



## The Collaborative Solutions Network 2013 Annual Report

### Introduction

The Collaborative Solutions Network is a system of care initiative in Central New York that creates opportunities for children, youth, families, and community supports *to work together in a comprehensive, community-wide approach* to foster social and emotional wellbeing. The members of CSN work together to inspire effective and family-focused positive system change. Over one hundred and fifty youth, caregivers, educators, community members, human service professionals, health care providers and community leaders are currently actively involved in the work of the CSN. All CSN activities are conducted in ways that uphold the following system of care values and principles:

***\*Youth centered   \*Family Guided   \*Culturally Sensitive  
\*Trauma Informed   \*Community Based***

The CSN contracts with the Franziska Racker Centers for administrative support and functions with braided funding from NYS grants, Tompkins and Seneca County funding streams, support from local school districts and private donations. There are currently three paid staff members that support the work of the CSN.

### The Year in Review

2013 was a year of growth and change for the Collaborative Solutions Network. We witnessed increased membership in the collaborative, most significantly in the area of parent/caregiver participation. In January 2013 we had only two active family members and we now have six parents/caregivers with lived experience who are involved in the CSN. Currently, over 40 Tompkins County agencies and school districts are involved in some aspect of the work of the CSN, along with 7 Seneca County agencies. In all, hundreds of professionals, community members, youth and family members have participated in CSN organized or sponsored events. On average, 20-30 members attend bimonthly CSN meetings with many more involved in smaller work groups that meet on the alternate months. Meeting evaluations are very positive and we continually use both written and verbal feedback to improve the quality of our meeting protocols. We are currently in the process of reorganization, including entering into a fresh strategic

planning process in early 2014 and the appointment of a seven member CSN Advisory Team.

With increased funding from both grants and fiscal support from Seneca County Mental Health Department, we were able to refine the CSN staffing pattern and add a part time CSN Team Coordinator. Tina Hallock brings both her experience as a parent who has supported her own child with a mental health challenges as well as her keen organizational skills to her position. Our continued partnership with New York State Success (New York's state-wide system of care) has afforded us with a number of great learning opportunities. These include monthly webinars and participation in a branding process where over 20 representatives from the CSN worked with a team from NYS Success to develop our promise statement and brand platform. (Please see the attached document)

Some of the highlights from the work of the CSN in 2013 include:

**1. Website redesign and expansion:**

We continue to refine the CSN website. Modifications include a new more attractive and accessible design and the addition of a list of private practitioners that work with youth and families. Therapists who are listed can now update their information remotely, including whether or not they have openings in their practice. It is notable that two area high school students received course credit for helping us develop a youth portal on the website which will launch in early 2014.

**2. Collaborative best practice for emergency mental health evaluation and follow up.**

In early 2013, approximately 30 representatives from a variety of agencies worked together to develop a best practice for emergency mental health evaluation and follow up. Participants included family members, hospital staff, schools, mental health providers, law enforcement, and many others. Work continues on this project, however some concrete results inspired by the CSN in 2013 include:

- **Remodeling of the mental health evaluation room** in the Cayuga Medical Center Emergency Department
- The development of a **decision making matrix and universal referral form** to be used when a youth is experiencing a mental health crisis. This form is currently being piloted on the TST BOCES campus and in several area schools.
- The development of a **parent brochure** for parents who are thinking of taking their child to the ED for evaluation. (developed by parents who are members of the CSN)
- **The Stay in Touch Program:** A collaboration between Suicide Prevention and Crisis Service and CMC to offer follow up to youth who are discharged from CMC following an admission to the ED or Behavioral Health Unit.

