

Act 264 Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Friday, May 24, 2024

9:30-12:00

Facilitator: Matt Wolf

Notetaker: Megean Martin

Location: Microsoft Teams

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Regrets: Heather Freeman,

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9:30-10:00	<p>1. Introductions</p> <p>2. Approve April meeting minutes.</p> <p><i>Alice moves to approve minutes, Megean seconds. Meeting Minutes approved.</i></p> <p>3. Any updates/changes to Operating Guidelines?</p> <p><i>No, all set on operating guidelines. Operating guidelines approved.</i></p> <p><i>Cheryl asked about update on adequate data collection for CSPs. Discussed how to efficiently collect this data. Wondering do we put this data in EMRs, through local community mental health agencies LIT coordinator responsibility. This includes youth that are not open clients. Some challenge if kids are not open. RMHS is doing this, how to spread the practice across the state This would be a great point to make in systems of care report. Need to accurately capture the data. Beth shared that this is helpful together more information, and possible MOI if needed, start with aggregated data? Beth to look in into this, she may follow up with Doug to use RMHS as an example.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Inform <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Decide
10:00-10:45	Joined by Mourning Fox, Director of Mental Health Programs, Department of Public Safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Inform <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discuss <input type="checkbox"/> Decide

Preferred name-Fox- Teaches at Police Academy, oversees crisis response providers that are based out of each VT state police barracks. Lots of experience in crisis work, and community mental health.

1. How is the embedded social work program with Vermont State Police going?

Doug's Question- Work started at DMH, in the past month, we have embedded folks at all the state police barracks. Royalton was most difficult to get filled. Two years without an interested party. Currently have 12 embedded folks (crisis specialists) throughout the 10 state police barracks. Williston has two, and Shaftsbury has two. Shaftsbury added 2nd, as a pilot to share with Bennington Police Department. Funding has increased, increasing to 16 people. Goal to have 2 people at each barracks to help increase coverage to 7 days per week. Added to Bennington from public safety team meeting, "they found money".

2. What are the regional differences in how embedded social workers are utilized?

Cheryl's Question- Slightly- part of Fox's job and goal is to create fidelity across all the positions. For example, similar response if someone from Shaftsbury calls, or from Derby. Should be very similar response. Some variance does occur. Some crisis workers go out with the trooper, some feel comfortable going out independently. Once safety is ensured, specialist controls the scene. If not, safe trooper controls the scene. Roles are clearly defined. Experience plays a role in response (crisis specialist).

3. For folks experiencing mental health challenges, what training and support are police getting and how are the embedded social workers helping to shift responses?

Alice's Question- All state police, (not sure if all law enforcement), have to have annual certifications. Ongoing education. Fox puts out educational materials on de-escalation skills. Crisis specialists puts out programs to help train troopers know when to bring in MH services. Fox teaching at the academy past 3 years. ALL police for the state go through the academy (sheriff, troopers, local PD UVM PD etc). All get crisis trainings from Fox. Key difference in approaching kids VS adults for troopers? Fox says brain development and decision making, frontal cortex science for adults and youth in crisis to help differentiate response. Post basic training role plays.

