

## The TRUST Partnership Meeting Minutes

**Thursday, March 14, 2024**

A meeting of the TRUST partnership was held at the Southern Georgia Regional Commission on Thursday, March 14, 2024. 36 partners attended the meeting. The meeting was hosted by Ware Children's Initiative.

### **Welcome**

Emily Allen, Grant Project Coordinator for the Southeast Health District, read the opening statement to begin the meeting. Sarah Jumper, Peer Support Committee Chair with the TRUST, read an introduction of what the TRUST Partnership is. Susan Haddock, Executive Director for Ware Children's Initiative, welcomed all attendees, directed everyone to the "Community Standards" placed on their tables, and encouraged everyone to participate in a moment of silence to remember why we were all gathered.

### **Break Bread Session-Harm Reduction in Our Everyday Lives**

To start the break bread session Emily A. shared a definition of Harm Reduction that stated, "harm reduction is any behavior or strategy that helps reduce the risk of harm to yourself or other." After writing this definition down each table worked together to come up with ways that they use harm reduction in their everyday lives. The lists consisted of behaviors/activities/items such as condoms, life jackets, seat belts, outlet covers, umbrella, therapy, house hold budgets, annual doctor visits, etc. Emily A. shared that this activity was to get people thinking about harm reduction in a way that is more generalized and more applicable to their lives, so that everyone can be more open to the idea when discussing it with substance use and opioid use disorder.

### **Introduction to Crucial Conversations**

Emily A. began by introducing that the Crucial Conversations training is a training offered at the SEHD for employees. Emily A. explained that while herself and some other co-workers were in the training, they realized that there are crucial conversations that come up during TRUST meetings. She began by giving the definition that a crucial conversation is "a discussion between two or more people where stakes are high, opinions vary, and emotions run strong." Next, attendees discussed at their tables how they handle being under stress. During this overview attendees discussed three main questions

- What is your style under stress?
- Think of a recent crucial conversation you have had. How would you grade yourself in the way you handled it? How could improving your dialogue skills benefit your relationship?
- Think about some of the toughest conversations. What are cues (physical, emotional, and behavioral) that your brain was beginning to disengage, and your emotions were driving you away from dialogue?

After the discussions Emily A. introduced and reviewed the law of crucial conversation card that was given to everyone. As she went over the card with everyone, she stated that it is important to remember "when safety is threatened, trust is broken, and silence and violence occur."

Emily A. shared that if this was a training their organization was interested in, it may be possible to contract with the SEHD's workforce development team to provide the training.

## **Break**

### **Trauma Informed activity and Making Sense of your Worth**

Susan H. did an activity with 2 volunteers. She started the activity by explaining that a lot of times when we start looking at trauma or behaviors we think “well I went through that, I can handle it. Or they reacted differently than I would have.” But we do not always know exactly what is going on. Susan H. would read a scenario, for example, “as you take your Jenga piece out think about how you would feel if you turned something in late at work and your boss was really frustrated with you.” With each scenario the attendees were able to compare the stability between the two Jenga sets that the volunteers were taking pieces out of. Susan H. explained that we all have different life experiences and attachment styles and with that we are also learning how to regulate. After the Jenga activity Susan H. explained that just like the two Jenga sets have a different base and one falls quicker, it is the same with people in life. We never know what someone else is going through, and “we do not always know what their Jenga set looks like.”

Next Susan H. discussed a recent training she went to called “Making Sense of Your Worth.” She attended with two other child and adolescent therapist from Unison Behavioral Health. Susan H. handed out a “list of lies” that said things such as “I am not good enough” or “I am not smart enough.” She explained that these are the lies that we tell ourselves and that the world tells us, but that the training she attended was about how to separate that lie from ourselves. She explained that sometimes, because of the lies we have been told, we forge that we are “precious and priceless” and the people around us are “precious and priceless.” Susan H. also discussed having boundaries in our lives with certain people even though as a human being they are still “precious and priceless.” She explained that the training is set up as an 8-week training, and each week you pick a lie that you may have been told or that you tell yourself and work to figure out where it came from and work to separate that lie from yourself. Susan H. said that she would love to be able to go into organizations and do this training with people. Susan H. shared that the training can be done 2 hours once a week for 8 weeks or 1 hour once a week for 16 weeks.

