

c/o United Way of Greater Nashua
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Nashua Prevention Coalition



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Meeting Minutes May 3, 2017

Welcome

Janet Valuk, Dee Gingras, Albee Budnitz, Shayana Owen, Lisa Vasquez, Tom Mandra, Ross Desmet, Jen Miller, Patricia Patten, Leah Elliott, Med Student Chris, Stephanie Wolf-Rosenblum, Liz Fitzgerald, Kurt Norris and Betsy Houde.

Guests: Laura Milliken, SPARK NH and Shannon McCullough, AmeriCorps VISTA

Minutes of April 5, 2017 were approved unanimously with those abstaining that weren't present.

Next meeting: Wednesday, June 7, 2017 will be facilitated by Albee Budnitz. Thanks Albee!

Announcements

- We are good to go for the **Youth Summit** this coming Saturday at Nashua Community College. Workshops will be on Stress Management, Diversity and current youth issues. Approximately 60-70 youth will be in attendance. Jan showed the posters that youth can hold up during the "Red Carpet Photo Opp".
- **Community Baby Shower** hosted by United Way is this weekend. Please see Liz at United Way for more details.
- First Church **Community Forum on the Opioid Crisis** is scheduled for Tuesday, May 9th from 12:00-1:30pm. You must register to attend. Call 882-4861 to register or email senglander@firstchurchnashua.org.
- There is a screening of **Screenagers** on May 17th at Elm Street Middle School. The coalition will have a table if anyone is available to volunteer. This is for Nashua parents (not youth). The presentation will be offered in Spanish in an alternate room at Elm Street.
- National Prevention Week is coming up May 14-20. Check out the flyer that Lisa shared for exciting activities and events.
- **Rotary's Ribfest** is coming up the weekend of Friday, June 16 through Sunday, June 18, and volunteers are needed. Rotary makes a thank you donation back to groups that help. Please contact Betsy (BetsyNH@aol.com) if you're available to help out. Opportunities are available for all hours and types of jobs.
- **In-Kind Forms** -- please get them back to Monica ASAP to track all related hours.

Presentation: Laura Milliken from SPARK NH

SPARK NH is all about working to reduce and address adverse childhood experiences for young children, which includes the time frame from "Expectant Parents and Children from Birth to Age 3". Are children's brain development built on a sturdy or fragile foundation? It's critical that a stable foundation be built for children to build more complex skills. Research shows that Brain Connections that aren't used are pruned back like an "overgrown shrub".

"Serve and return" relationships with supportive/trusted adults wires the brain with the correct connections needed for optimal brain architecture. This shapes the brain development and forms a sturdy foundation/brain architecture. Children need to learn how to handle stress as part of their development, and need a supportive adult to help them learn how to manage the stress and develop healthy.

However, *toxic* stress causes challenges that lead to lifelong consequences... Toxic stress is comprised of ongoing, unrelieved stress that isn't reduced by a supportive adult. Exposure to domestic violence, for example, can derail brain development. Nurturing, stable and engaging environments are needed to help children grow successfully.

Cognitive, language, emotional development are compromised as children have cumulative risks... children with 6-7 risks have 90-100 percent chance of a developmental delay in one of the above.

So what do we do?? START EARLY! Preventative intervention is more effective than addressing it after it happens.

Greater Nashua Smart Start Coalition is working in the region on increasing Serve and Return interactions with young children and parents. A new initiative called Vroom is grounded in the science of early child development turning shared moments into brain-building moments. They offer tips through a free phone app and get a tip geared toward their child's age. JoinVroom.org. Science that parents can use is integrated into messages that are easily used.

SparkNH.org is their web site, also @Spark_NH, [facebook.com/SparkNH](https://www.facebook.com/SparkNH) Their monthly newsletter has an update about each regional initiative currently in place. Nashua's goals are focused on Strong Families and Coordinated Childhood System. Nashua is currently working on providing supports and networking for people that are providing childcare on a daily basis to help them develop their skills. Also working to destigmatize parents that reach out for parenting help -- no baby comes with a manual.

Nashua's committee will be promoting Vroom to Child Care Aware group and to the medical centers. They've blended it into the 5-2-1-0 healthy eating initiative. They brought Moms from Marguerites Place to the NH Children's Trust Summit and they are now helping their peers. The team is also developing an event later this year focused on Women in the Workforce to connect more with business community.

Healthy social/emotional development is an important protective factor. Supporting children and families in a way that promotes healthy development is important to offset a whole range of issues.

What can we do as people that work with older children to support youth with multiple ACES to help reduce the impact of early toxic stress? Can the children we serve learn to serve and return with younger siblings, etc.? Add posters and video messages to the screens at Pediatric and OBGYN Offices to get the information out.

Betsy also asked about a universal screening for ACES that could be used to collect data for youth involved in Court Diversion.

Meeting ended at 4:30pm.

Next meeting, Wednesday, June 7, 2017