PEI & Marysville High School Selected to Participate in National Pilot Program

The school, in partnership with the Prevention & Early Intervention Program, was one of 35 selected by the National Council for Behavioral Health, with support from Lady Gaga’s Born This Way Foundation, to participate in the expanded teen Mental Health First Aid (tMHFA) pilot program in the 2019-2020 school year. Over 250 tenth graders received the training in the spring semester. The training is the first of its kind developed for high school students in the U.S.

The program teaches high school students to recognize and respond when their friends are experiencing the early stages of a mental health or addiction problem. tMHFA is an in-person training designed for high school students to learn about mental illnesses and addictions, particularly how to identify and respond to a developing mental health or substance use problem among their peers. Similar to CPR, students learn a 5-step action plan to help their friends who may be facing a mental health problem or crisis, such as suicide.

The course specifically highlights the important step of involving a responsible and trusted adult. To ensure additional support for students taking the training, PEI staff trained fifteen Marysville High School staff in Mental Health First Aid for Adults Working with Young People (YMHFA), and plans to train additional school staff and parents/guardians in the next school year.

“We’re thrilled Marysville High School is one of the first U.S. high schools to participate in teen Mental Health First Aid,” said Chuck Ingoglia, president and CEO of the National Council for Behavioral Health. “Teens trust their friends, so they need to be trained to recognize signs of mental health or substance use problems in their peers. The number one thing a teen can do to support a friend dealing with anxiety or depression is to help the friend seek support from a trusted adult.”

“With teen Mental Health First Aid, we like to say, it’s okay to not be okay,” said Lady Gaga, co-founder of Born This Way Foundation, as she spoke with 16 students who completed the first tMHFA pilot in eight schools across the country.

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Girls’ Circle

Girls’ Circle, a skill building/support group from One Circle Foundation, continued to be well received in, and much requested by, middle and high schools in the Yuba-Sutter area. In the 2019-20 school year, the PEI team facilitated Girls’ Circles at seven schools in Sutter and Yuba counties. Girls learned new and helpful ways to communicate, healthy coping skills, and what it means to them to be a girl/woman. Many participants agreed that what they liked the most was having a safe space to share how they felt and what they thought. Girls can learn from one another through the different activities, discussions and the sharing of experiences. For more information about Girls’ Circle, please contact Kristen Batchelder (KBatchelder@co.sutter.ca.us) or Meagan Poage (MPoage@co.sutter.ca.us) or call 530.822.7215.

The Council for Boys & Young Men

The Prevention and Early Intervention program completed another semester providing support for high school and middle school youth through strengthening social skills, leadership skills, and building secure and safe relationships between men. The Council for Boys and Young Men (generally shortened to “The Council”) developed by the One Circle Foundation, has been recognized by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

This year, PEI provided The Council to over 100 youth in middle and high schools in both Sutter and Yuba counties, including continuation schools and in juvenile rehabilitation facilities.

Young men who participated have expressed appreciation for having a place to go during the day and decompress and “take off the mask” associated with the social norms of maleness. Youth are engaged in the group through physical team building exercises and discussion topics ranging from expressing emotions to non-violent leadership. If you would like to learn more about The Council, please contact Ryan Corbin (RCorbin@co.sutter.ca.us) or Rudy Rodriguez (RRodriguez@co.sutter.ca.us) or call 530.822.7215.
Friday Night Live is a youth development and leadership program, sponsored by the Sutter-Yuba PEI Program in partnership with California Friday Night Live, developed for students who want to create change in the community regarding the use of substances, particularly alcohol. With this as the aim, Sutter Union High School and Live Oak High School participants worked hard this past school year to enact change in the community. Prior to the COVID-19 shutdown, LOHS participants created an opportunity during Red Ribbon Week for their fellow students to pledge to be drug-free. Then, participants began to meet with middle school officials at Live Oak Middle School and developed a lunch activity for students. Plans were laid for LOHS to help create a dance for the school’s graduation; however, it had to be cancelled due to COVID-19.

SUHS students encouraged suicide awareness through the dissemination of uplifting messages of hope for their fellow students and by providing information about suicide prevention services, such as the suicide hotline. Students at SUHS were also in the planning and research phase to begin enacting policy within Sutter County regarding the prevention of sales of alcohol to teens, which they hope to continue in the coming year.
**Mental Health First Aid**

Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health’s Prevention & Early Intervention (PEI) Program offers multiple trainings and workshops in Yuba and Sutter counties to educate community members about mental health and to help reduce stigma.

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is an interactive, 8-hour course that presents an overview of mental illness and substance use disorders in the United States. Participants learn about risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems. They gain an understanding of the impact of mental health problems, and common treatments for those problems. Participants learn a 5-step action plan encompassing the skills, resources and knowledge to help an individual in crisis to connect with appropriate professional, peer, social, and self-help care. Participants who complete the course receive a certificate of training.

Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) introduces participants to the unique risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems in adolescents, builds understanding of the importance of early intervention, and teaches individuals how to help an adolescent in crisis or experiencing a mental health challenge. The curriculum is primarily focused on information participants can use to help adolescents and youth ages 12-18. Like the original MHFA, it uses a 5-step action plan to give a helper some tools and steps to take to support a person who is struggling. There is currently a bill going through the state assembly to make YMHFA a mandatory element in the professional development of secondary school staff. More news to come.

Recently, the National Council for Behavioral Health, the organization that develops the curriculum for American audiences and that licenses community members as trainers, released new versions of both MHFA and YMHFA for virtual and blended (virtual and live) training. Participants will be able to complete the first two hours of either training on their own, with updated, self-paced curriculum. They will then complete the course with one or two trainers virtually, or when physical distancing limitations are limited, in person. Both courses are available for continuing education units or STC credits for many professions. For more information, please contact Kristen Batchelder at 530.822.7215 or KBatchelder@co.sutter.ca.us.

