



Calaveras Wellness Centers

MHSA Grant Funded

*Sierra Child & Family Services, Calaveras Co. Behavioral Health
Calaveras Co. Office of Education*

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PRESENTERS: MONIQUE GONZALES, CCBHS

KATHRYN EUSTIS, CCOE

AMANDA ROBINSON, SIERRA CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

On-Campus Wellness Team Approach

Family Specialists

Clinicians

School Counselors

Principals

Parents

- ▶ Early Mental Health Intervention Model Serving 10 Elementary Schools
- ▶ Each school has one Family Specialist and one Clinician assigned as a SCFS Wellness Team. Two of the Family Specialists speak Spanish.
- ▶ Each Wellness team serves two schools, on site 2 days/week. Staff members work 12 months/year.
- ▶ School Counselors play a key role in the team approach.
- ▶ Parents/Caregivers are involved early in the process.
- ▶ Wellness Team members are invited to attend school meetings, such as Student Study Teams, 504 Plan, and IEP meetings.

STUDENTS SERVED

- ▶ As of May 12, 2022 399 students have been served.
- ▶ Wellness Teams asked schools to refer students at highest risk first.
- ▶ Students across all grades have been served.
- ▶ Initially, the students needing more intensive services were in grades 4 and above.
- ▶ However, the number K-3 students that have been identified with significant trauma issues is steadily rising.

First Steps – Referral and Non Clinical Intervention

- ▶ Referrals come through school counselors & principals. Other referrals are looped back through the counselor to ensure coordinated services.
- ▶ Referred and self-referred students come into the Wellness Center and receive non-clinical early intervention services, generally up to 4 visits.
 - ▶ Grounding, mindfulness, grief, buddy development, basic communication skills.
 - ▶ The team also provides training, resources and referrals to parents and school staff.
 - ▶ Initial mental health screening.
- ▶ These services are often enough to stabilize students and keep mental health issues from escalating.

Higher Needs - Clinical Intervention

- ▶ Early screening may indicate that a student has a need for a higher level of care (moderate to severe mental health needs). If so, the Wellness Team contacts parents prior to proceeding with a clinical referral for assessment. Parents are assisted through the process of securing clinical services (private insurance or MediCal).
- ▶ If medical necessity is indicated for moderate to severe mental health needs, and the student has MediCal, the onsite Wellness Clinician completes a full assessment. Once authorized through BH the Wellness Clinician provides therapy at the schools Wellness Center.
 - ▶ The current clinical caseload is 40 active clients with at least 10 referrals in process.
 - ▶ CCBH Program Supervisor meets weekly with SCF clinical team to consult, present, and authorize youth who meet SMHS. This process has taken a year of training and fine tuning.
 - ▶ Students who do not meet the criteria for CBH clinical services remain supported at school by the Wellness Teams (non-clinical).

Child Trauma is the largest driver of the need for services.

- ▶ Students who are being referred to Wellness services consistently have a trauma history. A majority appear to have 3 or more ACES indicators.
- ▶ Developmental trauma is a significant focus of the team.
 - ▶ Early trauma disrupts cognitive, neurological and psychological development and attachment to adult caregivers.
- ▶ Primary diagnosis is most often PTSD.
- ▶ Early trauma is often disclosed by very young students when the Wellness Team is called upon to “sort out” behavioral issues.
- ▶ Early identification of trauma for young students helps with early intervention and skill building for students, families and the education team supporting them.

Successes

- ▶ Students appear to be responding to the Wellness Team approach more quickly than with the traditional route through models of care.
- ▶ Parents are trusting Wellness-related Behavioral Health services. Students and parents are engaged in the process.
- ▶ Services are being highly utilized, and all sectors are very verbal in their appreciation: parents, teachers, counselors and principals.
- ▶ This year there have been no FURS (Foster Urgent Response System) calls for the county. The Wellness Teams may be serving that need proactively.
- ▶ Access to services, Assessment and the Authorization process for youth needing SMHS has greatly improved in the past year due to consistent training.

