



CITY OF NORWALK
Lamond Daniels, LCSW, MPA
Chief of Community Services
125 East Avenue, Room #202
Norwalk, CT 06856
Office: (203) 854-7718
Mobile: (475) 459-8532
NorwalkCT.gov/1898/Community-Services
ldaniels@norwalkct.gov

August 7, 2024

Briefing: Collaboration for Youth Mental Health Gap Analysis in Norwalk

Project: Youth Mental Health Gap Analysis

Funded By:

- **City of Norwalk:** \$15,000
- **Silver Hill Hospital Charitable Fund:** \$5,000

Administrator of the Grant: The Norwalk Partnership (TNP)

Fiduciary: Positive Directions - The Center for Prevention & Counseling

Total Budget: \$20,000

Purpose

The Youth Mental Health Gap Analysis project aims to:

- Identify the current state of mental health services for youth in Norwalk.
- Assess existing resources.
- Highlight gaps in service provision.
- Map out how existing services are funded.

The findings will inform strategic planning to support efforts to secure additional funding from private, state, and federal sources to address identified gaps. By funding this analysis, the city's contribution, though minimal, is impactful, providing a significant opportunity to enhance our capacity to serve youth city-wide and to support a comprehensive funding strategy to increase funding and build capacity to support the needs of Norwalk youth mental health through a coordinated effort whether directly for schools, the larger community, or mental health providers. The key takeaway is that we will all be working collaboratively to bring in the necessary resources to support our youth.

Lead Partnership Panel / Key Members

- **Dr. Andrew Gerber**
President and Medical Director, Silver Hill Hospital
- **Dr. Alexandra Estrella**
Superintendent of Schools, Norwalk Public Schools

- **Lamond Daniels, LCSW, MPA**
Chief of Community Services, City of Norwalk
- **Kenneth Waller, FACHE**
Chief Executive Officer, Norwalk Community Health Center
- **Jennifer D. Barahona, LCSW**
Chief Executive Officer, Norwalk ACTS

This group will work closely with the consultant who will perform the analysis. Once completed, they will lead conversations with our state, federal, and philanthropic partners to address and support the recommendations to develop a sustainable mental health system for Norwalk youth.

Significance of the Project

This project is historical in the sense that for the first time, these key organizations come together with city funding and additional support from Silver Hill Hospital to take a city-wide look at the mental health needs of Norwalk's youth. Mayor Rilling is excited to take the lead in securing funds for this significant project and thanks Lamond Daniels for his leadership in this area and the Common Council for their vote to approve this funding. The City looks forward to working collaboratively with the Superintendent Dr. Alexandra Estrella, our new partnership with Dr. Andrew Gerber, Silver Hill Hospital, and our continued partnership with Norwalk Community Health Center, and Norwalk ACTS.

Key Areas of Focus

The gap analysis will help identify critical barriers and needs within the community, such as:

- 1. Outline the Current State of Youth Mental Health Services in Norwalk**
- 2. Identify Specific Gaps in Mental Health Services and Resources Available to Youth**
- 3. Map and Understand Current Funding Sources and Identify Potential Funding Cliffs**
- 4. Develop a Comprehensive Report to Support Funding Applications to Address These Gaps**
- 5. Explore Effective Models in Other Communities That Could Be Adapted for Norwalk**

This analysis will enable key stakeholders to collectively advocate for and secure additional funding to address these needs, ensuring the continued provision of essential services and support to our youth.

Importance for Securing State, Federal, and Private Funding

Conducting a comprehensive community youth mental health gap analysis is crucial for several reasons, particularly in securing funding from state, federal, and private sources:

1. **Evidence-Based Decision Making:** The analysis provides a data-driven understanding of the current state of youth mental health services, highlighting specific needs and gaps. This evidence is essential for making informed decisions and demonstrating the need for funding.
2. **Strategic Planning:** With detailed insights from the gap analysis, the key stakeholder group, each with high-level expertise, can develop targeted strategies to address identified issues. This strategic approach makes funding proposals more compelling and increases the likelihood of securing grants.
3. **Accountability and Transparency:** Funders require clear accountability and transparency in how their resources will be used. The gap analysis serves as a comprehensive document that outlines specific areas of need and proposed interventions, ensuring funders that their investments will be effectively utilized.
4. **Competitive Edge:** Detailed and well-documented needs assessments give the stakeholder group a competitive edge when applying for grants. Many funding opportunities prioritize applicants who can clearly demonstrate a thorough understanding of their community's needs.
5. **Collaboration and Partnerships:** The process of conducting the gap analysis involves collaboration with various critical partners, including schools, health providers, and community organizations. Funders value collaborative efforts and are more likely to support initiatives that demonstrate a real collaborative approach to addressing complex issues.
6. **Sustainability:** Identifying gaps and needs helps in planning for sustainable interventions. Funders are more likely to support initiatives that have a clear plan for long-term impact and sustainability.

###