AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

FAIRFAX COUNTY NEIGHBORHOOD & COMMUNITY SERVICES PREVENTION UNIT | ISSUE 8 | JUNE-JULY 2016

NEW BLUEPRINT CHARTS DIRECTION TO IMPROVED CHILDREN'S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

BY **JIM GILLESPIE**, DIRECTOR OF FAIRFAX COUNTY SYSTEMS OF CARE OFFICE

Promoting gatekeeper trainings, like Kognito Friend 2 Friend, is one of the key Blueprint strategies.

In August 2015, the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Policy and Management Team initiated the development of a multi-year plan for children's behavioral health services in the Fairfax-Falls Church community. They directed that the plan support the creation of a system of care framework that addresses the full continuum of behavioral health services, from prevention through intensive intervention.

Last fall, a thirty member planning team comprised of county human services staff, school staff, non-profit representatives, family organizations, youth representatives, and George Mason University faculty was convened. The planning team was charged with developing a vision and mission for the initiative and with establishing goals, strategies, action steps and a timetable for implementation.

The plan, or "blueprint," developed by the planning team and approved by CPMT on March 25, establishes the following vision, mission and goals for our local behavioral health system of care. The May and June issues of the Children's Services Act (CSA) Newsletter (found at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csa) present specific strategies and action steps to be accomplished over the next three years.

Vision

Provide a spectrum of effective, community-based services and supports for children and youth with or at risk for mental health or other challenges and their families, that is organized into a coordinated network, builds meaningful partnerships with families and youth, and addresses their cultural and linguistic needs, so that all children and youth in the Fairfax-Falls Church community are socially, emotionally, mentally, and behaviorally healthy and resilient.

Mission

We, the Fairfax-Falls Church community, collectively ensure all children, youth, and their families have equitable and easy access to a continuum of quality, integrated and/or coordinated services, supports, and opportunities to promote resiliency and further their social, emotional, mental, and behavioral health.

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GOALS:

01 Deepen the system of care approach to inform the entire continuum of behavioral health services for children, youth and families.

02 Increase collaboration through the implementation of cross-system data sharing.

03 Increase the presence and effectiveness of family and youth leadership.

04 Promote awareness and help seeking behaviors and reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness and behavioral health care.

05 Develop and expand youth and parent/family peer support services.

06 Help families access services and navigate the behavioral health care system.

07 Improve care coordination and promote integration.

08 Implement targeted strategies to address disparities in outcomes and access based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, geography and other factors.

09 Reduce the incidence of youth suicide.

10 Increase the availability of evidence-based practices.

11 Enhance the community's ability to implement trauma-informed practices.

12 Better address the needs of children and youth with emerging behavioral health issues.

13 Develop an improved service network for high-risk children.

14 Develop an expanded continuum of care for youth with developmental disabilities and autism.

15 Provide coordinated services and supports for youth and young adults of transition age.

The full blueprint is available at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csa/BHSOC.pdf.

KNOW ABOUT

FOUR FARMERS MARKETS NOW ACCEPT SNAP BENEFITS

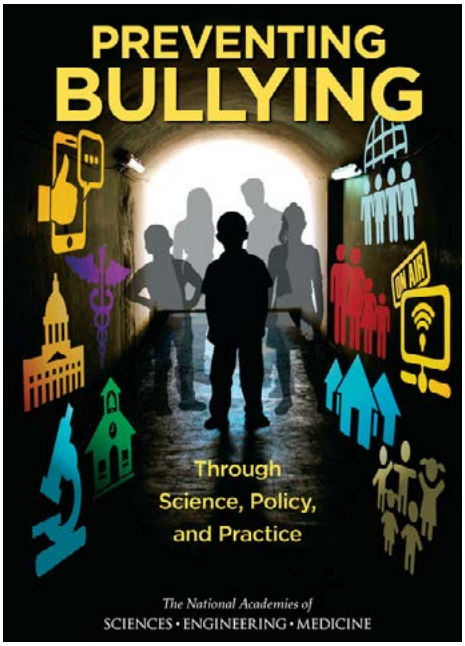
Four Fairfax County Park Authority Farmers Markets accept SNAP benefits (formerly food stamps): McCutcheon/ Mount Vernon, Reston, Lorton, and Herndon. Thanks to generous grant funding through Wholesome Wave and Inova, these markets now match all SNAP purchases up to $20 per market visit to be spent on additional produce.

The 11 FCPA farmers markets are open from the first week of May through October, November, or December, depending on the location. All offer a wide variety of fresh produce and other assorted goods, such as cheese, bread, and meats. For a full listing and schedule of markets, see http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets.

NEW REPORT HIGHLIGHTS THE LATEST IN BULLYING PREVENTION

JESSE ELLIS, PREVENTION MANAGER | FAIRFAX COUNTY NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine recently appointed a committee of experts to study bullying prevention and identify what we know and still need to learn about effective approaches. In May, the committee released its report, Preventing Bullying Through Science, Policy, and Practice, available at nas.edu/ScienceOnBullying.



