



MERC Meeting Minutes

March 18, 2021

Via Zoom

There were 25 members in attendance.

Welcome and Introduction of New Members- The meeting was called to order at 9:00am. There was one new member in attendance. Abbie Lee is a Prevention Specialist with OMNI Youth Services and will be providing prevention services in a multi-county area, including Madison and St. Clair Counties. Donna invited Abbie to meet with the Prevention team at Chestnut to brainstorm ways the two teams can work together.

Family Support Committee update- Several Family Support Committee members reported on the committee's progress. The committee meets every other Wednesday at 10am via Zoom. The Family Support Network service has had a slow start. Not many calls are coming in yet, but the team spent quite a bit of time at their last meeting determining how to promote the project. The group also agreed to include both Bond and Clinton County ROSC groups to join the Family Support Committee and work. Billboards and yard signs advertising the project should be going up soon in the four county area. The group is also planning to assemble more family support packets for dissemination. Donna asked that anyone who has a support resource to share send that to her as soon as possible. It was stressed that the packets are not the appropriate venue to distribute information on specific agencies. What they are including in the packets is more general family support information, including support groups, mental health supports, access to NARCAN, resource cards (including treatment agencies), and more.

MetroLink Project- Stacy Nonn discussed a new program Chestnut will kick off officially in April. Staff members will ride MetroLink trains in order to provide services to any rider in need. Staff are currently participating in extensive training. Referrals for services may come from MetroLink personnel, security, or even other riders. Staff will work together to encourage riders in need to engage in services. They will also have access to NARCAN if the need arises. Members asked which services were expected to be the highest need. Stacy explained that as this is a pilot program and there are currently only two staff funded for this work, there are a lot of unknowns at this point. It is expected that some days will be very slow and others will be much busier, especially as warmer weather and loosened COVID restrictions come about.

Macoupin County Safe Passages Program- Brian Pollo explained that he is with the Macoupin County Health Department, but the Safe Passages Program is happening in Montgomery County. The project has just kicked off, and there has not been a referral to the project yet. The Litchfield Police Department will refer individuals who come into the department to ask for help. The Safe Passage program provides assistance and access to recovery services for people with a substance use disorder. An officer on duty will contact staff working on the project, and a facilitator will meet with the individual. They will meet in a safe, confidential setting and discuss the individual's situation. If criteria are met, the facilitator will work with the individual to connect the person to a source of recovery.

Discussion: MERC sponsored training event- Donna shared that several members had recently asked about the possibility of MERC sponsoring a training, either for council members or for community members. It was suggested that we plan at least two trainings to be held over the next few months. The following members volunteered to take part in a training work group: Kris, Jean, Abbie, Liz, Jen, and Jason. Any other member willing to participate is encouraged to contact Donna as soon as possible. The group also discussed possible training topics, including:

- “How can family members help facilitate a loved one’s recovery?”
- “Enabling family members vs loving family members”
- “Co-occurring disorders”
- “Mental Health First Aid”
- “Working with underserved populations”
- “Language and Stigma”

Liz and Donna discussed an opportunity through SIUE Education Outreach Office. They met with two individuals from this department last week to discuss potential partnerships in community non-credit classes. The group discussed several possible trainings that MERC could sponsor. This will be added to the training work group discussion. Brenda also shared several possible trainers we may want to contact. She will send contact information for these individuals to Donna.

Wellness Moment- Sonja Vauters was unable to join the meeting today, so we did not have a wellness moment discussion. Donna asked members to instead share rich moments; things that happened that made them pause and reflect on happy thoughts. Several members shared rich moments.

Announcements, Events- The following items were shared:

- Jen mentioned a training sponsored by SIU School of Medicine, “A Walk in Their Shoes”.
- Jen and Liz will present a training on “Stigma and Language” at the Partnership meeting on the 24th. MERC members are encouraged to attend this Zoom training.
- There is an “Overdose Prevention in Jails and Prisons” training on April 8th. Information will be sent out once registration is open.

Next meeting- April 15, 2021 from 9:00-10:00 via Zoom

Resource Library Materials Available for Loan:

Book: <i>The Language of Letting Go</i> Melody Beattie	Book: <i>More Language of Letting Go</i> by Melody Beattie
Book: <i>Codependent No More</i> Melody Beattie	Book: <i>The New Codependency</i> Melody Beattie
Book: <i>How Al-Anon Works</i>	
DVD: <i>The Anonymous People</i>	DVD: <i>Pleasure Unwoven</i> (A personal story of addiction)