

The Women's Fund of the Community Foundation for South Central New York held a focus group on the mental health issues facing women and girls on Thursday, March 5<sup>th</sup> from 9 – 11 AM in the AVRE Conference Room. The following organizations were represented:

Community Foundation for South Central New York  
UHS Breast Care Center  
Addiction Center of Broome County  
AVRE  
NYS Mental Health Legal Services  
UHS Mental Health Services  
Broome County Mental Health Department  
Fairview Recovery Center  
Broome County Sheriff's Office  
RISE Domestic Violence Center  
Mental Health Association of the Southern Tier  
Lourdes Center for Mental Health  
Klee Foundation  
NYS Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo  
YWCA  
Binghamton University's Graduate School of Nursing

**Why a focus group?** The idea for a focus group originated with the Women's Fund's Advocacy Ad-Hoc Committee. One of its members remarked on the up-tick of the number of women she was seeing in her clinical practice that had significant mental health issues in need of support beyond which she or her staff could provide. This observation led to a discussion within the group about the state of mental health services available to women and girls and the need to gather more information about this issue locally. The sub-committee chose a focus group rather than a community forum as focus groups are designed to elicit baseline information from a select group of participants representing key areas of the field. To that end, participants were chosen representing: clinic-based services, community-based services, law enforcement, policy-making, and the court system

**While every effort was made to focus the discussion on the mental health needs of women and girls, it quickly became apparent that it was difficult to separate their issues from the larger mental health services system issues. Therefore, while some of the information is directly related to women and girls, the majority of information is about the mental health services landscape without regard to gender. The assumption being that improvements made to any area discussed will directly benefit women and girls.**

The outcomes of each of the six questions developed for this session are summarized below, along with follow-up recommendations.

**Question #1: Based on your experience and area of expertise, what are the current array of mental health services that are available to women and girls in Broome County?** The information gathered from this section can be broken down into three categories: clinical, community-based support, and law enforcement/courts. It was generally agreed upon by the group that the community has a wide variety of services available with some noted gaps (see question #3) and a need to better inform the community about the services that exist. This is not meant to be a comprehensive list, just a summary of the discussion. A list of family and children's services available in Broome County and a pocket guide to mental health services provided by Katie Cusano; Deputy Commissioner Broome County Mental Health Department, are attached.

**Clinical Services:** Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program (CPEP) at UHS, UHS in- and out-patient clinical services, UHS Nutrition Clinic (eating disorder treatment), Lourdes Mental Health Services, Greater Binghamton Health Center, Crisis Intervention Team through the Office of Mental Health, Family and Children's Society Sexual Abuse Project, ACT (Assertive Community Treatment) team for chronic mental health issues, Catholic Charities First Episode Psychosis program, 100+ private practitioners, Binghamton University Decker School of Nursing Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner and Rural Nursing programs, Clinic Plus program (school-age evaluation) through Family Enrichment Program, Addiction Center of Broome County (ACBC) women-specific trauma and substance use treatment groups, Fairview Recovery women-specific treatment group, Veteran's Administration clinic, forensic team at the Broome County Public Safety facility, Gateway Center, Samaritan Counseling Center.

**Community-based Supportive Services:** Catholic Charities peer support, Promise Zone Community Schools, Council of Churches supportive visits at jail, Teen Transitional Living Program, various Parent Mentoring Programs, Mental Health Association of the Southern Tier (MHAST) Peer Support programs, Prison Re-Entry program through Broome County, Southern Tier Independence Center (STIC) advocacy in schools, Crime Victim's Assistance Center and RISE programs to support victims of crime and domestic violence, YWCA supportive housing, County and City Drug Treatment Court and Veteran's Court (in development)

**Recommendations:**

- Re-establish training program for officers responding to mental health-related calls
- Explore bringing back the under-utilized Family Treatment Court
- Develop a PR campaign around the existing mental health services that Broome County has to offer

**Question #2: Based on your perspective and experience, what are the most pressing issues related to the mental health of women and girls in Broome County?** The information provided in this section is focused on the clinical access issues that women face in this region. Without access to the appropriate services and/or treatment they may need, many other issues become secondary.