**PEI Outreach**

Because of the current restrictions on large gatherings and physical distancing, the many community events that would normally take place in the spring and summer in the Yuba-Sutter communities have been cancelled or postponed, unfortunately. However, the PEI team looks forward to providing resources about mental health awareness, stigma reduction, suicide awareness and prevention, bullying prevention, parenting classes, substance use prevention, and many other topics in English, Spanish, and Punjabi at future events. Some of the events we attended prior to March were the Successful Connections events sponsored by Sutter and Yuba County Probation Departments, the Veterans’ Stand Down, the Live Oak High School Job and Career Fair, and many others.

If you or your organization are planning an event in the future, please keep us in mind. We would love to come and share information at a resource table, on a panel, or in a presentation. You can reach us by calling 530.822.7215 or pei@co.sutter.ca.us.
Bullying Prevention

Every administrator wants their school to be free from bullying. Unfortunately, bullying generally happens when adults are not around to see/hear it. PEI uses the Second Step Bullying Prevention Unit to teach students from kindergarten through fifth grade the three R’s - Recognize, Report, and Refuse. Staff at elementary schools in Yuba and Sutter counties can request the training for their students, which is provided in four presentations per class for the entire school. The curriculum is age-appropriate and gives youth the opportunity to see examples of bullying behavior, peers who are struggling with what to do, and then, those peers doing the right thing in animated, stop motion, or narrated stories, along with discussion and practice of the helping skills. Bystander power is particularly emphasized.

In the 2019-20 school year, PEI staff provided the training to four elementary schools: Luther, April Lane, Encinal, and YES Charter. Unfortunately, plans to provide it in other schools were put on hold due to the move to virtual learning. If you are interested in learning more about the training and how to bring it to your school,

New PEI Staff

Daniela Canchola, Bilingual Resource Specialist, has a bachelor’s degree in Social Work from Sacramento State University and an associate’s degree in Math and Natural Science from Woodland Community College. Prior to working at PEI, Daniela was an AmeriCorps Volunteer for two years. As a volunteer, she provided free services and resources for the community, focusing on low income households and senior community members.

Daniela also worked for two years as an Early Childhood Instructor at the Williams Family Action Center where she provided nutrition, parenting, car seat safety, and Head Start Classes, as well as employment services, referrals, and assistance with Cal-Fresh and Health Insurance applications. Daniela worked for the Colusa County Public Health Department, providing nutrition services for seniors, and translation services.

Daniela looks forward to providing services and resources in English and in Spanish in the Yuba-Sutter schools and to community members.

Lorena Jimenez, a new Intervention Counselor, joined the Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) program in February. She is bilingual in Spanish and English.

Prior to joining the PEI team, Lorena earned her associate’s degree from Woodland Community College and her bachelor’s degree in Social Work from Sacramento State University. Her goal is to continue her education by getting a master’s degree in Social Work with a Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) credential so that she can work as a school counselor. She knows from personal experience the impact a school counselor can have on students by helping them acquire coping skills, achieving their goals, and many other skills.

Due to COVID-19 and its impact on schools, the larger community, and other needs, Lorena’s work in schools has been limited. Instead, she has gone wherever needed and done whatever needed to be done to assist the community. Lorena has been working at the Yuba-Sutter Health Department Operation Center (DOC) Call Center, where she responded to calls about COVID-19 in English and in Spanish, and at the DOC as a contact tracer.

Dilpreet Mann is a new bilingual (Punjabi & English) Intervention Counselor. She will be providing services in the schools and to the Punjabi community. She grew up in the Yuba-Sutter community and is looking forward to what she can do to help.

Dilpreet got her bachelor’s degree in Psychology from UC Davis while working as a research assistant in a personality psychology lab and as a mental health worker at Safe Harbor Crisis House. She spent a few months working for child welfare services in Sutter county, before attending & graduating from Touro University with her master’s degree in Medical Health Sciences. Through Touro, Dilpreet was also trained as a lifestyle coach for a diabetes prevention program. Together with two other coaches, she has a lead a cohort of participants for about ten months.

Dilpreet has worked with the Prevention and Early Intervention program for five months. She was placed at the Yuba-Sutter Health Department Operation Center (DOC) Call Center when the stay-at-home order began. She was moved to the Emergency Disaster Motel Project, a program for high-risk homeless individuals. She has helped with case management in that program.
tMHFA, continued from p. 1

“Together, Born This Way and the National Council have put this program in eight schools. I know for certain that I’m not stopping here,” Lady Gaga continued. “I want the teen Mental Health First Aid program in every school in this country.”

“Through this pilot, Marysville High School is taking an important step towards ensuring their students are able to recognize when a friend or peer might be struggling and to feel confident that they know what to do to help,” said Cynthia Germanotta, president and co-founder of Born This Way Foundation. “Knowing how to spot the signs that someone in our lives is experiencing a mental health challenge and understanding how we can support that person is a basic life skill we all need to have – especially teenagers.”

tMHFA is an evidence-based training program from Australia. The National Council adapted the training with support from Born This Way Foundation and Well Being Trust. The pilot program is being evaluated by researchers from Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health to assess its effectiveness. To learn more, visit www.TheNationalCouncil.org or www.MentalHealthFirstAid.org.

Unfortunately, due to the transition to the online learning environment, this year’s students did not get to complete the whole program. The program will be available by request for any Sutter or Yuba county high school for the 2020-2021 school year. Contact Kristen Batchelder, MHFA training coordinator, for more information: KBatchelder@co.sutter.ca.us or 530.822.7215.