Among the key findings of the committee is that, even today, the lack of a consistent definition of bullying makes it difficult to assess the true prevalence of the problem. That said, there is no debate that bullying is widespread, affecting large numbers of children and youth with both short-term and long-term negative impacts.

A review of current prevention practices found that zero-tolerance policies are not effective. Specific programs aimed at teaching anti-bullying behavior and promoting social emotional health, when implemented by themselves, seem to have minimal effectiveness. The most promise is in "school-based programs with multiple components that both involve all students and offer targeted interventions for those at high risk for bullying." The "multiple components" tend to include policies, staff trainings, and environmental approaches. While limited evidence exists regarding the effectiveness of laws and policies, the committee conceded that they have significant potential.

Given the increased risk for victimization that LBGTQ youth and youth with disabilities face, the committee also recommended a renewed emphasis on studying the role of stigma and bias in bullying. Another recommendation challenged social media companies to "adopt, implement, and evaluate on an ongoing basis policies and programs for preventing, identifying, and responding to bullying on their platforms and should publish their anti-bullying policies on their websites."

These, along with other recommendations focused on reinvigorating bullying research and the dissemination and application of findings, should lead to a new opportunities for prevention and intervention.

RESEARCH UPDATE: WHAT MAKES SPORTS FUN?

No one doubts kids' need for physical activity, and sports can contribute greatly to an active lifestyle. But despite the high number of kids who play sports, it is estimated that one-third drop out each year, and that 70% quit by adolescence. Certainly, maintaining kids' enjoyment of sports is key to sustaining their participation.

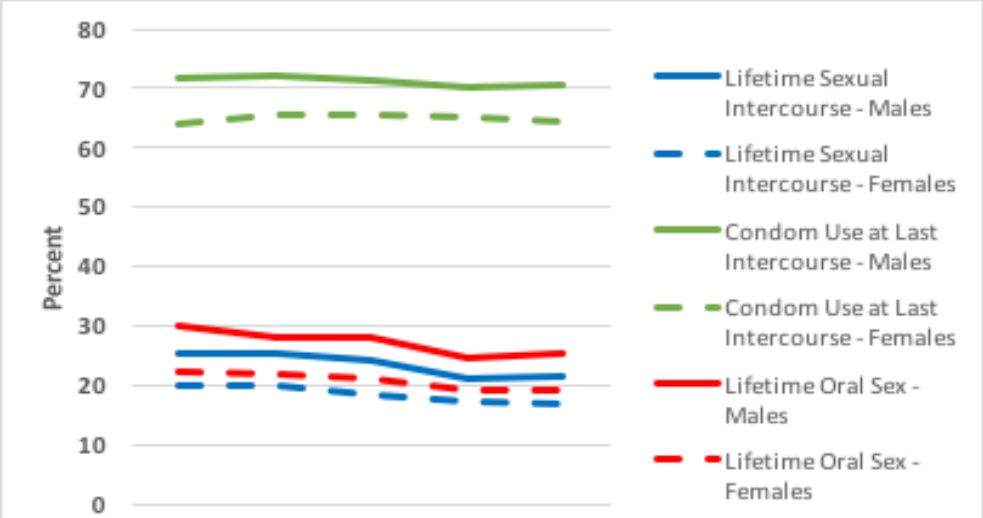
Past research has shown that the primary motivating factor for kids' participation in sports is "fun." To better understand what makes sports fun, Amanda Visek and her colleagues surveyed young athletes and their coaches and parents. They analyzed the results using concept mapping and other approaches to develop a "fun integration theory" that helps explain what makes sports fun. (By the way, of 81 determinants of fun, "winning" ranked 48th.)

The concept mapping identified 11 discrete dimensions of fun: Being a Good Sport, Trying Hard, Positive Coaching, Learning and Improving, Game Time Support, Games, Practices, Team Friendships, Mental Bonuses, Team Rituals, and Swag. The maps "also aid in understanding how each of the 81 discrete, yet associated ideas inter-connect as ...four fundamental tenets for fostering fun experiences in youth sport: contextual fundamentals (Practices and Games), internal fundamentals (Learning and Improving, Trying Hard, and Mental Bonuses), social fundamentals (Team Friendships, Team Rituals, and Being a Good Sport), and external fundamentals (Positive Coaching, Game Time Support, and Swag). These fundamental tenets…underscore the dynamic interplay among the dimensions of fun."

This research highlights the elements of sports that are most likely to keep kids engaged and participating. The authors note "the fun-determinants can be conveniently converted to practice plans for coaches, set a standard for parent education and behavior at youth sporting events, inform coaching education and certification programs, as well as serve as the basis for fostering positive, collaborative dynamics among teammates."