**Clinical Issues:** A lack of prescribers in the region, an inability to retain mental health providers (particularly psychiatrists), issues related to managed care, problems with the health exchange formularies not covering drugs that patients need, no clear point of access into mental health care, treatment drop-out rates, patient no-show rates, Medicaid transportation restrictions, limited options for treatment based on the type of insurance one has

**Social Issues:** Stigma surrounding accessing mental health services, a lack of appropriate advocacy services, the ability to safely house patients after treatment, functional day-to-day realities of women that impact access like: inability to access daycare, transportation, etc., isolation and loneliness of both rural and urban women, psycho/social issues of adolescent girls, safety issues for recovering women

**Recommendations:**

- Organize a community forum around the access to care issues listed above
- Fund projects that address the "functional realities" of women's lives that interfere with access to care
- Advocate with state government regarding the limitations on Medicaid transportation
- Consider funding projects that address the issues of isolation and loneliness of senior women
- Become better acquainted with the Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment (DSRIP) initiative and process

**Question #3: Based on your perspective and experience, what are the current gaps in mental health services for women and girls in Broome County?** While it was agreed upon that the area is “service rich”, significant gaps in mental health services remain. These gaps are categorized as follows: Populations Served and System Gaps. The gaps in populations served are perceived gaps and may need more follow-up to ascertain level of need.

**Populations Served:** Immigrants, sex-work trauma victims, school-based care, inpatient care for adolescents, substance use treatment for adolescents, rural residents

**System Gaps:** There is no continuum of care for mental health services as there is for primary care or substance use treatment services, “walk-in” mental health screening and care does not exist, lack of prescribers, lack of practitioners, lack of clinical testing and formal diagnosis, fewer intensive case management spots, few day treatment options for the chronically mentally ill due to regulatory issues, insurance issues that force gaps in care, cultural competency issues working with rural residents, immigrants and those in generational poverty, decreased funding for the Greater Binghamton Health Center, gaps created by the restrictions of Medicaid transportation

**Recommendations:**

- Consider funding a need assessment of the mental health/substance use treatment services available to the populations listed above
- Explore feasibility of piloting a mental health “walk-in” center
- Advocate for the re-alignment of regulation v. reimbursement for day treatment programs
- Provide cultural competency training programs for mental health professionals
- Organize a community forum to address the recruitment/retention of prescribers/practitioners
- Become better acquainted with the plans for the Greater Binghamton Health Center and how DSRIP will affect continuum of care for those needing mental health services

**Question #4: Based on your perspective and experience, what are the major barriers women and girls are faced with in accessing mental health services in Broome County? (including issues related to policy, corrections, insurance, sentencing, etc.)** Many of the barriers listed below are related to issues with the mental health delivery system. While a lack of prescribers and practitioners have been cited as an issue elsewhere in this report, the group offered more input on why that is the case in this section. The responses are represented by two categories: System Barriers and Social Barriers.

**System Barriers:** Long wait-times for mental health clinic services, shortage of prescribers and practitioners for the following reasons: caps on how many Medicaid patients can be seen, Medicaid/Medicare reimbursement rates, pay, Broome considered an “unattractive” area, area isn’t competitive, there are fewer medical students choosing this field- many make more money in the private sector, and stigma of the field amongst practitioners. Broome is a “health shortage area” which means there are incentives to practitioners to practice here. Binghamton University has programs to train graduate level practitioners but still experiences difficulty recruiting. Practitioners are aging out of the field. Many of the supervising practitioners are semi-retired with no one to take their place.

**Social/Personal Barriers:** Lack of affordable transportation, no drop-in childcare, gaps in insurance, availability of appropriate program or service, bias of the general public that mental illness is just “weak will”, mental health issues not recognized by untrained primary care practitioners, social stigma about mental health treatment, safety issues for women seeking services that may be in domestic violence situations

**Recommendations:**

- Organize community forum to address the recruitment/retention of prescribers/practitioners
- Consider funding programs that include assistance with transportation and childcare for women seeking mental health services
- Consider funding programs that train primary care practitioners how to handle mental health crises in their offices

- Consider funding programs that seek to reduce the stigma of mental illness

**Question #5: What recommendations do you have for improving access to, and outcomes of mental health services for women and girls in Broome County?** The information provided constitutes a “wish-list” of services and system supports to improve access to mental health care in Broome County. Some would involve expanding existing services and some would involve the development of new systems of care.

