

The TRUST Partnership Meeting Minutes

Friday, May 12, 2023

A meeting of The TRUST Partnership was held at Southern Eagle Distribution on May 12, 2023. The meeting was hosted by Gail Seifert, Executive Director for Ware Children's Initiative. 32 Partners attended the meeting.

Greeting/Introduction

Gail S. greeted all attendees and welcomed them to the meeting. Reverend Kit Brinson led everyone in a prayer.

Power of Recovery Language

Viva Steed, Clinical Director for Unison Behavioral Health, led everyone in the first part of a presentation on the power of recovery language. Viva shared about the power language has when talking about addictions. She led the group in a "Say This Not That" activity to describe what to say when discussing addiction.

Group Thoughts-stigma and triggers

Sarah Jumper shared a story of her own that encompassed the importance of giving without judgement to help people find freedom and redemption from homelessness and substance use disorder. Sarah also reminded everyone that "we can not guilt or shame someone out of the cycle of addiction." In her story, Sarah explained that "harm reduction teaches us that showing up without judgement and providing unconditional community and support is one of the best ways to empower people to make positive changes in their own lives."

Becki Johnson, the MAT Program Coordinator with Unison, shared that sometimes the trigger could be simply not being acknowledge. Becki shared a story of her own to show that sometimes the smallest things make the biggest difference in someone's life. Becki said "this is not something we can just speak about, you have to actually be able to live this. Trauma is one of the biggest causes of addiction, and I believe one of the biggest defeats to trauma is love."

Committee Updates

Emily Allen, Grant Project Coordinator with the Southeast Health District, gave an update on a retreat that the RCORP grant is helping provide. The committee chairs and co-chairs, members on the TRUST leadership team, some community partners, and a few people who are in recovery and desire to become peer specialist, will be going to Savannah at the end of May. The retreat will provide prevention trainings, Narcan training, and support for those who are wanting to become peer specialist.

Prevention Education Committee: Maggie Santana, Community Awareness Coordinator/Victim Advocate for Satilla Advocacy services, told everyone that last month the prevention team met at the Ware County Health Department. Maggie shared the acronym that the team came up with, Trust Respect Unite Share Transcend. The team will decide how to implement this acronym and use that when providing trainings. The prevention team also decided that we would provide trainings at each TRUST

meeting that may provide post credits for some partners and to also bring knowledge and raise more awareness.

Harm Reduction Committee: Sarah J. updated the group on activities the committee is working on. The committee is working on getting a Narcan information event into Brantley County, specifically. Sarah shared that she is looking for a space in that community to hold the event. The committee is also working on compiling a group of meetings (AA/NA, Faith-based recovery groups, support groups, etc.) to share.

Communications Committee: Chandler McGee, Communications Specialist with the Southeast Health District, gave an update the brochures being created to hand out to community partners to share resources. Chandler also shared that they have secured a contract with a radio partner to start producing the radio PSAs in English and Spanish in all 3 counties.

Law Enforcement/First Responders Committee: Michelle Lee, Deputy Director and Pierce County EMA/Fire, shared that the agencies participated in the DEA Take Back Day. The Patterson Police has an officer at the courthouse and had no one show up. Michelle explained that she thinks this is why they stopped participating in the Take Back Day, but the boxes at the Sheriff stations in each county are steadily getting medications dropped off. She said it was not the success they hoped for, but people are still utilizing it, so they are still pushing that information out via Facebook that the Take Back Boxes are there year-round. Michelle also mentioned that Pierce County is now set up with ODMAP along with Waycross PD and Brantley Sheriff office. Hopefully, this will allow better tracking of the overdoses in our community.

September Recovery Bus Tour

Kathy Sweat with Bethesda Recovery and The Hub explained that The Hub is a recovery organization group that is organized by peers and for peers of people with substance use disorder. Kathy stated that The Hub has had some set backs and is needing volunteers and peers. They have an opportunity to train the ER staff on information about recovery and where resources are for people that go to the ER. Kathy is looking for a contact from the ER so that she can put them in contact Georgia Counsel for Recovery. Gail S. shared about Know Your Worth from Coffee County that is also being extended to Ware County. Gail S. shared the statistic that between October and December of last year Ware County was second in the state for people using the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline number.

