

Needham Youth & Family Services

DEPARTMENT REPORT

June 2022

CLINICAL SERVICES

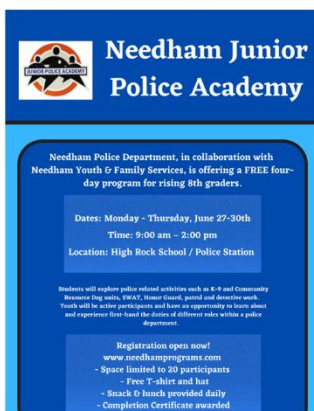
Youth & Family Services is providing individual and family therapy for residents and have significantly increased our capacity for this. While we typically focus on youth and their families, we are aware that there are many people in the community who need extra support. We have been able to offer crisis/urgent supportive services to all residents and have been able to help in these crisis situations.

- There were 51 clients seen for counseling this month
- We currently have 34 youth on our waitlist
- We have provided 11 Parent/Community consultations
- We have had 1 discharges this past month.
- We have had 8 emergency consults this month
- Groups:
 - We started Lunch groups at John Eliot Elementary School which meet on Tuesdays. Initially, we ran a 3rd and 4th grade group. Each group consisted of 4 students identified by the school guidance counselor. After a successful 6 weeks, we added a 5th grade lunch group. The students participate in a variety of activities which focus on friendship building.
 - Our 6th grade group, Friendship Files was a huge success and we have been asked to run more of these. The focus of this group was to assist students in learning skills needed to successfully navigate their social environment. We are planning another one for this summer.
 - We are starting a High School coping skills group during X block. This group will run weekly through the rest of the school year and will focus on students 9th-11th grade.
 - We are planning a group to help support families and individuals impacted by the war in Ukraine. We are hoping that this group will have an adult and youth component and will start this month.
 - Y&FS is running an anger management/coping skills group for Elementary Aged Youth starting this summer.

COMMUNITY ISSUES BEING ADDRESS:

- Significant increase in mental health symptoms including anxiety and depression. The American Academy of Pediatrics joined with the Children’s Hospital Association and recently [declared](#) a national state of emergency in children’s mental health.
- According to the [CDC](#), suicide attempts have risen – 51% for 12-17 year old girls from early 2019-early 2021
- Behavioral problems have increased significantly across the country – we have seen this in Needham
- We are assessing addition community needs and virtual programming.
 - Our focus is to continue group treatment to increase the number of youth accessing services
 - We are working on increased training for staff in trauma informed care
 - We are working closely with a school group on helping support the school community and families on many different levels.
 - We are planning some community presentations to help educate and support residents
- Helping to address issues of racism and inequalities and ensuring that all have access to services if needed

PROGRAMMATIC SERVICES:



Y&FS is helping set up the **Junior Police Academy** for the police department. This free four-day program is offered for youth rising to 8th grade and will explore police related activities such as K-9 and Community Resource Dog units, SWAT, Honor Guard, patrol and detective work. Youth will be active participants and have an opportunity to learn about and experience first-hand the duties of different roles within a police department.

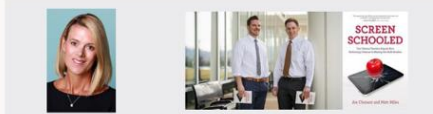
Y&FS is hosting a Family Night on June 29th from 5:30-7:30PM. The hope is that the program will help build family unity while engaging in some fun activities.

Screen Time and Anxiety

May 10, 2020 at 3:30 pm

Needham Town Hall
1471 Highland Ave
Needham, MA 02492

To Register: Email Jennifer Pinto
at jpinto1@bidneedham.org



SPEAKERS: Dr. Patricia Conrod, a Clinical Psychologist and Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Montreal, will be speaking about the effects of social media on teens. In addition, Matt Miles and Joe Clement, the authors of "Screen Schooled," will be presenting on their findings, experience, and sharing some tips on what we can do about it.