**Recommendations:**

- Advocate for walk-in level of care for mental health issues
- Develop an outreach/media campaign to inform public of the many mental health services that are available in the community.
- Develop a long-term category of low intensity follow-up care designed to “touch and go”
- Expand the evaluation and diagnosis of mental health issues
- Increase the accessibility of mental health services by developing a continuum of care system similar to that utilized by substance use treatment services
- Increase the availability of on-site childcare while parents are receiving treatment
- Develop an “itinerant” clinical program that travels to rural areas, shut-ins, school-based onsite programs etc.
- Research need for and establish satellite clinics in various locations (rural, school-based, etc.)
- Advocate for integrated licensure to pave the way for mental health walk-in services
- Develop a system of integrated care so that mental health issues can be addressed when and where they arise
- Co-locate social workers at primary care practices to address mental health issues
- Enhance peer-certification in New York State
- Re-establish training of police officers who are often first responders in mental health crisis situations

**Question #6: How can your organization/agency or the Women’s Fund contribute to improving access to and outcomes of mental health services for women and girls in Broome County?** Information included resources that participants currently have that could aid in the effort to provide the best mental health service spectrum possible in Broome County. The responses to this question were not as comprehensive due to time constraints.

**Resources Available:**

- Binghamton University has 2 federally funded programs to train Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners (PNP)
- UHS offers tuition assistance to RN’s that want to become PNP’s
- 2-1-1 acts as a clearinghouse for mental health and emergency services
- Participating organizations will continue to promote the positive aspects of treatment and recovery

**2015 Adult Community Services for Mental Health/Substance Abuse/Disabilities**

Agency/Program	Description	Phone Number
Addiction Center of BC	Provides substance abuse and co-occurring services	723-7308
Binghamton U Psych. Clinic	Provides psychological services to adults, families, groups & couples	777-2103

ACHIEVE	Provides services for intellectually and developmentally challenged citizens	723-8361
<b>Broome County Office of Aging &amp; Health Department</b>		
BC. Community Alternative Systems Agency (CASA)	Provides client assessment services for physical, psycho-social, environmental care, needs and strengths using a nurse and caseworker.	778-2420
Community Free Clinic	Uninsured adults 18 & older who have little money & don't qualify for social programs	778-3938
<b>Mental Health Association</b>		
Compeer	Matches community volunteers in friendship with adults experiencing mental illness.	771-8888
Housing Assistance & Support	Offers assistance to obtain or remain in housing if you meet the income criteria.	771-8888
Sunrise Wellness Center & Beacon Drop-In	Provides a safe haven for those with a mental illness/chemical addiction. <b>PEER SUPPORT LINE is 607-240-7291 &lt;&lt;&lt;&lt;&lt;</b>	771-8888
Advocacy	Provides aid to adults in navigating the mental health system & understand their rights.	771-1674
Peer Educators	Provide educational sessions to eliminate the stigma of mental health.	771-8888
Self-Help Independence Program (SHIP)	Provides self-help services and empowerment designed for recipients like Creative Writers Group, Speakers Bureau, Fundamental Follies, etc.	771-8888
<b>Family &amp; Children's Society</b>		
In-Home Mental Health Management	Provides mentally ill adults 18 & older who currently receive personal care through CASA and have an Axis I, DSM IV Diagnosis.	778-2420
Adult Clinic	Provides services to Adults needing Mental Health Services	729-6206
Vocational Incentive Program	Provides vocational case management service designed to assist adult BC recipients (18 & older) of mental health services to obtain and maintain competitive employment.	231-8364 x316
<b>Broome County Mental Health</b>		
Re-Entry Program	Provides assistance to men & women in meeting the challenges they face when returning to their communities from prison.	778-1364
762-Dual Recovery Project	Provides system of care to Broome County and offers client case reviews to settle disputes regarding client care or access to services.	778-1162
<b>Catholic Charities (excluding SPOE &amp; it's services - 723-9991)</b>		
Advocacy	Provides advocates to work with mental health recipients to assist them support services	773-3205
Four Seasons Club	Provides members with confidence and life skills	778-1144
Stepping Stone	Provides a safe haven for recipients of mental health services.	773-3205
Health Home	Provides care management service model for individuals with chronic medical and/or behavioral health conditions	723-9991
<b>United Health Services</b>		
HOME	Provides in-home mental health assessment and short-term treatment for elders exhibiting severe depression, etc. Grant funded. Ages 60 or older.	778-2411
Health Home	Provides care management service model for individuals with chronic medical and/or behavioral health conditions	762-2163
New Horizons	Provides substance abuse and co-occurring services	762-2257
<b>RISE (was SOS Shelter)</b>		
Domestic Violence	Emergency Shelter & 24/7 Hotline is at 754-4340      Advocacy Office is at 748-5174	754-4340
<b>Fairview Recovery Services</b>		
MICA Network	Provides case management/coordination of services & residential to 15 clients annually	722-8987
<b>ACCES-VR (was VESID)</b>	Adult Career & Continuing Educ. Services – Vocational Rehab.	721-8400
<b>Southern Tier Independence Center</b>		
Advocacy, Counseling	Provides integration and support services to individuals with disabilities.	724-2111
<b>GBHC</b>		
Comm. Treatment & Recovery Ctr	Provides services to Adults needing Mental Health Services and Day program	797-0680
<b>LOURDES</b>		
Lourdes Center for Mental Health	Provides services to Adults needing Mental Health Services	584-4465
<b>Veteran Center</b>	Provides counseling services, parenting classes, job counseling and more	722-2393

