



BELOIT CMT: POWERING FORWARD TOGETHER

The School District of Beloit engaged a broadly diverse team of community agency leaders and families to form the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Core Management Team.



Within the first 14 months, the Core Management Team's networking efforts were making a difference—mental health supports for students were gaining traction.

"We committed to building a strong collaborative network built on respect and focused on mental wellness for all students. By working together and not in silos we can better meet students' mental health needs."

**- Shawn Fredricks
SS/HS Project Manager**

→ CHALLENGE

Senna* struggled throughout her young life to feel like she belonged. Although she connected with support early on, she did not follow through due to the stigma around mental health. Senna's anxious feelings of not fitting in continued; she was not sleeping, her grades were dropping, and she got in trouble with alcohol at school. Senna is not unique.

In Wisconsin, the significant shortage of school mental health providers has limited access to mental health services for children, youth, and families. Rates of suicide among youth have increased over the last 15 years; as of 2015, it was the second leading cause of death among individuals ages 15–24. In Wisconsin, up to one in five youth experience a mental health disorder in a given year, and roughly 60% of Wisconsin youth with a major depressive episode did not receive treatment in 2013. Students with mental health problems often struggle with academics, have difficulty interacting with teachers and peers, all that affect their ability to focus and learn.

(<https://healthysafechildren.org/sites/default/files/WI-Spotlight-508.pdf>)

As a district, we realized that to address student mental health needs alone would never be enough; we needed to wrap our students and families with high-powered interventions. This challenge called for a team of bold, innovative, and forward-thinking leaders "to hold hands and walk through the darkness together."

*Name changed to protect privacy

→ SOLUTION

Through the Safe Schools/Healthy Students (SS/HS) grant, our district was required to convene a Core Management Team (CMT) throughout the life of the grant. The team was composed of community members, agency representatives, district staff, families, and students. This group began by reviewing what services were already in place in the School District of Beloit and the community to support the mental health needs of students. Following the needs assessment, the team researched options and crafted a plan to address the gaps in mental health services and supports. Little did we know that within that process, one of the benefits of the SS/HS grant was not about implementing a specific program—it was about collaboration, about connecting, and about combining our resources to best meet the needs of the students. Along with planning, problem solving, and solidifying implementation at each CMT meeting, the team initiated a "one-minute challenge." This practice allowed each SS/HS partner to share what they wanted the group to know about their recent mental health-related efforts, successes, or upcoming events.

“Our collaboration has helped us understand our community better; it has opened up resources to everyone and really made us connect to meet the needs of our youth.”

- Debbie Fischer,
Youth2Youth 4 Change

“My mission on the CMT was to be the voice of those who can't communicate. I wanted the team to know that culture counts and that bilingual services are the key.”

- Cecilia Ramirez, Latino Service Provider Coalition

“The CMT has been one of the most meaningful groups I belong to. I have learned so much about the multitude of service offerings throughout our community.”

- Laura Neece MA, NCC, LPC
Counseling Care Center



These personalized activities promoted meaningful connections and stimulated thinking. Through these collaborative efforts, the group gained a clearer picture of students' needs and started to understand the intense struggles they experience. We grew as a community.

→ RESULTS

The collective efforts of the CMT played a significant role in bringing about needed mental health services, programs, and supports for students and families. The CMT also kept a focus on sustainability, shared resources, trainings, and served to strengthen school-community relationships.

Concentrated collaboration with Beloit Health Systems (BHS) secured a school-based Counseling Care Center for students throughout the district. The Center started with one part-time position, which eventually increased to three full-time staff. This school year, 122 students accessed mental health treatment services, with over 827 appointments scheduled. BHS and the District also partnered in implementing SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral to Treatment), an evidence-based practice designed to identify, reduce, and prevent students' use and abuse of, and dependence on, alcohol and illicit drugs.

Additional successes attained by the CMT Collaborative include:

- Youth2Youth 4 Change, the Boys & Girls Club, Juvenile Justice, and Community Action all learned the essential elements of another high-powered evidence-based intervention, Restorative Practice, with over 45 individuals completing the training program.
- NAMI, the Beloit Police Department, area agencies, and the district ensured that Crisis Intervention Team training was implemented with fidelity when responding to youth crises on campus and in the community.
- The Latino Service Provider Coalition brought the needs and concerns of the Latino community to life for CMT members and facilitated language access for students and their families needing this service.
- Youth2Youth 4 Change is now connected, engaged, and utilized in classrooms and schools throughout the district, sharing prevention messaging and collaborating with new funding sources.

→ SUSTAINING SUCCESS

As the 2018–19 school year starts, and the SS/HS grant comes to an end, the CMT is committed to continue its efforts through a new initiative. The district was awarded a \$75,000 School-Based Mental Health Services State Grant for the School District of Beloit Mental Health Collaboration Project. The CMT will continue with collaboration, bold and innovative thinking, and strategic planning to move school mental health forward in Beloit's schools and communities.

Exciting News! The Counseling Care Clinic is expanding mental health services directly to students with another site at Beloit Learning Academy. Collaboration at work!

**MORE MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS
NOW SEEK AND RECEIVE
APPROPRIATE MENTAL
HEALTH SERVICES.**

For more information about the program, contact:

Lynn Hamilton, AODA Coordinator

(608) 361-3143

<https://www.sdb.k12.wi.us/>

lhamilton@sdb.k12.wi.us

1225 Fourth Street, Beloit, WI 53511