



# Creating Connections Summer Newsletter

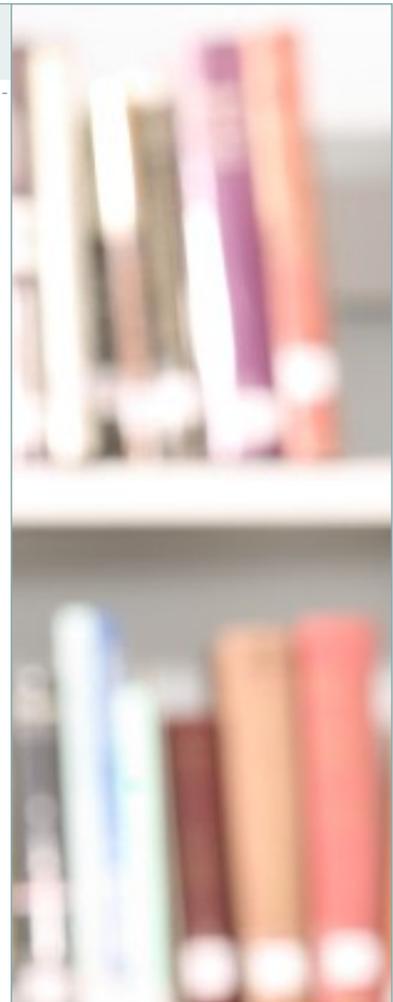
## PHASE II UNDERWAY

The implementation stage of the project is well underway. We have made major progress! Our focus during June and July has been on developing a mental health curriculum for social workers and piloting the trainings in both eastern and western WA. Additionally, the implementation of the new trauma symptoms screening tool began during this period with assistance being provided through the Child Health and Education Tracking Program. We've also launched the ongoing mental health screenings program. All in all, we have had a successful summer and are excited for what next quarter will bring.

## CHILDREN'S BUREAU 2014 ACCESS AND TRAUMA ANNUAL GRANTEE MEETING IN WASHINGTON D.C.

The Access and Trauma Annual Grantee Meeting took place June 2-3, 2014 in Washington D.C. Barb Putnam, Sue Kerns, Mike Pullmann, Andrea Negrete, Lin Payton, and Kari Mohr were in attendance. The purpose of this year's meeting centered on sharing and discussing the first year of implementation of Phase II activities.

Specifically, day one began with a panel by the nine sites presenting on their project's approach to screening, assessment, case planning, progress monitoring and service array configuration. We also had an opportunity to hear from Associate Commissioner of the Administration of Child, Youth and Families, Joo Yeun Chang who shared her enthusiasm and support for the work we are doing. The remainder of day one and all of day two consisted of large and small breakout sessions covering topics such as 1) cost study, 2) program implementation, and 3) identifying and addressing barriers to installation activities and implementation drivers. The meeting providing our team with a great opportunity for peer support among our fellow grantees, knowledge sharing, mutual problem solving, and discussions of our individual and collective success to improve linkages of youth in foster care with mental health services.



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Ongoing Mental Health .....2
- Trauma Tool Implementation .2
- Alumni Interviews .....3
- New additions to Core Team ...3
- Mental Health Training.....4

## NEW TRAUMA TOOL IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the trauma tool began with a small statewide group of CHET Screeners who volunteered to become early adopters of the trauma tool. The purpose of the early adoption was to have a core group of CHET Screeners pilot administering the trauma tool. Their feedback was key to gain direct feedback from the field. With this approach, the screeners were able to share how the trauma tool was received from both youth and caregivers as well as the impact it had on their work.

Additionally, CA program manager, Dae Shogren provided a post-conference follow to CHET staff statewide by attending Unit staff meetings. This is an opportunity for CHET staff to dialogue about ideas and concerns around the implementation of the trauma tool.

Both the CHET and OMH programs implemented the trauma tool statewide on July 1st, 2014.

## MEET THE NEW ONGOING MENTAL HEALTH SCREENERS!

We are so excited to have these folks join the Creating Connection Team! Each of the screeners brings her own strength and character to the program. Please join us in welcoming Becky, Trisha, and Robin~



### Region 1

Hello! My name is **Becky Burgess**. I graduated from Pacific Lutheran University with a Bachelor's in social work. After college I started working at Rainier School, a Residential Habilitation Center for adults with developmental disabilities. From there, I became a Case Manager for the Division of Developmental Disabilities and held case loads of both adults and children. A few years later, I was provided an opportunity to work with the Children's Administration with the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program. Under this program, I was able to work with youth who had been or were currently in foster care and provided financial assistance to help eligible youth with college expenses. I had worked in the ETV Program for 3 1/2 years when I had heard about the new Ongoing Mental Health (OMH) Screener position through the Creating Connections grant.

I have really enjoyed connecting with the families as an OMH Screener and having a chance to get to know a little bit about some of the children/youth that we will be working with. It has also been interesting learning about the different therapies available for children who have experienced trauma and how we can get them connected with appropriate treatment. I'm really excited to see where this program will lead and to be able to get in on the ground floor of a new program.

### Region 2

Hello, I'm **Robin Shanafelt**. I recently moved from Vancouver to Olympia. I'm excited to explore this beautiful area. I came to work for Children's Administration in 2006. Prior to my current role, I worked as a Child Health and Education

(CHET) Screener in the Kelso and Vancouver offices. I've also worked in Birth-3 Early Intervention, and served as adjunct faculty in Child and Family Studies at Clark College in Vancouver. I have a BA in Human Development from WSU (go Cougs!) and my MSW is from EWU. As an Ongoing Mental Health Screener, I look forward to serving our children and youth by screening for and identifying unmet mental health needs. Also essential, will be connecting our children and youth to the right services to support their healing and enhance their well-being. Thank you! I look forward to working with you.