<b>Samaritan Counseling Center</b>	Provides counseling services for a wide variety of issues, referrals and more	754-2600 or 1-877-825-0678
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**2015 Broome County  
Additional Services for Children & Families**

<b>Agency/Program</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>
<b>ACHIEVE</b>	Provides summer program for developmentally disabled children from early July through mid-August, Monday through Thursday.	723-8361
<b>Samaritan Counseling Center</b>	Provides professional counseling, preventive educational programs and consultation services. Offices in Owego (1-877-825-0678) & a satellite office in Windsor (655-2063)	754-2660
<b>Mental Health Association</b>		
Compeer Youth Mentoring	Matches community volunteers in friendship with children experiencing mental illness. Offers social and educational activities for all program participants.	771-8888
Sunrise Wellness Center & Beacon Drop-In	Provides a safe haven for adults with a mental illness/chemical addiction. <b>PEER SUPPORT LINE is 607-240-7291</b>	771-8888
Advocacy	Provides aid to individuals in navigating the mental health system and to understand their rights.	771-1674
Peer Educators	Provide educational sessions to eliminate the stigma of mental health.	771-8888
Self-Help Independence Program (SHIP)	Provides self-help services and empowerment designed for recipients like Creative Writers Group, Speakers Bureau, Fundamental Follies, etc.	771-8888
<b>Family &amp; Children’s Society</b>		
<i>Mental Health Clinic</i>	Is a NYS OMH Licensed outpatient mental health clinic that provides psycho-social and psychiatric assessment and treatment.	729-6202
<b>Catholic Charities</b>		
Family Counseling	Provides psychotherapy to individuals, families & groups by NYS Certified Social Worker along with psychiatric consultant.	729-9166
Gateway	Free short term group and individual counseling for youth 8-21 years	584-7800
Single Point of Accountability	Provides mental health services for families with children 18 and under through a variety of services (Children’s Flex Team, ICM, SCM, CCSI, FOCUS, MICA, Functional Family Therapy, RC, Rural Client Coordinator, Boys of Courage, RTF) through a single referral.	584-7800
Aging Out ICM	Provides case management services to clients with a DSM-IV diagnosis (ages 16-21) through SPOA referral.	584-7800
Teen Transitional Living Program	Provides services for Runaway/homeless pregnant and/or parenting adolescent females and males between the ages of 16-21 teens who themselves or their children are at-risk of imminent placement of foster care	584-7800
<b>Broome County Social Services (Prevention Programs accessed through BC DSS)</b>		
Families First	Prevents placement of children in out-of-home care, or higher level of care with short-term intensive in-home crisis intervention; Referred through DSS	778-3080
Coordinated Children’s Services (CCSI)	Provides an integrated system of care that responds promptly to the needs of children at high risk of out-of-home care, their families and community.	584-7800
Functional Family Therapy (FFT)	FFT is designed to offer home-based family therapy services to families with youth 11 to 18 years old.	584-7800
Sharing Hope & Inspiring New Energy (SHINE)	Provides intensive case managers to work with families that have youth in the PINS/JD system	584-7800
Therapeutic After-School (TASP)	After-school program that identifies at-risk children who have shown school, home or community adjustment difficulties; Referred through DSS	722-2804
Preventive Services Program (CHPS)	Provides family focused, child-centered services by improving parent-child interaction, promote self-sufficiency and help raise healthy children. Referred through DSS	238-1365
Child Advocacy	Provides services to Child sexual abuse victims and their non-offending family members	723-3200

