

LIT Connections

September 13, 2023

11:00-12:00



I define connection as the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgement; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship. ~ Brene Brown

Present: Alicia Hanrahan, Cheryle Wilcox, Tony Folland, Janelle Germaine, Deb Forrett, Kheya Ganguly, Olivia Gaudreau, Diane Bugbee, Jessica Coleman, Marlene Wein, Sandi Yandow, Reene Weeks, Laurie Mulhern, Beth Sausville, Sandi Yandow, Amy Lincoln Moore, Kerri Duquette, Cinn Smith

Topics Discussed Today

➤ Placements for youth:

- Parent rep brought up not having enough residential placements. Would be nice to see organizations work together to stand something up.
- Could Dave McAllister join a future meeting to talk through what the communities are experiencing—he is the President of Vermont Coalition of Residential Programs (VCORP)
- Updated that DAIL-DMH-DCF, are working together and are in contract negotiations with an apparently successful bidder to see if we can stand up a Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility in VT. We don't have this level of care in Vermont, and it is an intensive level of treatment—under inpatient, but higher level residential care. Negotiating for a 15-bed program.
- The question was asked to DCF if therapeutic foster homes still exist?
 - Yes, they do to some extent.
 - DCF have put out RFP for crisis homes and haven't gotten any response for those.
- DCF is looking to stand up a 2-bed crisis stabilization program in Windham county. Short-term to bridge the gap for higher end, complex needs, youth with trauma who are in need of stabilization short term.
- Working with an architect to plan the space and then a contractor to make the space work.

➤ Workforce Recruitment and Retention:

- DA/SSA Workforce Task Force-Recruitment and Retention Efforts occurring
 - Discussed ways to focus on recruitment and retention at our agencies. Cheryle will attach the strategic plan to these notes for folks to see what investments and strategies we are using. This is a public document.
 - [CCV and VSAC offer free tuition to Vermonters: https://ccv.edu/ccv-and-vsac-offer-free-tuition-to-vermonters/](https://ccv.edu/ccv-and-vsac-offer-free-tuition-to-vermonters/)
 - DCF has a program with UVM through federal funds- with Social Work dept. folks are getting their degree and then leaving and paying off the grant because the work isn't what they expected.

- Discussed **housing and the need for more**—one agency has allowed a new staff to live in one of their unused buildings until they find housing. Also have connected new hires from out of state with real estate agents to assist or people have used Air B n B until they find permanent housing.

- **Issue with a school district re: Act 264. A new special ed. director has been combining Act 264 meetings and warning them as an IEP meeting as well—how to respond?**
 - They both have very different agendas which makes this complicated. Not good practice to do this regularly. However, acknowledged how hard it is to get everyone together which is probably what is driving this. Don't recommend this but can see the purpose.
 - AOE-it isn't great to combine the two; stacking the meetings back-to-back is better. Different folks at both.
 - A parent rep stated they have seen it work well when there is a CSP, there are times when there is a clear statement the CSP is over and clear distinction that moving into the IEP meeting now. Very important to be clear where one meeting ends and another begins.
 - There isn't anything that says this combining can't happen, just trying to consider best practice and parents' rights.
 - Sandi brought up different funding streams paying LIT parent reps and parent support folks at the Federation which may make this complicated to pay and track as well.
 - Important the LEA is at IEP meetings so decisions can be made.
 - If the family doesn't want them combined, they can state this and have separate meetings.

- **LIT Extravaganza: October 11th** at the Waterbury Complex or virtually
 - We will have breakouts and the ability to go virtually. We've had practice with that lately and have had success. Hoping to use that learning on this day!
 - Food- SIT will be providing breakfast. There will be dairy-free and gluten-free options!
 - Invite went to LIT Coordinators—will send a reminder for them to send to their LIT and ask them to share invite AND RSVP as to who is coming and virtual or in person. The capacity for the complex is 90, but we want to not have more than 60 that day in person for breathing and safety reasons!