

# **AGENDA**

## **TOLLAND MENTAL HEALTH & SUBSTANCE USE ADVISORY TASK FORCE**

**October 3rd, 2022 – 7:00 P.M.**

### **ZOOM REMOTE MEETING**

1. Call to order
2. Approval of agenda
3. Approval of minutes
4. Public interest
5. Points of information
6. Update on Weyland-Smith community survey and data collection
7. Review of recommendation around mentoring
8. Review of recommendation around DEI Task Force
9. Early childhood/elementary mental health needs discussion
10. Next steps for task force
11. Public participation
12. Points of information
13. Adjournment

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# Tolland Mental Health & Substance Use Advisory Task Force

## REMOTE ZOOM MEETING

September 19th, 2022 – 7:00 PM

**Members Present:** Becky Moore (Chair), Madhu Renduchintala (Vice Chair), Jacob Marie (Secretary), Jayden Regisford, John Reagan, Colleen Yudichak, Carleen Oehmsen, Rita Malenczyk, Jessica Palozie, Darrell Irwin

**Members Absent:** Jennifer Gallichant

**Others Present:** Maureen Flanagan (Assistant Director of Human Services)

- 1) **Call to Order:** Ms. Moore called the meeting to order at 7:06pm.
- 2) **Approval of the Agenda:** Ms. Malenczyk moved to approve the agenda with an amendment that corrected “public interest” to “public participation.” Mr. Renduchintala seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
- 3) **Approval of Minutes:** Ms. Malenczyk moved to approve the August 15<sup>th</sup> minutes. Mr. Renduchintala seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously.
- 4) **Public Participation:** None
- 5) **Points of Information:** Ms. Palozie noted that there are no adequate decision trees to show how patients are directed towards mental health providers, which is a major barrier to getting proper care.
- 6) **Review of Info Sent to Task Force:** Ms. Flanagan noted that she had sent a document to the Task Force relating to a Hockanum Valley Community Council (HVCC) mentoring and job training program. Ms. Moore asked for the Task Force’s feedback; she noted that she would like to bring services town without duplicating what already exists. Ms. Flanagan confirmed that the program is grant-funded. Mr. Reagan suggested that the town could spread the word about this service via social media, which in turn could give a sense of the demand for the program in town. Ms. Moore asked how the town will know if people are actually using the service and how to target groups that would benefit the most from the program, such as high school students. Mr. Marie suggested that the HVCC could present their offerings at the High School. Ms. Flanagan noted that she has been in contact with the High School staff. Ms. Malenczyk stated that it might be prudent to wait until after the needs assessment is complete before engaging with the service. Mr. Renduchintala noted that because the program is at no cost to the town, he is comfortable going forward with it before a needs assessment is completed.