Kathy shared that in September the Clinton Foundation, Georgia Department of Behavioral Health, and Georgia Council for Recovery will be sponsoring a month-long bus tour throughout Georgia. They will be going to, mostly, bigger cities, but they will be coming to rural South Georgia and stopping in Waycross on September 5, 2023. They will be pulling into the Phoenix parking lot and having a 30-minute opportunity to be a part of this organization. They will also be stopping in Homerville. This is to promote recovery and speak against the stigma surround SUD. Kathy invited TRUST partners to be a part of this event. They are also going to be doing a documentary during this time and Waycross will have a 2-minute segment in the Documentary.

MAT Medications

Dr. Fady Henein is the Medical director of St Illa Crisis Stabilization Unit and Residential Program with Unison Behavioral Health. Dr. Henein presented, over zoom, on the MAT Program and the different medications used for this program. He began the presentation by describing the main medication that is used, Suboxone. Suboxone is a combination of buprenorphine and naloxone. Buprenorphine is the main ingredient and is a partial agonist. Dr. Henein explained that it is much less likely to cause euphoria or an overdose as long as it is not taken with other substances. The idea of giving patients Suboxone is harm reduction. Dr. Henein stated that most studies suggest that the risk of relapse without treatment or medicines is about 90% after 1 year and with treatment or medicines the risk of relapse is about 20%-25%. The presentation also included information on when it is safe to start patients on Suboxone and information about pregnant patients who are dependent on opioids. After discussing Suboxone, Dr. Henein discussed another medicine used for MAT, Vivitrol. Vivitrol is a long-acting injectable form of Naltrexone. Compared to Suboxone, which is a partial agonist, Naltrexone blocks the receptors in the brain, so it is an antagonist. It is approved for treatment with opioid use disorder and alcohol use disorder. Opioids must be out of the system before patients are given Naltrexone or Vivitrol. Dr. Henein also explained risks that can come with using this medication. The last medication that was discussed was Methadone, however it is not a medication used at MAT Program with Unison Behavioral Health. It has been shown to be equally effective as Suboxone in terms of decreasing overdose and other effects of opioid use disorder, however it is considered a full agonist, more likely to cause euphoria, and does not have a “ceiling effect” like suboxone. Dr. Henein explained that overdose is still much less likely with Methadone than compared to other opioids such as heroin, oxycodone, and fentanyl. After the presentation Dr. Henein received questions from the attendees.

Stigma Survey Results

Destiny Jordan, Data Analyst for Share Health presented the results from the Stigma Survey. The presentation included information on the background of the survey, stigma/biases, and the survey results. The survey was a 23-question survey and the purposes were to assess the knowledge and attitudes of the community towards Substance Use Disorders and Opioid Use Disorders. The questions were categorized in 5 different statements: opioid use disorder, opioid use disorder treatment, bias/stigma, Narcan, and infectious disease services. There were 75 participants that participated in the survey (31 in Ware, 6 in Brantley, 5 in Pierce, and 32 at a previous TRUST meeting). After giving a brief background of bias and stigma, Destiny shared the data from the survey. For example, 20% of people agreed that “if a person is addicted to drugs they can stop using if they really want to.” However, when looking at opioid use disorder, majority of participants did agree that it is a real illness, and anyone can be addicted to pain medications. Destiny shared that for the statement “people with substance abuse disorders deserve to receive transplants” 27% of participants disagreed with this statement. Destiny explained that these results show that there needs to be a lot of education in our community around resources. After sharing all the results from the survey, Destiny ended the presentation by asking 3 questions: 1) What do you think this data is telling us? 2) Do you see opportunities of improvement in your community? 3) How do you suggest we address the stigma in the tri-county communities?

Power of Recovery Continued

Viva S. finished up the power of recovery language presentation by sharing 2 videos. One video was from an organization called Shatter Proof that Viva encouraged the TRUST partnership to look into further.

Testimonial

Becki J. introduced Megan Osteen. Megan shared her personal story of recovery with the attendees. By the end of her story Megan explained that “Unison and the MAT program has helped her tremendously” Megan shared that the community at Unison has been one of the most impactful parts of her journey with recovery.

Closing Remarks/Adjourn

Gail S. reminded everyone to grab their lunch and the meeting was adjourned.

Emily Allen, Grant Project Coordinator, Southeast Health District
Recording Secretary for meeting 5/12/2023