaign #29441

Volunteer Opportunity
BY DIANE LOMBARDO

Nevada PEP applauds the dedication and support of our amazing volunteers statewide. Opportunities are always abundant and all are welcome to join our PEP VIP Family. Simply go online to complete the volunteer submission form at www.nvpep.org, or call, 702-388-8899 to speak to Diane Lombardo in Las Vegas or 775-448-9950 to speak to Kelli Walker in Reno, e-mail dlombardo@nvpep.org in southern Nevada or kwalker@nvpep.org in our satellite office, or visit one of our offices and begin a rewarding volunteer experience. Volunteers are vital to the operation and delivery of PEP services. Projects range from assembling packets to preparing bulk mail.

Thanks to the continuing efforts of volunteers, the staff at Nevada PEP is able to focus on the needs of families being served. We would like to proudly recognize our awesome volunteers and thank each and every one for their continued dedication and selfless contributions of time and energy and accept our heartfelt gratitude.