

FAMILY POLICY BOARD

Monday, March 7, 2022

Hybrid Meeting (option to meet in person or via Zoom)

12:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Kristi Arenz, Katie Berkedal, Sandy Brekke, Hetti Brown, Michelle Burkhardt, Chris Crye, Megan DeVore, Ann Kappauf, Jane Klekamp, Catherine Kolkmeier, Carla Lundeen, Audra Martine, Sue Mathison, Vie Matty, Heidi Odegaard, Teresa Pierce, Tracy Puent, Joella Striebel, Bridget Todd-Robbins, Tina Tryggestad, Jodi Widuch, Jason Witt, Mary Kay Wolf, Tita Yutuc, Lurch-BACA

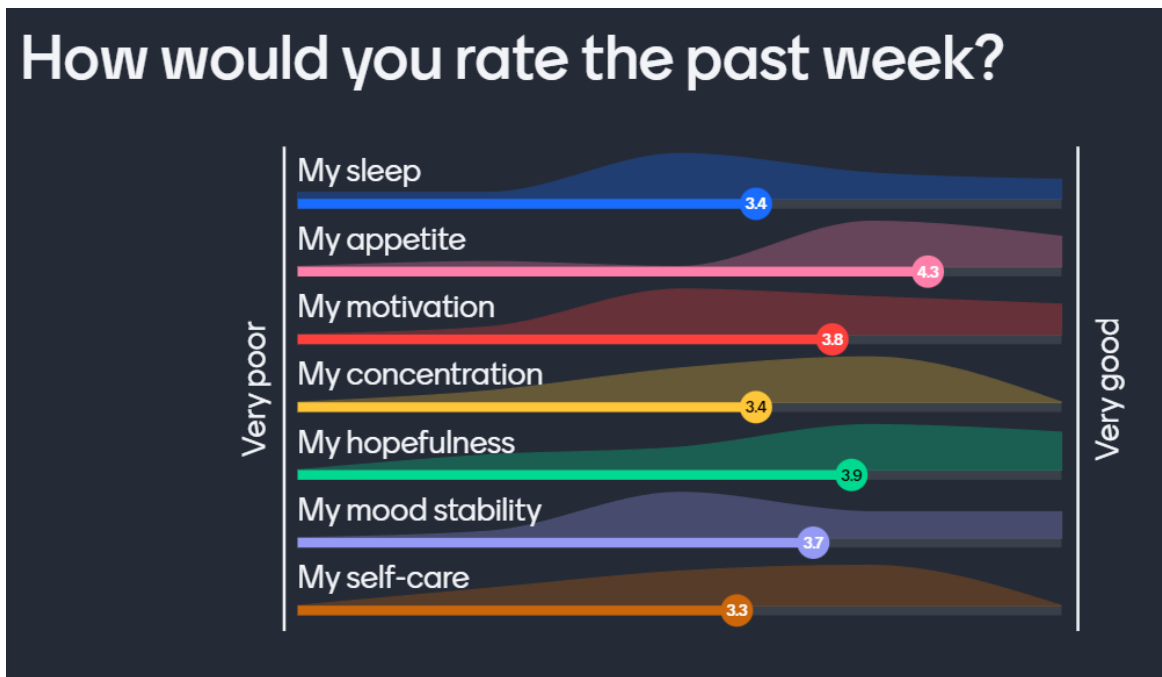
GUESTS/OTHERS PRESENT

None

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Ann Kappauf called the meeting to order at 12:02pm

The meeting began with members taking the “How would you rate the past week?” survey by Mentimeter at the request of Catherine Kolkmeier. Mentimeter (<https://www.mentimeter.com>) is a company that provides real-time polling tools for groups. This poll showed a snapshot in time of how members were feeling. Below are results for the instant feedback survey.



APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Tita Yutuc and Kristi Arenz to approve the February 7, 2022 minutes as presented. **Motion carried unanimously.**

HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND BOARD UPDATES

HHS Board Update: Jason Witt shared that continued funding was received last month for the pretrial program in JSS. The program remains eligible for continued funding which was approved by the County Board.

HS Director Update: Jason Witt shared that last year the group had quite an interest in learning more about the Human Services co-responder program with law enforcement. Sam Seefeld, Crisis Team Supervisor, has been busy with interviews in the community and was recently on a local radio podcast. There was also a prior discussion on a public radio program with Chief Kudron, ISRS Manager Christin Skolnik, and Sam talking specifically about the program. The hope is to have the crisis team and law enforcement provide an update to the group sometime this year.