- 7) **Recommendation for Mentoring Programs:** Ms. Moore gave an update, stating that she hopes to vote on the recommendation at the next meeting and bring it to the Town Council in October. In reference to the HVCC program, which is closely related to this recommendation, she agrees with Mr. Renduchintala that it isn't necessary to wait for a needs assessment because no town funds are involved. Mr. Irwin confirmed that there would be a k-12 portion of the mentoring recommendation. Ms. Moore also noted that the recommendation will be written to provide the implementers plenty of flexibility in carrying out the recommendation.
- 8) **Recommendation for Diversity and Inclusion Task Force:** Mr. Renduchintala stated that the recommendation isn't ready to vote on yet, and he will provide visuals once ready. He noted that he looked into the Coventry committee with a similar function and found that it wasn't very active, but does hold events and a book club. Mr. Renduchintala stated he would like to do something similar with the recommendation, and have it look into hiring practices.
- 9) **Next Steps for Task Force:** Ms. Flanagan asked how active the Task Force would like to be when creating the survey. Ms. Moore stated that she would like to stay apprised of the survey but not be directly involved. Mr. Marie stated that he would like Weyland Consulting to utilize the survey recommendation as guidance, but due to the difficulty involved in crafting survey questions, it would be best not to be directly involved in writing the survey. He would like to see the survey before it goes out, however. Mr. Renduchintala agreed with Ms. Moore and Mr. Marie.
- 10) **Public Participation:** Rebecca Urrutia, 72 Pepperwood Road, stated that she is concerned about increased screen time for young children. She is particularly concerned about the cascading effects that this can have as children enter their teen and adult years. She also noted the detrimental effects short recesses and lunches have on a child's mental well-being.
- 11) **Points of Information:** Mr. Renduchintala stated that he agrees with Ms. Urrutia. He discussed some of the prior recommendations that the Task Force has worked on in regards to these topics, such as the youth recommendation. He also stated that it would be a good idea to also discuss her thoughts with the Board of Education. Mr. Marie stated that he agrees with Ms. Urrutia's points, and suggested that she should watch the screen time addiction presentation the Task Force viewed in August. Ms. Malenczyk stated that she agrees with Ms. Urrutia, and that she is particularly concerned about the lack of playtime young students get. Ms. Moore also agreed, and noted that play-time can vary by teacher. Ms. Oehmsen also agreed, and noted that there are several state standards that can prevent local districts from providing more play time and less screen time for younger children. She also stated that there needs to be more opportunities for children who don't play sports to socialize. *Ms. Moore allowed Ms. Urrutia to respond.* Ms. Urrutia stated that she hasn't received a response from school administration and if there is anything the Task Force can do, she would appreciate it. Ms. Moore stated she will add it to the next agenda. Mr. Regisford added that bringing the concern to the Board of Education would be particularly effective to do now because of its focus on social and emotional health.

**12) Adjournment:** Mr. Renduchintala moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Malenczyk seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:56pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jacob Marie



## Town of Tolland Survey of Adult Community Members, 2022

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey. The data you provide is invaluable to the The Town of Tolland as it plans to support residents regarding behavioral health, including mental health and substance use/misuse issues. All information collected will be anonymous. If you have already completed this survey, please do not take it again.

At the end, you can enter yourself into a drawing to win a prize.

### 1. How long have you lived in Tolland?

- I do not live in Tolland
- 2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-15 years
- 15 or more years

### 2. What is your current age?

- Under 18
- 18-29
- 30-39

- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-69
- 70-79
- 80-89
- 90 or older

3. Please select your race/ethnicity: (Select all that apply)

- Asian or Asian American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White or Caucasian

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## Town of Tolland Survey of Adult Community Members, 2022

4. Please indicate your level of concern when thinking about issues impacting Tolland **ADULT** residents, ages 19 and older:

	Not at all concerned	Slightly concerned	Concerned	Extremely concerned
Mental health (ex. self-harm, anxiety, depression etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Suicidal ideation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Alcohol use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Marijuana use (including vaping, smoking, ingesting etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prescription drug misuse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nicotine use (e-cigarettes, vapes)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Not at all  
concerned

Slightly  
concerned

Concerned

Extremely  
concerned

Tobacco  
products use,  
such as  
cigarettes,  
chewing  
tobacco, cigars

Illicit drug use,  
not including  
marijuana

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Town of *Tolland*  
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Town of Tolland Survey of Adult Community Members, 2022

5. In Tolland, how comfortable do you think most people that you know are with the following, if needed?

	Not at all comfortable	Comfortable	Very Comfortable	Extremely Comfortable
Participating in therapy or counseling for their OWN MENTAL HEALTH issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accessing therapy or counseling for their CHILD's MENTAL HEALTH issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Not at all comfortable	Comfortable	Very Comfortable	Extremely Comfortable
Participating in therapy or counseling for their <b>OWN SUBSTANCE USE</b> issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accessing therapy or counseling for their <b>CHILD'S SUBSTANCE USE</b> issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participating in groups to support mental health issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participating in educational groups to support parenting or caregiver challenges related to mental health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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## Town of Tolland Survey of Adult Community Members, 2022

9. Do you know where to go for help if you or a family member is struggling with **substance use or misuse**, including alcohol or other drugs? (Select all that apply)

