



CLIENTS	Caregivers, Whole Family, Youth-Elementary to High School, LGBT
NUMBER	264 youth/237 families
ETHNICITY	Very diverse (see back)
INCOME	\$20,000- \$29,999 (average)
DIAGNOSES	ADHD, Anxiety, Attachment Disorder, Conduct Disorder, Depression, FAS, Substance Abuse Disorder, PTSD

I'm Ready to Talk

"A mother of a 16-year-old attended our parent group and had originally resisted the idea of attending counseling. One day she came to us and said, 'I'm ready to talk about this.' Her readiness to talk was a huge shift in behavior from defensive and protective to accepting and trusting."

-Joanna Lowry, Neighborhood House

YOUTH LEADERSHIP & PARENT GROUPS

- The number of youth altercations have dropped dramatically over the second half of the year.
- Parents reported reduced isolation and better understanding of mental illnesses, coping skills, stress management, and skills to support one another.
- Youth and families reported trusting relationships with therapists; re-framed perceptions that therapy is akin to "brainwashing or a scam."



MICHAEL

PROBLEM/CHALLENGE

Michael is 17. He was mandated to attend group as part of his probation. When Michael first came to group, he rarely spoke, was defensive and shut down. He opted out of yoga even when his peers were willing to try it.

INTERVENTION

Michael built trust with a therapist who affirmed his reality and challenged him to unpack his emotions, experiences, and biases. Group became a place to listen to his peers' experiences; to be vulnerable, supported, supportive, challenged, reflective, compassionate, thoughtful, curious, courageous, and honest. He worked on communication, life skills, relationships, identity, art, historical trauma, goal setting, literacy, mindfulness, community engagement, and psycho-education etc.

IMPACT/SUCCESS

Funding from RCCMHC supported Neighborhood House to help Michael become more connected to school, peers, family, and community. He now participates enthusiastically in group (even yoga!) He uses a cooling breath if angry and an energizing breath if tired in school. He has deescalated altercations between himself and other youth. He acknowledges how he and his peers can and do influence situations. Michael is curious and asks questions. He is an engaged scholar of his experience. He plans to attend college and become a Broadcast Journalist. Staff have seen his relationship with his mother grow, too. He has more freedom at home because he demonstrates that he is responsible (regular school and group attendance, job, good communication with mom). Michael has emerged as a leader!



Ramsey County Children's Mental Health Collaborative (RCCMHC) Funded Services

FUNDED AGENCY: Neighborhood House (NH) is a multi-service, multi-location, multi-cultural social service agency, providing Basic Needs and Lifelong Learning services to help people build the skills, knowledge, and confidence to thrive in diverse communities.

FUNDED PROGRAM/SERVICE: Youth Leadership and Parent Groups

PROGRAM/SERVICE DESCRIPTION: Culturally appropriate one-on-one mental health counseling and group psycho education for low-income youth of color (many of whom have experienced trauma) and their parents. The following services were delivered by licensed professionals experienced in working with our target population: 1) one-on-one mental health therapy with a licensed professional to address trauma, developmental needs, and support of overall functioning; 2) group psycho education where participants are provided with information and skills surrounding symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, and other prevalent mental health issues, and; 3) family mental health education groups designed to help families understand various mental illnesses, acquire coping skills, learn to manage stress, acquire coping skills, and develop their ability to support one another.

LENGTH OF GRANT TERM: October to December 2016

AWARD: \$34,000 (used full award)

ETHNICITIES SERVED: African, Asian or Pacific Islander, Black/African American, Immigrant, Latino, Native American or Alaskan Native, "I don't Know"

DATA COLLECTION: Neighborhood House uses ClientTrack, HSA, CANS, SAYO-Y, and YIP measurement tools, as well as staff observations to measure data. They assessed changes made via the Holistic Student Assessment and Barriers Assessment, It's That Easy reflections, instructor observations, youth and parent feedback, and staff meeting notes to document noted changes.

IMPACT AND OUTCOMES (and how they relate to RCCMHC vision and goals)

RCCMHC Vision: Every Child in Ramsey County Will Function at the Highest Possible Level of Mental Health. Youth were able to 1) develop trusting relationships through planned and just-in-time psycho-education, 2) benefit from the impact of trauma and mindfulness lessons, and 3) use individual support/counseling as needed. Youth were able to be more present in group, get more out of group sessions, and build healthy connections with other youth in the group.

Goal A: Cross-System Collaboration. NH partners with Ramsey County Juvenile Corrections and Sheriffs, Saint Paul Police, public and charter schools, mental health professionals, Metro State University staff and faculty, and multiple internal services/programs to wrap needed support around participants, as well as work across systems to share information, knowledge, and practices that support family stability.

Goal B: Health Equity. 100% of participants are from under-served populations.

Goal C: Whole Family Wellbeing. Parents were able to 1) share concerns about children's treatment in the juvenile justice system, 2) reflect on their own and their children's trauma, 3) learn relationship and communication skills tied to the family's values, expectations, and boundaries through the It's That Easy curriculum, 4) receive individual counseling and support, and 5) build a network of support with other parents in the group.

LESSONS LEARNED: We had a detailed plan, expense tracking tools, and partners in place to ensure we reached as many youth and families as possible. We embedded services into existing youth programs and used existing parent relationships. We were very intentional in partnering with mental health professionals who honor, lift up, and reflect the cultures of our participants. It is important to focus on family systems change to support positive youth outcomes; when adults are doing well, youth do well; Basic needs (food, housing, referrals, employment) services that wrap around all needs that a family identifies support stability and decrease stress. Year-round support is needed to address the lack of culturally-relevant mental health services for youth in Saint Paul and work more holistically with youth and their families.