A presentation on **Screen Time and Anxiety** occurred on May 10, 3:30 PM and had about 65 participants. We had 3 presenters, Dr. Patricia Conrod, Matt Miles and Joe Clement who will focus on the anxiety, screen time and tips for regulating this. Dr. Conrod is a renowned researcher at The University of Montreal and Joe Clement and Matt Miles are teachers and authors of the book "Screen Schooled."

Mural Project: We are in final planning stages of planning for the next mural project. We are working with students, local artists and interested adults to finalize the mural. The project is going to be in the tunnel connecting Defazio Park and Pollard Middle School, which has also been the target of graffiti. We have put in multiple applications with the MBTA and are waiting for approval to move forward. The first mural project done on the fence near Red Wing Bay was a huge success. Youth & Family Services got the community involved in creating and painting a mural that would focus on unity. We had over 100 people participate in this project ranging in ages from 3 to 76.



Students Helping Older People (SHOP) - Y&FS is going to pilot an intergeneration program where we pair students with older adults to make connection and help the older adults with their grocery shopping. We hope that this program will give students volunteer opportunities in addition to connecting with the older population.

Y&FS partnered with Park and Rec and Public Health on a Spring Wellness Day at Pollard. This event was a huge success and there were over 100 participants. During this event staff organized games and activities all centered around wellness in addition to distributing important information.

Y&FS is working with a local expressive art therapist, Tova Speter, on providing workshops for the community. These workshops will center around mindfulness and expressive arts. The first one we ran for parents, and it was a huge success with 16 participants. Y&FS has planned another one on June 14th for Middle school students. **Tova Speter, LMHC** consultant based at Gorse Mill Studios in Needham, Massachusetts. With a Master's degree in Mental Health Counseling and Art Therapy, she has over 20 years of experience working at the intersection of arts and healing, and offers art therapy and mental health counseling services through her private practice. Tova is also a practicing painter, installation artist, and community muralist. All of her work is based on her belief that engaging in art-making is inherently therapeutic and formative. More at www.tovaspeter.com.

Youth & Family Services is in the process of taking on the role of the adult advisors in for the Take Back the Night club. This club organizes the Take Back the Night event every year in addition to building awareness around domestic violence.

The Peer Tutoring Program has come to an end for the year. There were 43 pairs of students matched together who worked over the school year. We are already in the beginning stages of planning for next year.



The VIP Program has ended for this year and was a huge success. We had 21 pairs who met over the school year and engaged well in the program. We got a lot of positive feedback on this year and are already planning for next year.

Volunteers Around Needham: Youth & Family Services is in the beginning stages of planning for this program this year. There are 6 days planned (July 12th, July 14th, July 19th, 21th, 26th and 28th from 9-12PM) with the following organization Community Farm, Community Council, Park and Rec, COA, Parks and Forestry and the hope is to have about 15 students each of those days.



Members of the Health and Human Services team have been trained to teach **Youth Mental Health First Aid virtually**. Youth Mental Health First Aid is a public education program that teaches participants how to recognize and respond to the signs and symptoms that suggest a potential mental health challenge, how to listen nonjudgmentally and give reassurance to a youth who may be experiencing a mental health challenge, and how to refer a person to appropriate professional support and services. We ran a training for High Rock Church and trained 8 people and are working on one for BID Needham in May. We have recently got approval to train 5 staff to be teen Mental Health First Aid trainers and are hoping to roll this out next school year.