- Yes-In the area AROUND Tolland, for ADULTS
- Yes-In Tolland, for ADULTS
- Yes-In the area AROUND Tolland for CHILDREN and TEENS
- Yes-In Tolland for CHILDREN AND TEENS
- No

10. Do you know where to go for help if you or a family member is struggling with **mental health issues** such as depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation etc.? (Select all that apply)

- Yes-In the area AROUND Tolland, for ADULTS
- Yes-In Tolland, for ADULTS
- Yes-In the area AROUND Tolland for CHILDREN and TEENS
- Yes-In Tolland for CHILDREN AND TEENS
- No

11. Please select barriers you, or others that you know who live in Tolland, have experienced when considering accessing behavioral healthcare, including substance use/misuse or mental health treatment. (Select all that apply)

- Not sure where to call
- Concerns about stigma/worried what others might think
- Long wait until can be seen by a provider who serves adults
- Long wait until can be seen by a provider who serves children or teens
- The hours providers are available conflict with work or school
- Available providers do not take insurance
- No access to insurance
- Cost, even with insurance, is too high
- Transportation to providers outside of Tolland
- Transportation to providers in Tolland
- Lack of providers that address specialized needs (i.e. eating disorders, LGBTQ, ADHD etc.)
- Lack of providers with experience with diverse race, ethnicity, or cultural backgrounds
- Lack of providers who speak languages other than English
- Belief that programs such as this do not work or help
- I don't know

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Town of Tolland Survey of Adult Community Members, 2022

12. Please select the **barriers, OLDER ADULTS, ages 60 and older, who live in Tolland**, may experience when considering accessing **behavioral healthcare**, including substance use/misuse or mental health treatment. (Select all that apply)

- Other concerns take precedence over behavioral health treatment such as housing or food stability, physical health problems, etc.
- Lack of family or social support to facilitate motivation to seek treatment
- Not sure where to call
- Concerns about stigma/worried what others might think
- Available providers do not take insurance
- No access to insurance
- Cost, even with insurance, is too high
- Transportation to providers outside of Tolland
- Transportation to providers in Tolland
- Lack of providers that address specialized needs (i.e. Veteran's supports, grief/loss)
- Belief that programs such as this do not work or help
- I don't know



## Town of Tolland Survey of Adult Community Members, 2022

13. Are you a parent or caregiver of a child, age 10-18, who lives in Tolland?

Yes     No

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Town of Tolland Survey of Adult Community Members, 2022

14. Please indicate your level of concern when thinking about issues impacting **Tolland youth ages 10-18:**

	Not at all concerned	Slightly concerned	Concerned	Extremely concerned
Mental health (ex. self-harm, anxiety, depression etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Suicidal ideation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Alcohol use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Marijuana use (including vaping, smoking, ingesting etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prescription drug misuse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nicotine use (e-cigarettes, vapes)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Not at all  
concerned

Slightly  
concerned

Concerned

Extremely  
concerned

Tobacco  
products use,  
such as  
cigarettes,  
chewing  
tobacco, cigars

Illicit drug use,  
not including  
marijuana

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Town of Tolland Survey of Adult Community Members, 2022

15. If they wanted to, how easy would it be for youth, ages 10-18, to get the following?

	Very easy	Sort of easy	Sort of hard	Very hard
Beer, wine, wine coolers or hard liquor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Electronic Cigarettes/Vape Products (E-cigarettes, JUUL, Ruyan, NJOY)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Marijuana or hashish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prescription medication for non-medical use, used for the purpose of getting "high"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. How much do you think youth, ages 10-18, risk harming themselves physically or in other ways when they do the following?  
(Select one answer per substance)

	No Risk	Slight Risk	Moderate Risk	Great Risk
Prescription medication for non-medical use, used for the purpose of getting "high"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use marijuana 1 or 2 times per week	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use E-Cigarettes or Vape (Ex. JUUL, NJOY, Blu) on a daily basis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drink alcohol (beer, wine, liquor) (more than a sip, outside of religious activities)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. How wrong do you think it is for youth, ages 10-18, to do the following:

