

Northern Lights Monthly Coalition Meeting January 25th, 2024

Attendees (in person) - Harlie Kaminski - AACPS teacher; Desi Thomas - Suicide prevention; Leon Fossett - Crisis response; Ryan Mani - Mental health Fort Meade; Leslie Beers - Coalition Coordinator; Tykeara Dunscomb - Youth Peer Support Specialist; Bree McMorrow - Harm reduction, Ashley Ramsey -Coalition Supervisor, Emily Bishoff - SOS coordinator, Verket Randall - AACO Health Dept, Lt. Washington - Coalition Specialist Fort Meade, Devin Howard - Northern Lights Chair and youth outreach, Denise Williams - Outreach Coordinator, Katie Wargo - Coalition coordinator and SOS director
(Virtual) Michael Dorsey - Grow Home, Joy Cortina - Life of Joy

- It was a very engaging meeting with a lot of input from guests.

Our activity was to submit ideas for conversation starters to engage youth in conversations about substance misuse, bullying, unhealthy behaviors, and suicide. We were also asked to submit ideas for flyers, posters, etc., on these topics.

- Desi suggested promoting more of the colors associated with each topic and including LGBTQ since the rate of suicide is extremely high in that community.
- Other suggestions included including a QR code on all flyers and posters for additional information, resources, and help.
- We need to lessen the stigma surrounding ALL topics. Stigma is the #1 reason people don't ask for help.
- We need more peer-to-peer conversations. It's been proven that people are more likely to talk about their issues if the person listening or asking questions has walked in their shoes.
- When dealing with bullying, we need to rally around both the person being bullied and the person who is the bully. The bully probably has some unresolved issues of their own and will continue to bully others if they also don't get help.
- Katie will collect everyone's paper with suggestions, thoughts, and ideas. Compile all the information and create a more informative and inclusive flier to share with our community.

Future events -

- Youth peer support virtual meetings are every month's 1st and 4th Thursdays.
- On February 28th, Magothy Middle will host an SOS for the Broadneck Cluster. At this time, it's a parent session. If all goes well, we hope to have student sessions as well.
- Desi is ready to start presenting her "suicide prevention" video presentation.
- House of Addiction is moving along on March 14 and 15. We require donations, i.e., prom attire for 6 to 8 students, volunteers, and full bedroom furniture (Lt. Washington might be able to help with the furniture)

The next meeting is February 22, 2024, at the police station @ noon.