4. What kind of training do the embedded social workers receive before working with law enforcement?
Matt's Question- They go through 8 hours of training that includes presentations from law enforcement helps give perspective on roles officer plays, and scene safety. Hiring decisions also play a role, conversations in interviews to understand the soft skills of crisis, and being able to work in a para military structure. Crisis responders need to know that Policing is very black and white, and MH is all gray. Feedback from PD is that crisis workers are very helpful. Range of degrees- Associates to Masters range. Not looking for licensed anything, looking for the skills and the "who" in the person. Emphasis on building relationships, and connections to resources.
5. How has the Police Academy been updated in recent years? How many hours of training do they get and what is included in the training specific to working with children and adults with mental illness? (Is there any handout about what is in the training?)
Lori's Question-Everyone gets 8 hours. Troopers get an additional 8 hours in pre or post training. Fox says he is still pushing, chief complaint, law enforcement in general have to complete 40 hours in "tool training" (taser, shooting, spray, baton). BUT NOT required to have ongoing mental health training for de-escalation. This is Fox's hope to improve. State police have adopted having crisis skills, de-escalation as a part of yearly trainings.
6. What is the best way for community members to connect with local police departments on how best to support individuals that may have special needs?
Cinn's Question- Approach any PD and voluntary give PD the information. All information is beneficial to know, and can be placed in their record system (Valcour). Can flag person's information with the information provided. In NH/Lebanon, actually program where people can provide information of their special needs, outside of Valcour. Give examples of personal interests of people to use for de-escalation. Cinn notes that having crisis plan on hand to hand to responders. Fox shared that VT State Police is really working hard at slowing things down. Things go south when responders are quick to respond with "that's enough" attitude. Helping to alleviate the pressure of needing to respond to other situations. "A successful outcome is where everyone walks away safely."
7. Do you have recommendations regarding whom to talk to at Corrections or Police?
Megean's Question- embedded Alice's question. Criminal Justice Council-Academy falls under this, responsible for continuous trainings. State Board. Heather Simmons is head of police academy, William Sorrel Chair.

	<p><i>Alice adds to this conversation- Should this Board recommend a re-certification requirement around mental health/de-escalation/etc. for law enforcement personnel?</i></p> <p><i>Lori added support for non-verbal training as a parent of kiddo with disability, non-verbal. Fox noted working on sitting with silence and emphasizing this in trainings. When someone is in crisis, prefrontal cortex isn't firing well, and causes slower responses. Fox shared that every time he teaches de-escalation he spends time on non-verbals and wait times.</i></p> <p><i>System of cares report, and good news to share. Alice asked Fox to send some good news that the board could highlight. Late November deadline- REQUIRES FOLLOW UP w/Fox. Program is being recognized nationally, coming to VT next both to film interviews and good work VSP is using. Not another state in US that is embedding crisis folks the way VT is. Mostly city based, not another single state where crisis workers are embedded state wide. WCAX piece on crisis program.</i></p> <p><i>Articles-</i> https://www.wcax.com/2023/06/22/wcax-exclusive-inside-program-changing-vermonts-approach-policing/ https://www.wcax.com/2023/06/23/wcax-exclusive-inside-program-changing-vermonts-approach-policing-pt-2/</p> <p><i>Cheryl- Data? Trends on ages? Trends on themes? How much is suicidal behavior? Threats to other people? How to address in a more focused way?</i></p>	
<p>10:45-10:55</p>	<p>Break</p>	
<p>10:55-11:30</p>	<p>Decide on questions for annual LIT Survey</p> <p><i>System of care still have meaning? Whose role is it to revitalize? How to emphasize this as still a need?</i> <i>Wondering Lit/Systems of Care as both are addressed? Systems of Care is bigger than LIT.</i> <i>Discuss System of Care, worried that System of Care has faded due to turn over. How to reinforce system of care?</i> <i>How to delineate initial CSPs from follow-up CSPs?</i> <i>What is actually actionable for the LIT, move away from just reporting, BUT working towards steps to address a challenge.</i> <i>Over the years have struggled with responses from LIT. The slow response rate has helped provide an inclining of where to provide supports or attention from Act 264 board. Hard to get local LITs to complete it and return it. This is why we have moved towards a narrower focus or a fill in the blank. Alice shared that she appreciates</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Inform <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Decide</p>