Sexual Abuse Project	Provides a specialized comprehensive assessment of the impact of sexual abuse on the child victim and family members referred by DSS	729-6206
Detention Alternative After-school (DAASP)	An After-School program that offers an alternative to detention for youth ages 12-17. Referred through Probation or Family Court	584-4465
Mental Health Juvenile Justice (MHJJ)	Provides counseling and case management services to youth who have been screened by probation to have mental health, family or substance abuse issues. Referred through Probation.	584-4465
IMPACT	Provides a home visiting plan and an Individual Family Support plan will be developed for each family with children ages 0 to 10.	584-4550
<b>RISE ( formerly SOS Shelter)</b>		
Domestic Violence	Emergency Shelter is at 754-4340      Advocacy Office is at 748-5174	748-5174
<b>ACCES-VR (was VESID)</b>	Vocational Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities	721-8400
<b>Southern Tier Independence Center</b>		
Advocacy, Counseling	Provides integration and support services to individuals with disabilities.	724-2111
<b>GBHC</b>		
Adolescent Crisis Residence	ACR serves youth (13-17 yrs) who are in situational crisis caused by event in adolescent's environment such as family problems, loss of relationships, neglect, abuse, school problems or homelessness.	773-4625
<i>Child and Adolescent Services</i>	Provides inpatient and outpatient care to children ages 5 to 17 with consultation and assessment, counseling, therapy, crisis/planned respite residential and intensive Day Treatment.	773-4187
<b>Children's Home of Wyoming Conference</b>		
Day Treatment	Twelve month school program which integrates intensive clinical and special education services to youth ages 5-12	722-2804
<b>Probation</b>		
PINS	Provides voluntary prevention to youth whose behavior indicates he/she may requires Family Court Involvement	778-8990
<b>Broome County Mental Health</b>		
Promise Zone	Was established to help children in high-need communities; a partnership with Binghamton University and BOCES. Includes School Coordinators in Union Endicott, Whitney Point, JC, Binghamton & BOCES. Clinic Plus, KYDS Coalition & BC SAFE programs reside under PZ.	778-1146
<b>Lourdes Youth Services</b>		
Parents & Children Together (PACT)	Home visiting program that offers services to families living in Broome and Tioga Counties; Services are offered from pregnancy until their child reaches age five.	584-4550
<i>Lourdes Center for Mental Health</i>	Is a NYS OMH Licensed Outpatient Mental Health Clinic providing psych-social and psychiatric assessment and treatment.	584-4465
Lourdes Center for Oral Health	Offers a full range of general dental services	584-4545
Student Assistance Program (SAP)	Provides free prevention counseling in matters of substance abuse and problem gambling services to all students in the participating schools. Middle and High School students, teens and their parents	584-3110
<b>Clothing Services</b>		
Plato's Closet	Quality used closing for those in need at Vestal Parkway, Vestal, NY	239-4722
Urban Star	Offering clothing for all family members, accessories and more at 625 Main Street, Johnson City, NY	821-4810
Wares Like New Thrift Shop	Quality, used clothing at a low cost for those in need at 277 Front Street, Binghamton from 9:30am to 3pm Monday through Friday.	773-0993
VOA Thrift Resale Store	Offering clothing for all family members, accessories at 519 Hooper Road, Endwell, NY	239-6053
<b>Urban League</b>	Provide programs for children and adults helping them become well educated and equipped for economic self-reliance (City Project, Afterschool Program, etc)	723-7303