Collaboration and Leveraging

- ▶ Since implementation Calaveras County has had a strong partnership between Behavioral Health and COE. BH also had secure relationship SCFS as a contracted provider.
- ▶ All three agencies continue to meet at least twice monthly during a monthly team meeting and separate Evaluation and Sustainability meeting. The team also participates in the Student Mental Health Leadership Consortium quarterly.
- ▶ Other collaborative workgroups that include wellness centers at various capacities include:
 - ▶ Site Administrator Meetings- School Administrators report and consult on their wellness programs
 - ▶ Crisis Collaborative Meetings- breakfast club that created the crisis protocols, requested the creation of the Care Team, and has been working to strengthen relationships between schools, LE, and the hospital
 - ▶ SBHIP- A new workgroup including all the districts and BHS, that is working on the needs assessment for the Student Behavioral Health Incentive Program
- ▶ Fund leveraging (First 5) will support parent counseling.
- ▶ Wellness services have led to early identification of the need for Child Abuse Reports. (Rising numbers)
- ▶ The Wellness Team has connected with the Calaveras Care Team, a multidisciplinary team, to follow up with family resources and referrals.
- ▶ Information sharing and connections with counselors and teachers at school sites is recognized as a critical component of success.
- ▶ The planning team is looking at sustainability strategies early in the process. How can all the partners support ongoing Wellness Centers on school campuses?

Challenges

- ▶ Finding private spaces on campuses that are appropriate for highly confidential meetings.
- ▶ Identifying and adapting to the individual barriers, needs, and culture at each school has been challenging at times.
- ▶ There is limited/no access to clinical services for students who have a “mild to moderate” mental health need, or whose families cannot transport them to out-of-area providers.
- ▶ Family Specialists and Clinicians received the most challenging referrals at the start of the school year, in a time of high environmental stress as children returned to on-site learning after COVID shut-downs.

Strategies

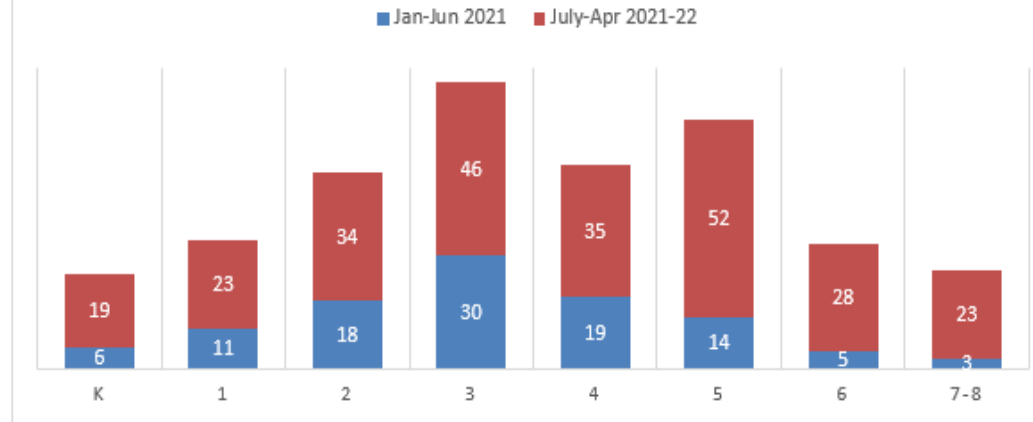
- ▶ Progress is being made, but it can be changed overnight. Resolving this issue is a priority. **Having a stable, safe, confidential space is essential for quality services for students.**
- ▶ SCFS staff have been encouraged to be more active in school staff meetings, activities and more.
- ▶ Students are currently held in Wellness Services for a longer period of time to promote stability.
- ▶ Sierra Child and Family Services is currently working on getting mild-moderate designation to provide clinical services for these students.
- ▶ Collaboration with BH for training was critical and ongoing as we prepare for CalAIM
- ▶ Wellness Teams and Supervisors supported each other through the difficult weight of referrals addressing high levels of trauma for young students.
- ▶ Wellness Teams have been excited to see students, families and education teams move in a more resilient direction.

Evaluation

- ▶ State funder requires data
 - ▶ We will not release any identifiable child data or data where a child's identity could be inferred.
 - ▶ We are working with CCOE to find a mutually agreeable and safe way to transfer data elements required by the state.
- ▶ Local Team needs feedback to improve program and work toward a sustainable future
 - ▶ We will need feedback from school sites: principals, counselors, teachers.
 - ▶ We will need feedback from parents
 - ▶ Surveys, focus groups, whatever is feasible

Jan-Jun 2021 July-April 2021-22 Wellness Data

CHILDREN SERVED BY WELLNESS SINCE INCEPTION NUMBERS SERVED BY GRADE LEVEL (366 CHILDREN HAD GRADES RECORDED.)



Clinical Services

93 children were served by Calaveras County Behavioral Health. *Please note there is always a lag time for behavioral health services following Wellness services, so additional children may be seen in future months, or receive additional services.*

- 86 received a Mental Health Assessment
- 88 were enrolled in Mental Health Services
- 93 children received a diagnosis; (36 had one diagnosis, 57 had two or more diagnoses.)
The highest number of diagnoses for children referred by Wellness were for trauma and stressor-related disorders and neurodevelopmental disorders. |

Calaveras Wellness Centers

WELLNESS CENTERS

Calaveras County now has Wellness Centers on each of our ten elementary school campuses. Each center is unique, just as each school is unique, but all the centers share a similar structure and purpose. Currently, every Wellness Center has two staff members: a family specialist and a mental health clinician, and is staffed two days each week.

