

Flint ReCAST Community Strategic Plan

Project Overview:

The Flint Resiliency in Communities after Stress and Trauma Program (ReCAST) is designed to promote resilience in the Flint community by assisting high risk youth and families, mitigating the impact of trauma, reducing behavioral health disparities and increasing the opportunities and training for Flint youth through strong community engagement strategies. These efforts will leverage available cross agency strategic planning and evidence based trauma informed behavioral health activities. The target population addressed by this project are high risk youth and their families impacted by the Flint Water Emergency (FWE). Poverty, exposure to violence and trauma, decreased educational and employment opportunities all contribute to the risks facing youth and their families. The FWE has exacerbated the ongoing social and economic deprivation of Flint residents, resulting in high levels of anxiety, depressed affect, worry, fear, distrust, anger, and feelings of being overlooked and dismissed by the institutions in Flint and more broadly, by the government. The population of the city of Flint is more than 55% African American¹, and various forms of structural, institutional, and interpersonal discrimination, and more specifically racism⁵, have been anecdotally referenced as the source of the FWE and subsequent fall out among Flint residents and advocates for Flint nationwide. In contrast, some largely unaffected individual⁶ residents of the Genesee County (Flint residents included) have viewed the water emergency as an overblown effort led by underserved Flint residents to get financial resources for themselves; *community anecdotes suggest these comments are more often reported by individuals with the financial resources and capabilities to leave Flint if they so choose, rather than from Flint residents whose only option is to stay in Flint.* This proposal seeks to offer preventive services for this community, targeting opportunities to engage youth and their families, as well as the local organizations, institutions, agencies, and providers that deliver services and make decisions regarding the well-being of the Flint community. Narratives of success and well-being will unfold through community empowerment, and builds on the voice and resilience of community residents and existing organizations to support the growth of Flint moving forward. Using a community-engaged model, the steering committee of the Flint ReCAST, which includes members of the Flint community, city, state, and academic representatives, builds on past partnerships and experience to collectively (1) offer opportunities for Flint youth and their families to create long-term goals that support their well-being and behavioral health promotion, (2) support violence prevention through positive opportunities in Flint, and (3) empower community organizations, formal and informal, to contribute to the future growth and development of the Flint community through youth and their families.

Process Used to Develop Strategic Plan (including how our coalition of stakeholders were involved)

Coalition stakeholders were invited to attend a series of meetings throughout January and February 2017. The initial session was precluded by an informational training to define

trauma-informed approaches and trauma-informed care across settings, to include community contexts, health systems settings, and for clinicians. (offered in two trainings, attended by ~85 adults during the morning session and ~35 adults in the evening session). The next day immediately following this training, the first of 3 strategic planning sessions was held; over 60 people attended our first strategic planning session, and included representatives across health and service related agencies, including but not limited to mental health clinicians, family outreach specialists, federally qualified health center representatives, community organizations (engaged in youth arts, sports, theatre, career development, emotional development, self-affirmation), health service providers, inpatient mental health service providers, city representatives, state representatives, crisis communication, disabled populations, and others. Three of such meetings occurred to address the 5 project aims and related objectives; Aim 1 was addressed January 13, 2017 immediately following the trauma informed training; meeting 2 addressed aims 2 and 3, and was held February 16, 2017 (approximately 30 attendees); aims 4 and 5 were addressed in the meeting held February 23, 2017 (approximately 40 attendees). We employed a process of (1) reviewing the aims in the context of trauma-informed approaches, (2) asking attendees to evaluate their assets and resources to address the objectives, and (3) synthesis of the assets and resources put forth by meeting attendees (both in small groups during the sessions, and by the ReCAST steering committee). Subgroups highlighted for services through ReCAST were identified based on attendance during ReCAST meetings (that were originally initiated in October as part of the community needs assessment and through the 2017 meetings referenced here).

Mission, Vision, and Project Value Statements

Mission Statement: The Flint ReCAST will foster resiliency and empowerment for the Greater Flint community by building a trauma-informed community through training for training and programming for Flint area youth, families, and the agencies and organizations that serve them.

Vision Statement: Flint ReCAST sees a future Greater Flint community of resilient children and families who can envision their own success both in the present and into adulthood.

Project Values:

- Community engaged partnership model
- Building on community resident, agency, organization, and institution based strengths
- Coordinated policies that foster success rather than denigration of youth and families
- Evidence-informed practices implemented with fidelity
- Cultural awareness and respect
- Acknowledgement of historical trauma