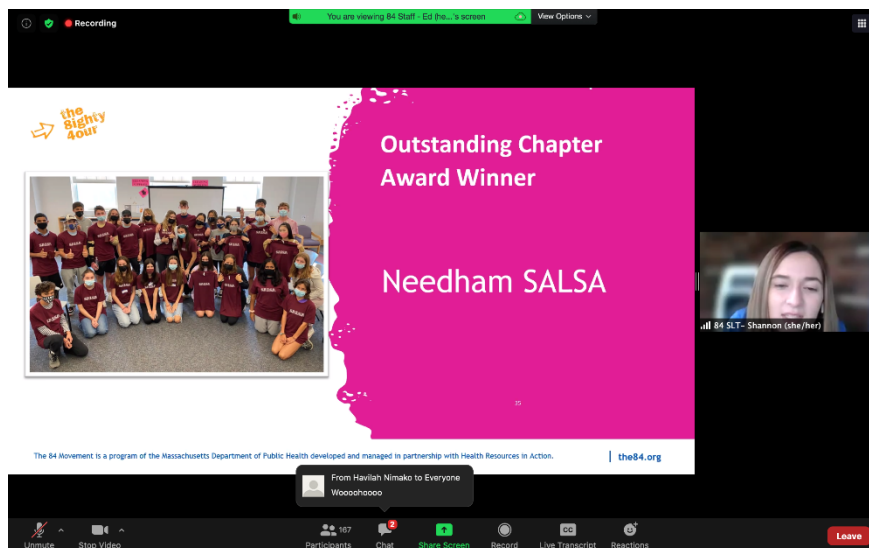
Volunteer Program Update: This program is designed to assist students in finding volunteer and community service opportunities in and around the Needham community. This listing details opportunities in and outside of Needham. This program is currently on hold.

Employment Program Update: We have made it easy for employers, as businesses now email us posting information about job opportunities, and we will then post all new jobs on our website Mondays (www.needhamma.gov/youth/jobsforyouth). Learn more about the Employment Program at: www.needhamma.gov/youth/employment.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION:

Y&FS is filling in and supporting students at High Rock School 2X a week for an average of 2 hours each visit due to a school adjustment counselor out on maternity leave. Our staff member will carry a small caseload of 5 students through the end of the school year. This will continue to build the relationships with the school system and help to get our services into the schools.

Get Connected Needham is a resource list that can direct residents to find needed services. Youth & Family Services was part of a larger town group to put this list together and update the list regularly. This list can be found on the COVID-19 website in addition to the Public Health website. We are now also providing phone support during business hours for people who are having difficulties navigating the internet or do not have access to a computer.



Youth & Family Services continues to work closely with the students involved in our **Chapter 84**, which is a peer to peer led nicotine prevention group. One of our members is part of the 84 Leadership Team and has taken the lead on many initiatives. Most recently, our group participate in “Kick Butt Day: Take Down Tobacco” which is a national day that raises awareness of the importance of preventing

tobacco use among teens. It is typically held at the Massachusetts Statehouse but this year it was virtual. The Needham Chapter helped to lead the workshop and met with Representative Denise Garlick and Senator Michael Rush to discuss the importance of legislation, mental health and addiction. The Needham Chapter was also won the 2022 Outstanding Chapter Award.

Youth & Family Services’ staff regularly attend the meetings of **SPAN** --- Substance Prevention Alliance of Needham (formerly known as the Needham Coalition for Youth Substance Abuse Prevention). Youth & Family Services is represented on all 3 action teams. We are also represented on the steering committee. There are several initiatives coming out of this group including creating online substance use supports, peer support, community activities and educational webinars.

The **Internship Collaborative** with the Dedham Youth Commission, Medfield Youth Outreach and Westwood Youth and Family Services has come to an end for this year. Youth & Family Services looks forward to being involved again next year.

The **Domestic Violence Action Committee (DVAC)** has started meeting. Youth & Family Services has a representative at these meetings. Some of the Y&FS staff have attended various trainings to help support their committee work around domestic violence.

We have continued to be involved in the **Community Crisis Intervention Team (CCIT)** and attend these meetings regularly. This meeting is attended by the police department, fire, town social workers from various divisions, the health department, a SPAN representative, and Riverside Crisis Team. We discuss community members in crisis who may need additional supports. Quarterly there is a larger meeting that includes other community partners including the hospitals, Walker, local mental health and substance use organizations. Quarterly this team meets with larger community providers (including local mental health agencies, BID, NWH, Walker) to discuss the overall community needs and trends.