Not at all wrong	Slightly wrong	Moderately wrong	Greatly wrong
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	Not at all wrong	Slightly wrong	Moderately wrong	Greatly wrong
Drink alcohol (beer, wine, liquor) (more than a sip, outside of religious activities)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use E- Cigarettes or Vape (Ex. JUUL, Ruyan, NJOY) on a daily basis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use marijuana 1 or 2 times per week	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use prescription medication for non-medical use, used for the purpose of getting "high"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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### Town of Tolland Survey of Adult Community Members, 2022

18. When was the last time you talked to your child about the risks of underage drinking?

- Never
- Within the last month (30-days)
- Within the last 6 months
- Within the last 7-12 months
- More than a year ago

19. Do you have clear rules for the child living in your home regarding the items below?

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Drinking alcohol/underage drinking (i.e. alcohol use under age 21)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Yes

No

Not Sure

Using  
prescription  
medication, not  
for medical  
purposes, to get  
"high"

Using marijuana  
or THC products

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## Town of Tolland Survey of Adult Community Members, 2022

20. Based on what you have seen and heard in Tolland what is the primary reason that youth, ages 10-18, use alcohol and other drugs?  
(Choose one)

- Boredom
- Experimentation
- To cope with stress and anxiety
- They have easy access to alcohol, marijuana, vapes and/or other substances
- Their parents do not have clear rules against use
- Their peers are doing it (peer pressure)
- Something else

21. What do you think is the safest decision regarding underage drinking?

- Providing alcohol for those under age 21 to use in a safe place
- Not providing alcohol for those under 21
- Taking the keys for those under age 21 to
- Something else

prevent drinking and  
driving

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Town of Tolland Survey of Adult Community Members, 2022

22. Using the slider below please estimate the percentage of **YOUTH** ages 10-18, in Tolland using alcohol, marijuana or other drugs.

None Half All

A horizontal slider bar with a circular handle on the left and a square box on the right. The bar is currently empty, indicating 0%.

23. Using the slider below please estimate the percentage of **YOUTH** ages 10-18 in Tolland experiencing concerns related to **mental health** including anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation etc.

None Half All

A horizontal slider bar with a circular handle on the left and a square box on the right. The bar is currently empty, indicating 0%.

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Town of Tolland Survey of Adult Community Members, 2022

24. Where would you prefer to access information about mental health, substance misuse and related issues for youth and adults?

- Social media such as Facebook and Instagram
- Town or School email
- Local newspaper
- Town or School Website
- Flyers or posters in public locations (ex. library, town hall etc.)

25. What topics would you be interested in learning more about related to behavioral health? (Select all that apply)

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> What to expect when you first access mental health services | <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy Communication Tools            | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Substance Use (i.e. Underage Drinking, Vaping, Marijuana etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nutrition/Exercise  | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Mental Health/Suicide Prevention | <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy Relationships/Signs Dating or Domestic Violence              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stress Management   |   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Management and Responsibility                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Adult Mental Health/Suicide Prevention |   |

How to support someone struggling with, or in recovery from, substance use disorder

Internet/Social Media or Gaming Safety for youth

Behavioral health concerns for older adults, ages 60 and older

26. If you were to access information on behavioral health topics, how would you prefer to receive it? (Select all preferred methods)

- In-person class in Tolland
- Virtual class with other Tolland residents
- Pre-recorded class or digital curriculum, accessed online
- Flyers and handouts with basic tips and information on the topic
- Peer based group with others in need of similar information or supports

Thank you for your participation in this survey.

To enter into a drawing to win a prize click the link to the incentive drawing form below. Information from this form will not be shared and cannot be linked to the results of this survey.

**[CLICK here to enter incentive drawing](#)**

For questions about this survey or the gift card drawing please contact, Maureen Flanagan, Assistant Director of Human Services, e-mail: [mflanagan@Tollandct.gov](mailto:mflanagan@Tollandct.gov)

Thank you for completing this survey!

## **Area of Need**

The Tolland Town Council has tasked the Mental Health and Substance Use Task Force to identify the needs of the community and make recommendations.