Visek, A.J., et al. (2014). The fun integration theory: Toward sustaining children and adolescents' sports participation. Journal of Physical Activity and Health, 12(3): 424–433. doi: 10.1123/jpah.2013-0180.

YOUTH SURVEY SPOTLIGHT SEXUAL HEALTH



Overall, 19% of Fairfax County 8th, 10th, and 12th graders participating in the 2014 Youth Survey (administered in Fall 2014) reported having ever had sexual intercourse. As is to be expected, older students are more likely to have had sex; 5% of 8th graders, 16% of 10th graders, and 37% percent of 12th graders report ever having sexual intercourse. In line with national trends, the percentage of teens who have had sex has been declining over the past five years. The same is true for ever having engaged in oral sex; in 2014, 22% of students reported having had oral sex, down from 26% in 2010. Condom use, however, has remained fairly steady over time; in 2014, 68% of students who had had sex reported using a condom at the last time they had intercourse. For more information on the Fairfax County Youth Survey, see www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey; data from the 2015 survey will be released this fall.

CSB AWARDS MINI-GRANTS TO ELEVEN YOUTH-LED PROJECTS TO FIGHT THE STIGMA OF MENTAL ILLNESS

FAIRFAX-FALLS CHURCH

COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD

The Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB) has awarded mini-grants for 11 projects, all planned and led by young people, which aim to reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues among their peers. Each of the projects will be implemented by September 30, 2016.

Funding for the CSB's mini-grant program for youth-led projects is from a regional suicide prevention grant from the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services.

"The purpose of the program is to empower and educate our youth, so that they know how to recognize a mental health concern in themselves or someone else, and won't hesitate to get help," says Jamie MacDonald, Director of CSB Wellness, Health Promotion, and Prevention Services.

The grants were awarded to: Asian American LEAD, Cedar Lane School, Falls Church High School's Safe Place Club, James Madison High School's MadIson MATTERs initiative, Fairfax High School's Molly McCracken, The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) – Northern Virginia, She Rocks the World, the Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology Active Minds chapter, the Unified Prevention Coalition of Fairfax County Youth Council, the West African Community Collaborative, and the Willston Computer Clubhouse. See http://1.usa.gov/1ZmbgUQ for more information on the recipients and their projects.

"One in every five people in the U.S. experiences a mental health disorder every year," says MacDonald. "Mental health disorders are common and treatable, but people are often reluctant seek help because of the misunderstanding and stigma they may experience due to their diagnosis."

By providing some resources to youth-led projects, the CSB seeks to inspire young people to be the driving force for a positive culture change to eliminate the stigma around mental illness.

MESSAGING TOOLS

Every issue, we will feature messaging that you can use to share prevention resources available in Fairfax County. Feel free to, without attribution, use these messages in your outreach efforts.

This Month's Resource: PRS CrisisLink's Textline

LAURA MAYER, PRS CRISISLINK PROGRAM DIRECT

Newsletter Article

PRS CrisisLink has served northern Virginia through crisis hotlines for over 45 years. In June of 2014, PRS CrisisLink expanded their services to include crisis texting services to Fairfax County Public Schools and the community at large. Since the program launch, crisis workers have handled over 5,400 texting conversations and exchanged over 223,000 text messages with those in crisis.

By and large, those under the age of 18 have been the most significant consumers of this service, with 18-24 year olds close be-hind. More importantly, textline volume indicates that more young people are talking about their crises and suicidal thoughts at much higher rates than they ever have on a traditional hotline call.

What you should know about the textline:

All texts are confidential and free. There is no problem too big or too small for PRS CrisisLink crisis workers. In addition to providing texters with a safe place to talk about their experiences, crisis workers are trained to provide risk assessments, information and referrals and for youth, how to connect with a trusted adult.

The goal of the crisis worker is for every person who reaches out to these services to feel more empowered, safe and connected to the community support network. If you or someone you know needs help, please text "CONNECT" to 855-11 to speak with a crisis worker. For more information about PRS CrisisLink, including information about accessing wallet cards or becoming a volunteer, please visit prsinc.org/crisislink.

Facebook Post

If you ever find yourself in a difficult situation or just need to talk, call PRS CrisisLink at (703) 527-4077 or text "CONNECT" to 855-11 to speak with one of their highly trained crisis counselors, 24/7. It's free and confidential. **#suicideprevention #mentalhealth**

Tweets

Those seeking help can text CrisisLink at 855-11 for prompt response, counsel and referral **#suicideprevention.**
Our 24/7 suicide prevention text hotline—text "CONNECT" to 855-11 if you are in crisis.
Please RT.

Posters

Posters advertising the textline in English and Spanish are available to download, print and post at http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb/publications/suicide-text-line.htm.

PSAs

Three different 30-second public service announcements about the textline, aimed at youth and their parents and friends, are available at http://bit.ly/25Ha0PE.

Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all county programs, services and activities. Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request. For information, call 703-324-4600, TTY 711.

A Fairfax County, Va., publication
June 2016