The Youth Resource Network is a roundtable including representatives from multiple youth-serving organizations that meets during the academic year to address specific needs of school-age youth and families that reside and/or attend public school in Needham. These meetings have been very popular this year as there are so many families in crisis. Y&FS chairs this meeting monthly.

We are attending the quarterly **Youth Commission/Youth Services meeting**. Represented at the meeting are directors from towns such as Northborough, Bedford, Burlington, Westborough, Winchester, and several more. We have also joined a smaller group of Directors from the Metro-West region to increase collaboration.

We have joined a **Community Health Resource Group** which gets local agencies/departments together for information sharing/support. This meeting is attended on a regular basis.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES:

The budgeting process for FY23 is in its final stages. It is going to be a difficult year and it is still unclear the extent the pandemic is going to have on future budgets, so we are being very careful in our budgeting requests. We have requested increased funds for training for staff and equipment to work remotely. We have also made a number of requests, which were approved, through the ARPA funds including a 2 year FT clinician, funds for specialty consultation services and funds for community wide educational programming. All of these would help support the community at this time of a mental health crisis. **Kelsey Nichols**, our PT staff member, has accepted the 2 year FT position and started on 2/28/22.

Y&FS continues to raise money for family in need by promoting the **Crisis Donation Fund**. Most recently there have been a number of donations from various Clergy Association

Members and 100 Women Who Care of Needham. We are also working to allow for donations to be made electronically so that it is easier to make these donations.

We are in the process of working with William James College to continue the **Interface Referral Service** to the town. BID-Needham and the Needham Community Council has generously offered to fund part of the program for the next two years. Since Needham is an active user of the resource the cost has gone up and therefore, we are currently looking for more sources of funding. A long-term plan would be to see how the town and schools could add funding to the operational budget to secure consistent funding for this great service. Please contact the office if you would like more information.

Y&FS worked with the COA on a grant through the Metro West Health Foundation for \$4,000 to go towards increased clinical supervision and consultation. Given the increased needs of the community and the newer staff coming into the division, we thought this was an important plan to help train staff and keep skills current.

We are saying good-bye to our Graduate Clinical Intern, Elizabeth Radley. She has been so helpful in the office this year and has been very supportive to the community. She will be missed as we are looking for more interns for next school year.

Y&FS has been very focused on training staff to make sure that staff have the clinical skills necessary to manage the current mental health crisis. 3 staff members have recently attended a SMART training and one staff member is going to be trained in EMDR. All of these are trauma based treatment modalities. Staff have also attended a number of suicide prevention trainings. All staff are also being trained by Walden Behavioral Health on how to work more directly with students struggling with disordered eating.

We have been building our social media platforms in hope to reach more community members with the information, programs and events our department has to offer.

Facebook: [Facebook.com/needhamyouthservices](https://www.facebook.com/needhamyouthservices) 649

Instagram: 496 (+9) Followers @NeedhamYouthServices

Twitter: 156 Followers @Needham_Youth

NotifyMe (Listserve): 1188 signed-up

Below are the voted upon meeting dates for FY 2022:

Wednesday, September 8 th	Town Hall-Town Common/Highland Room
Wednesday, October 13 th	Town Hall-Town Common/Highland Room
<i>Wednesday, November 10th</i>	Town Hall – Great Plain Room
Wednesday, December 8 th	Town Hall – Great Plain Room
Wednesday, January 12 th	Virtual - Zoom
Wednesday, February 9 th	Virtual - Zoom
Wednesday, March 9 th	Town Hall – Highland Room
Wednesday, April 13 th	Town Hall – Great Plain Room
Wednesday, May 11 th	Center at the Heights
Wednesday, June 1st	Town Hall