WISCONSIN OPPORTUNITIES ACT UPDATE - Hetti Brown shared that this has officially been introduced and circulated for co-sponsorship. It is an omnibus antipoverty bill which contains many sections. Over 30 organizations have endorsed this bill. Each individual piece can be pulled out and brought forward as an individual bill, which has already happened with many of them, and Hetti is asking the board for endorsement of the omnibus bill today.

Motion by Catherine Kolkmeier and Sue Mathison to formally endorse this bill. Motion carried unanimously.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION REGARDING CLIENT NEEDS

Jason Witt reviewed discussion had in last month's meeting. One topic of interest included how client-needs agencies have changed since the onset of the pandemic. Another topic included finding qualified applicants for additional positions in Human Services and the effect on other County agencies experiencing staff shortages. Additionally, there was discussion on the burden of licensing and regulation when filling positions as well as how to engage policy.

Ann Kappauf facilitated a roundtable discussion in reconnecting with everyone here when serving folks in our community.

1. What have the needs looked like of individuals or families served over the last couple of years? What have agencies seen more of or less of? What has been different?
 - a. Mental health
 - b. Childcare
 - c. Transportation
 - d. Housing
 - e. AODA issues
2. Are there additional needs not yet identified?
 - a. There may be increased resources in terms of state and federal funding for these needs, but there are also labor shortages and regulation challenges.
 - i. The school district has hired three additional full-time staff to work with students on a daily basis, but the licensure piece bogs down the timing.
 - ii. The process and regulations make it more difficult to find qualified staff which decreases productivity.
 - iii. In-home and external childcare centers find it extremely challenging especially with such tight regulations which make it difficult to recruit and train staff.
 - b. As a non-profit there isn't as much funding for pay which makes it difficult for staff to maintain longevity as they find other employment offering higher pay.
 - c. The number of clinicians working with more complex-need individuals are going down and harder to find.
 - d. Local graduates many times leave our area and go elsewhere.
 - e. In the last couple of years, lots of families have a decreased mental endurance, requiring daily check-ins.
 - f. This is being seen in kids, too; the endurance is not there. Experiencing lots of anxiety when going back to normal activities. There has been a large increase of daily marijuana use in youth as young as 10 years old, but there are few educational opportunities for discussions on consequences of smoking while so young, especially with the increasing potential of marijuana becoming legalized.
 - g. When basic needs cannot be met, individuals cannot focus on the needs required to maintain employment.
3. Anything else to add?
 - a. Lack of availability of housing units in the community is a contributing factor of people relying on motels. May be due to poor rental history, poor credit history, minor criminal history, leaving a domestic violence situation, even involving police activity to protect themselves shows up in their history so people are struggling to find a place to live.
 - i. Jane Klekamp shared there are potential longer-term solutions for families and adults with mental health and/or substance abuse issues being discussed by the County Board. They are looking into purchasing homes for temporary housing until finding permanent housing. They are working with the City of La Crosse to build a spot for those with chronic mental health issues.

AGENCY CHECK-INS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Ann Kappauf welcomed Sandy Brekke to the group, replacing Lacie Ketelhut.

Heidi Odegaard shared that the March 15th Coffee & Conversation will focus on cannabis and alcohol trends in our local youth.

Catherine Kolkmeier shared that Better Together is in its sixth year of an eight-year grant. The purpose of the next two years is to leverage the funding to sustain some of the work that needs to be done. It will be specific to the mental health of youth in grades 6-12.

Catherine also shared that there will be a Foundation of Resilience and Empathy training on March 15th from 1-4 pm. Details can be found at www.resilientcommunitieswi.com. In addition, there will be a virtual health summit on April 22nd, focusing on loneliness and isolation with youth, adults, and older adults.

Jodi Widuch shared that on April 1st, Parenting Place will be opening their doors once again to playgroups. Hours of operation will be announced soon.

Jodi also shared that the Partner Up program will be providing support for employer-sponsored childcare as a benefit to employees. Interested businesses are to apply by April 4th.

Lurch from BACA shared that the Blue Ribbon Breakfast will be held on April 1st. Additionally, there will be a family fun walk and 5k in the park on April 16th.

Hetti Brown shared that the Wisconsin Help for Homeowners program is launching this week. Its purpose is to assist with overdue mortgage payments, property taxes, land contracts, homeowner association fees, insurance, flood insurance, and more.

ADJOURNMENT TO THE NEXT MEETING TO BE HELD MONDAY, APRIL 4, 2022, AT NOON

Chairperson Ann Kappauf adjourned the meeting at 1:01pm.

Approved April 4, 2022, Connie Bublitz, Recorder