3. **The Early Recognition Project** includes *The Whole Child Check Up Initiative* (primary care providers offer mental health screenings as part of well visits and the CSN staff offer assistance with connecting children who have a positive screen to relevant community resources) and *work with the early childhood education community* to offer mental health screenings. This project is funded through a grant with the NYS Office of Mental Health and is a collaboration between Seneca and Tompkins Counties. In 2013, we worked with three primary care offices, Tompkins County Head Start and Ithaca City School District CPSE and were able to facilitate a total of 2092 emotional health screenings.
4. The Early Recognition initiative is supported by the **Solutions for Youth and Families Warm Line** a “no wrong door” approach to accessing resources for youth with socio-emotional challenges in our community. Families with a positive emotional health screen can call the Warm Line to get help connecting with supports in the community that are right for them. The Warm Line is also available to anyone in the community who would like to know more about what is available in our area and how to connect with resources, including families, human service providers and school personnel.
5. **The Collaborative Care Community (CCC) Initiative** is a collaboratively designed regional best practice for supporting successful transitions between systems of care for youth in hospitals or residential care that continues to be implemented in our region. In 2013, with financial support from the CSN and funds from Seneca County Mental Health Department, we hired a .5 FTE CCC Implementation Coordinator. Sally Manning currently tracks 8 Tompkins County youth who are in residential placement and has assisted with the transition of 8 youth back to our communities. She is actively involved with SPOA in both counties and continues to assist in the identification of families who could benefit from participation in the CCC model. We are in the process of developing a program evaluation plan for the CCC that will include both satisfaction surveys for family members and other stakeholders. Educational site visits have been conducted at 5 regional hospitals and residential treatment facilities and Sally has met with regional CSE chairs and other school mental health staff to provide information about the model. All of the supporting CCC documents are now uploaded on the CSN website for easy access.
6. The newly founded **Family Navigator Program** matches parents and caregivers who have lived experience with families who have youth that are currently experiencing mental health challenges. With the support of an Innovations Grant through NYS Success, we initiated a pilot program to expand peer family support and leadership in our region. Three peer family partners were hired in September. In order to assure relevance to families, these parents have been active collaborators in the development of the model for the pilot. This participation included choosing the name for the program, development of the

program evaluation tools and the establishment of a marketing plan. To date, the Family Navigators have worked with six families and have been integrally involved as leaders in the CSN. We are working with Binghamton University School of Social Work on an evaluation plan for the Family Navigators Program and will be collaborating with area agencies that offer support to families to explore sustainability and expansion of this important resource.

7. **Sharing the Care: Partnerships to Promote Well-Being.** In December of 2013 we learned that we were one of 6 communities in the United States chosen to be part of a Zero to Three Training Project. Sharing the Care's goal is to provide professional development opportunities that engage multi-disciplinary, cross-sector professionals who work with young children and their families in:

- Developing a shared knowledge base and a common language
- Developing cross-sector professional relationships
- Focusing on building partnerships with parent
- Promoting well-being for very young children and their families

About 20 individuals in our region will be involved in this intensive learning experience over the course of the next year. Sally Manning serves as the project coordinator.

8. **Cross system trainings and collaborative meetings** to build common understandings and collaborative approaches to supporting our youth and families. IN 2013, Tompkins County gatherings included a meet and greet between all of our local primary care providers and outpatient mental health practitioners, a two day System of Care Training, a cultural sensitivity training for the Ithaca City School District and many presentations and CSE Chairperson meetings, District Superintendent meetings, and site visits to CMC to build even stronger alliances for effective discharge planning. Seneca County meetings included a meet and greet for primary care providers and area mental health practitioners and a Partners for Children, Youth and Families gathering to address Community Well Being. Over 80 stakeholders met in large and small groups to network and to explore issues related to personal and community well being.
9. **Cross system data collection and analysis** to inform strategic planning and program development. A number of stakeholders in both Tompkins and Seneca Counties are currently exploring ways that we can assimilate data across systems in order more clearly understand the demographics, strengths and needs of our youth at risk and to assess "what works and what doesn't".

10. In our December “State of the CSN” meeting we determined:

- We will engage in a strategic planning process in early 2014. We are in the process of interviewing consultants to assist us in this process. We hope to choose a consulting group by early February have a revised strategic plan in hand by June 2014.
- We will be appointing a 7 member CSN Advisory Team who will be nominated by CSN members and will meet on a bimonthly basis to guide the work of the network.

We are continually grateful for the passion and commitment that the CSN members bring to this work. We are truly *“redefining possible....together”*.

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