	<p>both perspectives. We have LIT connections, once a upon a time Act 264 used to meet with every LIT. What would happen if we took an hour of LIT connections meeting, and members of Act 164 agreed to meet with one particular LIT, and drill down on specified questions. Partnership and connections to help keep system of care alive, and moving forward.</p> <p>Include definition of systems of care at top of survey?? Cheryl Huntley to look for definition?</p> <p>LIT survey designed to be easy to respond. Perhaps using LIT connections idea to generate more input.</p> <p>Quality Unit to have a system of care plan? Postponed for year. System wide, system of care plan Doug suggestions. LIT tends to be the lead for the kids planning, however discussion on what is long term alignment around community behavioral health? Should Act 264 for a making recommendations on this?</p> <p>Doug added 10 B- State made large decision on parent rep involvement. Wondering if this was a unilateral discussion? Outcome has a big impact. Team discussing process/procedure of this decision, discussing whether it belongs as a question on LIT survey. Took out- How many LIT members were formally involved in state level discussions regarding the future of their parent representative/s? Include this question in our next meeting as a question with Secretary.</p> <p>Remove 17- Are you using any trauma responsive and resilience-based practices in your work with families? This is an ever-present topic among providers, feels redundant. Should this be a topic of conversations on Alice's suggestion of LIT connections.</p> <p>Megean added keep who is running CSPs. Megean noted DCF in Rutland area is not running CSPs, this is a training need for Rutland DCF.</p>	
<p>11:30-11:55</p>	<p>Update from Act 264 Board Member, Laurie Mulhern, on Child Protection Registry Workgroup</p> <p><i>Data on DCF numbers- Prior to covid numbers were even higher, including substantiations. Take a look at the docs Lori emailed to the group. Main point- H661 OG Bill 169 DCF & VRC changes to statues. Highlights- instead of 14 days for individuals notified for responding to substantiation given 30 days, and possible 60 days. Added ability for electronic notification. Level of risk will be defined in the work ahead. Rule setting for procedures, new administrative review unit, including new hires to be reviewers, rules regarding to maintenance of records, increasing security of information, tiered registries/tiers for substantiation and for how to assign that level of risk in the system. Develop a notice and appeals for substantiation. Lots happening in this revision. Before 11/15 DCF written report to senate to how to store</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Inform</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discuss</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Decide</p>

	<p><i>interviews, include model policy. Lori suggests reading the new bill, delineates every step of the process, impacts the registry. Children’s Act Task Force working with VPRC address expungement etc.</i></p> <p><i>Board gave a kudos to DCF for getting this work done! Positive changes!</i></p> <p><i>Board would like to see copy of the report that DCF has to submit. Proposed rules have to be filled by 9/1. Curious to see what the changes are, and what are the tiers of substantiation.</i></p>	
<p>11:55-12:00</p>	<p>Public Comment</p> <p><i>Sandi Yandow- LIT parent reps, and specifically independent contracted parent reps. Parent reps given award for their hard work during covid. 4 parent reps impacted by the change, 4 independent contractors across the state. “Nothing about us without us, all of this without of us” Parent reps asked to step out of SIT meetings that were related to bids/grant process. Lots of information could have been shared, significant missed opportunities to understand the process. Federation is greatly concerned that LITs get to chose and vet reps. That process seems to have changed without any conversation with LIT coordination. So many new members son SIT that lack the historical background. What is Act 264 board’s role in weighing in? Each of the 4 do not know if the new contract will pick them up as rep, they each have at least 15 years of service. Deeply saddened about the process, and how this has affected the four parent reps. Daily schedule has become like a substitute teacher. No opportunity with SIT to discuss this. Deep dive was requested in 2021 to investigate this, nothing happened. Refunding is suggested, understanding how to mentor, and properly train. The significant change is what will happen with the new round of parent reps if it is not these 4, or if there is no coordination or communication with those that have been serving? What will the ripple effect of this process create? SIT failed to act when they knew money was a concern. Board shared their appreciation to the four women. Concern about how to support financially.</i></p> <p><i>FOR JUNE AGENDA!!! _____</i></p> <p><i>45 minutes in June to discuss who the grants recipient is regarding Act 264 participants</i></p> <p><i>Proposed changes under this grant</i></p> <p><i>Where they are at with offering and having positions accepted?</i></p> <p><i>Board was supposed to meet with SIT, when is that going to occur? What is our agenda for that meeting? Scheduled for October.</i></p> <p><i>Cinn questioned sustainability of funding? Fear of destroying CSP process. Ongoing agenda item- to check in!</i></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Inform</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Discuss</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Decide</p>