We have ascertained that there is a need for more diversity, equity, and inclusion programs. Our community is comprised of many unique cultural backgrounds, ethnicities, race, orientation, and experiences. The Task Force also realizes that we are not equipped to handle this this sufficiently, and therefore makes the following recommendation.

## **Recommendation**

The Task Force recommends that the Tolland Town Council create a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force, similar to this one, and should be made up of individuals in the community. While the goals and responsibilities of the DEI Task Force is up to the Town Council, below are some recommendations/suggestions regarding the purpose and responsibility.

- *Develop programming and community events to inform and promote diversity in town and public schools including and not limited to (race, gender/gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, etc).*
- *Community Book club that promotes diversity.*
- *Engage with the community and determine any programmatic/systemic needs.*
- *Review benefits packages in town and make recommendations that could attract a more diverse pool of candidates such as parental leave that is inclusive of LGBTQIA employees.*
- *Review hiring practices in Town Hall and the Board of Education.*
- \* *The questions to consider here would be, how do we select our candidate pool, what questions are being asked during interviews, etc. This is not meant that the task force should be involved in the hiring process in any way.*

## **Benefits:**

- Promotes a feeling of welcoming and inclusion in town.
- Could allow for volunteer opportunities
- Fosters an educational environment.



### **Area of Need**

The town of Tolland currently has no formal mentoring programs available to town residents. There are outside programs, such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters, that will take referrals from Tolland, however the wait lists are long and prioritized by those who have the highest needs. We have heard from community members that youth need more resources to be set up for success in the “real” world- socially, emotionally and financially. In addition, community members have identified that there are limited resources for career counseling in Tolland for adults who are looking to enter or reenter the workforce.

There is an abundance of research available that shows the impact of mentoring programs on community wellness. Mentoring programs facilitate meaningful connections within the community. When a community is well connected, community health and wellness improves. Many factors, including Covid-19 have impacted the ability to create meaningful connections in the Tolland community. This recommendation offers new pathways of connection amongst all town citizens.

### **Recommendation**

The Task Force recommends that mentoring programs within the town of Tolland are created. In discussions about this, the Task Force identified three different potential mentoring opportunities for the town of Tolland.

1. *Traditional Mentoring:* Adults (over 18) volunteer to mentor youth (under 18) within the town of Tolland.

#### **Things to Consider**

- Someone to coordinate mentoring program
  - Criteria developed to become a mentor
  - Criteria developed to identify youth that would benefit from this program
2. *Career Mentoring:* Research shows that those in recovery from substance use/mental health difficulties are more likely to be successful when they have access to resources enabling them to obtain productive employment and explore different career paths. In addition, many youth do not have the skillset to obtain employment when they first enter the working world. This would be aimed at developing real world skills, exploring different careers and supporting individuals wishing to enter (or re-enter) the work force.

As we explored this, a program offered by HVCC came to our attention. Rather than reinvent this for our town, we recommend that the program offered by HVCC is made more accessible to Tolland residents. While Vernon is close by, we can't assume that everyone has the motivation and means to get there. Two suggestions are:

- a. invite this program into Tolland High School to directly provide support to students

- b. Facilitate resources from this program utilizing space in town weekly to provide access to services

3. *Youth Mentoring Youth*: Mentoring program created that would utilize school resources to allow older youth to mentor younger youth. At the end of the school day, students in this mentoring program would take a bus to the identified school they are mentoring at. They would be partnered with an identified child/group of children, and spend an allotted amount of time with this child/group. Students would then be bussed back to the HS in time to take the late bus home. The Task Force suggests that this starts with two identified grades to pilot the program and identify successes/challenges.

Benefits:

- Eliminates barrier of transportation for youth to participate in a program like this
- Allows students an opportunity to build their resume, gain volunteer hours and connect with youth in town
- Gives children access to relatable role models
- Provides SEL support
- Improves self esteem for mentors and youth being mentored
- Increases real world skills such as: conversation making, planning and executing an activity, maintaining relationships
- Establishes work ethic and responsibility