## **OATH**

Niki Spivey, the interim Executive Director and Navigator for OATH, and Ken Taft, the chairmen for OATH shared about what Okefenokee Alliance for the Homeless (OATH) is and how they help their clients. OATH started in 2016 and officially became a nonprofit in 2019. Niki S. explained that OATH has a business office and is open Monday-Thursday. She explained that when client comes in the very first thing, they do is get to know them, build a relationship, hear their story, and make them feel worth something. Niki S. explained that a lot of the time the people they see have no documentation (ID, birth certificate, or social security card) and getting an ID, birth certificate or social security card is difficult when they have none of the above. Niki S. continued to say that OATH helps “bite away at this elephant because you can’t eat a whole elephant at once.” She explained that sometimes the goal for the whole week is to come into OATH every day, get a hot meal and a shower voucher. With the documentation the first thing they work on is a birth certificate, then they can make sure they have a medical record, then they get go get a social security card, and next they apply for food stamps in order to get two pieces of mail to prove that the client lives in the state of GA to get the ID. This process can take anywhere from 2-4 weeks before being able to get all the documentation to begin applying for housing,

emergency food stamps, applying for jobs, etc. Niki S. explained that this is just the very first step to getting into OATH and even during this process client have nowhere to stay, because there is only 1 shelter in the Waycross area for men and it only has beds. And there is one shelter in the area for women who are escaping their abuser. Because of the lack of shelters in the Waycross area, Niki explained that they must transport people to bigger cities such as Savannah, Jacksonville, Valdosta, Atlanta, Macon, etc. in order to get them into a shelter. Niki S. said, “they strive at OATH to help each client make the next best decision in order to address the problem at hand.” Niki closed by sharing that we do have tent communities in our area, but that because we live in a rural community, they hide. Niki also shared that they are not “homeless people” they are “people experiencing homelessness.”

OATH provides lunch Monday-Thursday along with shower vouchers, laundry vouchers. Niki shared the QR code for the meal train, the link to their amazon wish list, and the link to their volunteer sign up that is on their Facebook page.

### **TRUST Poster**

Emily A. shared that her and Ambi Bess, Chronic Disease Prevention Manager and Public Health Analyst for the Southeast Health District, were able to go to Washington, D.C. for a reverse site visit with the RCORP Grant. While at the conference they were able to showcase a poster showing successes that the TRUST has had. Emily A. shared this poster with the attendees at the TRUST meeting.

### **Rat Park Experiment Discussion**

During this time a video was shared about the Rat Park Experiment that helps explain that the opposite of addiction is connection. After watching the video, Sarah J. shared about her personal experience that related to the video and experiment. Sarah stated that is important to “love people out of addiction instead of forcing them to find their ‘rock bottom.’” The attendees then had a conversation at their tables about how this video changed how they think about addiction. One person shared “all of us rely on support to succeed so why should addiction be any different.” Another table discussed how we need more support in our communities specifically from parents, schools, and churches to educate about drugs.

### **Speaker’s Bureau Training/Media Training**

A video was shared from Chandler McGee, Public Information Officer/Risk Communicator with the Southeast Health District, and Katie Hadden, Emergency preparedness Coordinator with the Southeast Health District. The video shared a media/speaker’s bureau training that will be happening on May 21, 2024 from 9:00AM to 12:00PM.

### **Hope Bag Donation Drive**

Allena Thomas, TRUST Outreach Coordinator with Unison Behavioral Health MAT Program, shared about an event the MAT program was doing called the Hope Bag Drive. The Hope bag drive is happening on March 21, 2024 at Mary Street Park from 1:00PM to 4:00PM and donations from the list on the flyer are welcome.

**Awards and Celebrate Recovery**

Heather Peebles, Special Projects Coordinator at the Southeast Health District, presented the Bridge Builder award to Emily A. and the Fresh Ideas Start Here Award to Ambi B. Lastly, Destiny was celebrated for graduating her recovery program, and then everyone else in recovery was celebrated as well.

**Closing Remarks**

Emily A. thanked everyone for attending and the meeting ended with a moment of silence. Attendees were encouraged to grab their lunches and stay for the All Recovery Meeting if interested.

Emily Allen, Grant Project Coordinator  
Recording Secretary for meeting