The family specialist helps connect families to mental health and community resources, and helps students build skills to handle tough emotions like frustration, anger, fear, and disappointment.

The clinician's job is to assess students who have specific mental health needs and help them access behavioral health services, either through MediCal or private insurance. Usually, either the family specialist or the clinician is on your school campus, rather than both at the same time.

For students who qualify for MediCal services, it is now possible for them to receive mental health services at school. While this isn't a role of the Wellness Center, oftentimes the service provider can be your school's Wellness Center mental health clinician.

The countywide Wellness Center planning team is working to improve connections to services for students who have private insurance as well. There is a shortage of private therapists in our county and in the entire country, a big challenge we are trying to address.

HOW TO ACCESS YOUR SCHOOL'S WELLNESS CENTER

Contact Calaveras Wellness at calwellness@sierrachild.org or contact your child's principal or school counselor to request a Wellness member call. www.calkidswellness.org

WHAT WE'RE HEARING

"We are thrilled to have a wellness center on our campus! Cynthia and Danny are amazing resources for students' well-being."
Mrs. Wolfer, VSE Principal



BUILDING WELLNESS

Even though the program launched during a pandemic, we have been able to serve more than 300 elementary school students across the county already. Many students whose mental health needs were not being recognized or met are now being seen and served. The pandemic caused a great deal of trauma and stress for our children, and the Wellness Centers couldn't have come at a better -- or more difficult -- time.

Our Wellness Centers would not be possible without the strong partnerships among agencies in Calaveras County. The project is a collaboration of Calaveras County Behavioral Health Services, Sierra Child and Family Services, Calaveras County Office of Education, and all of our school districts.

We are constantly working to increase the capacity of our current Wellness Centers. And a new source of short-term infrastructure funding has become available that may help us develop Wellness Centers for the schools that do not yet **have them**.



Calaveras County
Office of Education



Spring Newsletter

End of Year Site Summary



Dear Administrator, Counselor, Teachers, and Staff,

Thank you for welcoming Sierra Child and Family Services Wellness staff on your campus this year. We are looking forward to the next school year. I wanted to take a moment to thank everyone who participated in the Wellness Survey. All the feedback was appreciated and will help us going forward in improving our services on all your campuses. I also wanted to address the goal of Wellness, staffing of Wellness and what it will look like on your campus this coming year.

Calaveras Wellness Centers are available as a safe space on campus to nurture and support the health and well-being of our students, and to help students and families connect to community resources.

Sierra Child and Family Services (SCFS) provides Wellness support and services to students and families on ten elementary school campuses in Calaveras County. Our mission is to provide excellent mental health, foster, and adoptive services for children and families in Northern California. The SCFS vision is to bring our services, at whatever level a child or family may need, to all the communities we serve, overcoming whatever barriers may exist.

Calaveras Wellness Center Services on Campus

Wellness Center staff is on campus two days a week. Additional days on campus may be added over time as capacity grows to meet student needs. Students, parents, and teachers can make a referral by talking to the principal or school counselor, and students can "drop-in" during break or lunch. Parents can contact the Wellness Center for support or resources. Parents and staff may also reach Wellness staff through our website, calkidswellness.org.

Currently, every Wellness Center has two staff members: a Family Specialist and a Mental Health Clinician. Starting next year there will be a sign on the door stating which day will be staffed with a Family Specialist and which day will be staffed with a Mental Health Clinician. There will also be a phone number on the sign that you can contact if the Wellness Center is not staffed that day and you need assistance.

The Family Specialist's job is to help connect families to mental health services and community resources, and help students build skills to handle tough emotions like frustration, anger, fear, and disappointment. The Clinicians' job is to assess students who have specific mental health needs and help them access behavioral health services, either through MediCal or private insurance. For students who qualify for [MediCal](#) services, it is possible for them to receive mental health services at school. While this is not part of the Wellness Center project, oftentimes the service provider can be your school's Wellness Center Mental Health Clinician.

Currently, the countywide Wellness team is working to improve connections to services for students who have private insurance as well. There is a shortage of private therapist in our county, and this is a big challenge we are trying to address.

SCFS is very excited to provide Wellness services throughout the summer on most of the school campuses. Thank you to the schools that were able to accommodate Wellness over the summer!

We hope you have a rejuvenating summer and look forward to teaming up with you to support our kids!

QUESTIONS?