

**Madison Shared Services Meeting
Madison County Public Library
March 27, 2024, 9:30 AM – 11 AM**

Present: Tonya Bell, Brandi Turner, Cindy Hutto, Laura Blue, Victoria Taylor, Gabrielle Aboki, Cumi Allen, Quanisha Bailey, David Boatwright, Jessica Brantley, Michele Choice, Jacob Clore, Nicole Dempsey, Lerena Fleck, Debbie Graham, Tamara Johnson, Anna Heaps, Yolanda Gillette-Carlson, and Hilary Stick.

Agencies Represented: Healthy Start Coalition, Healthy Families Seven Rivers, Madison County Health Department, Battlefront, Disc Village, North Florida Child Development, Partnership for Strong Families (PFSF), Big Bend Cares, FLDOE Blind Services, Big Bend AHEC, FSU Card, Apalachee Center, and Veteran's Affairs.

Tonya Bell opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. She advised everyone that she is doing Pinwheels for Prevention on April 20th.

Gabrielle Aboki with ELC Big Bend informed all that they are now pulling children from their waitlist. She also stated that she is meeting with childcare providers in Madison tomorrow. We were advised of a virtual resource event called Painting a Brighter Future, which will be held on April 23, 2024, from 6 PM to 7:30 PM via Zoom and Facebook.

Jacob Clore, PFSF, said that they work with children that have been abused or neglected. In 2023 Madison & Taylor Counties they have had to remove 30 children from their homes due to household violence, inadequate supervision, medical neglect, sexual abuse, substance exposed newborn, and substance abuse. In 2024, they have removed 1 child so far. The Madison Council Budget had \$1,000 allocated that they can give to families (\$200 per family), and they have \$400 remaining. Three families in Madison and a total of 4 children have benefited from Council funding. Jacob spoke on behalf of Sebastian Plank, also with PFSF, who is a recruitment specialist for foster care. In Madison County they have 26 children in out of home care and 3 traditional foster homes. Always trying to recruit foster families and looking for adoptive families as well.

Our guest speaker today was Nicole Dempsey with Veteran's Affairs (VA). The main topic of her presentation was preventing suicides among veterans and their family members. She told us that in the US there are over 40,000 people who commit suicide. Of those people 4,500 veterans took their own lives. Risk factors that are associated with suicide include their housing situation, access to medications, access to guns, losing a job, or losing someone that was important to them. Suicide can be impulsive or during a rough period in a veteran's life. A lot of times a suicide stems within an hour or less from a highly elevated event. The VA utilizes the SAVE method.

S - Identify the signs of suicide.

A - Ask the person if they are thinking of suicide.

V - Validate. Help the person feel valued or understood.

E- Encourage and expedite getting help for them.

Nicole also educated everyone about another great resource, call 988 for free mental health. If it is a true emergency, please call 911. We were also reminded of the 211 phone number too. She advised all that there are clinics in Perry and Tallahassee that offer face to face support as well.

Our next meeting will be held on June 26th.

Notes taken by Laura Blue