### Region 3

Hi! My name is **Trishia Benshoof**. I have lived all over the Great Northwest, but my family moved to the Olympia area a year and a half ago. We are exploring and enjoying this new piece of the Northwest! I have a BA in Social Work from NNU and 11 years of Child Protection Experience in Intake, Investigation, and Case Management. I have also spent time in Early Intervention and Adoptions with a focus in community outreach and networking. I think that's why I am so excited to be a part of the team that is setting up the Ongoing Mental Health screening process! I believe it has a unique place in support of the Case Management process and is a piece of the network of services for children and youth in care. I look forward to supporting the great work you do for children and youth in care and our ongoing efforts to make sure children and youth get as healthy as possible with services that are positive and effective. I look forward to getting to know you as we move forward together! Thank you!

## PERSPECTIVES FROM ALUMNI OF CARE

Jessica Sachara, a partner of the Creating Connections team and an alumni of care, conducted interviews with a group of alumni as part of her practicum with the University of Washington. The purpose of the interviews was to gather baseline information about Washington State foster youth's experiences around getting their mental health needs met during their time in care. The interviews included questions about screening, treatment, and progress monitoring. 10 alumni of Washington State's foster care system between the ages of 18-24 were interviewed. The alumni reported a variety of experiences with the Washington State mental health system. Below are highlights from the report:



- Eight out of ten alumni interviewed reported receiving some sort of counseling while in care
- There was a consensus that progress monitoring is both necessary and beneficial. Alumni noted that mental health symptoms may not immediately manifest and it is especially important to track mental health symptoms during transitional periods such as high school and college.
- Alumni suggestions for improving the mental health system for youth in care align closely with the Creating Connections goals of the grant: providing trauma-informed care, consistent progress monitoring, individualized treatment, more in-depth evaluations/assessments, and finding a counselor that is a good fit for the youth.

*"I wish there would have been more in depth testing on my behalf ... Something like that would be helpful because I know that as I was changing from middle school to high school, there were a lot more issues that came into play... . I think I needed more frequent check ins throughout transitional periods"*

## EXPLORING CAPACITY BUILDING: AF-CBT TRAINING

Provided by the Evidence Based Practice Institute, on July 21st –23rd, David Kolko and Naomi Perry trained mental health providers across 9 different agencies throughout the state in Alternatives for Families- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (AF-CBT) in Tacoma, Washington. AF-CBT is an intervention that helps families and

their children when there has been violence in the family.

The focus of this training centered on how these types of services can support child welfare-involved families.



## NEW ADDITIONS TO OUR CORE TEAM



**Andrea Negrete, M.Ed.**, holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and a Master's in Education from the University of Washington, Seattle.

Andrea is joining us as the new Project Coordinator for Creating Connections. She previously coordinated a state-academic partnership with the Children's Administration that aimed to increase awareness and utilization of Evidence Based Practices for children and families involved in the child welfare system.

Andrea will help coordinate and provide support for many activities in this project. Welcome Andrea!



**Joe Avalos, M.A., CDP**, holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and Master of Arts degree in Counseling Psychology from Saint Martin's University in Lacey, WA. Joe is the supervisor of the Children's Behavioral Health Team with the Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery and is joining the team as the co-principal investigator. Joe has worked with youth and families in a variety of clinical settings, from the emergency department of a major hospital to outpatient chemical dependency services. Joe is also a state certified Chemical Dependency Professional, a U.S. Navy Veteran, and a former foster parent.

**FOR MORE  
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**CASEWORKER TRAINING IN MENTAL HEALTH**

**Regional Core Training:**

On May 28th and June 11th, Sue Kerns and Barb Putnam trained The Alliance for Child Welfare coaches on the Mental Health: A Critical Aspect to Permanency and Wellbeing curriculum in West Seattle and Spokane. The three-hour curriculum covers a variety of topics, including the importance of mental health, common mental health and behavior challenges, screening tools, adult mental health, Evidence Based Practices, psychotropic medications, trauma and suicide. Alliance coaches will deliver the curriculum to newly hired social workers in the coming months.

The training was well received by Alliance coaches. Coaches completed a short survey before and after the training to gauge the success of the training. Attendees reported a considerable gain in knowledge about mental health, and reported a high degree of confidence in their ability to successfully deliver the curriculum.

Regional Core Training	Rated from 0 (not at all) to 10 (completely)	
	Mean	# of Participants
How much knowledge did you gain from today's training about mental health?	8.00	6
To what degree do you feel that you have the skills and ability to effectively lead the group, address questions, and successfully deliver the curriculum?	8.00	6

**In-Service Training:**

On June 20th and 25th, the first all-day trainings on mental health were launched. These trainings covered topics from the Regional Core training in-depth as well as adding additional content about mental health. Compared to the Regional Core Training, the In-Service Training focused on skills building and application of knowledge. Attendees gained further experience identifying mental health needs, interpreting screening reports and exploring a variety of treatment options for those with mental health needs.

The In-Service Training was also extremely well received by attendees. Many attendees noted that they thought the material was important and appreciated the skills building activities.

In-Service Training	Rated from 0 (not at all) to 10 (completely)	
	Mean	# of Participants
Overall rating of the content, relevance and usefulness to your job	8.21	19
Content was well organized	8.5	20
Helpfulness of training materials	8.5	20
Instructor's knowledge of subject matter	9.25	20
Instructor's delivery and facilitation ability	8.95	20