

# Meeting Minutes

## West River Valley Thrives (WRVT) Coalition Meeting

June 27, 3:15 PM – 4:45 PM

**In attendance:** Nick Plante, Steve Tavella, Beatrice Birch, Bill Monahan, Chris Bullard, Crystal Mansfield, Janis Hall, Jeanette White, Shelly Huber, Susan Gunther-Mohr, Tracy Binet-Perrin, Amy Goldberg, Karren Meyer



### 1. Introductions:

**Nick Plante- WRVT Project Coordinator**

**Steve Tavella- WRVT Director**

**Beatrice Birch- Founder/Director of Inner Fire (proactive healing community helping mental health recovery without psychoactive medication. The only of its type in the country)**

**Bill Monahan- Outreach Coordinator at Grace Cottage and WRVT Advisory Board Member**

**Chris Bullard- One of two mental health liaisons to the VT State Police.**

**Crystal Mansfield- Director of Rehabilitation Services and Wellness Programs at Grace Cottage Hospital and WRVT Advisory Board Member**

**Janis Hall- 3 Generations Collaboration**

**Jeanette White- Senator, Windham District**

**Shelly Huber- Incoming president of Valley Lions Club and Newfane select board member**

**Susan Gunther-Mohr- Social Worker at Leland & Gray  
Tracy Binet-Perrin (Presenter)- School Counselor at Green Street  
School.**

**Amy Goldberg (Presenter)- Reach Up Case Manager, Economic  
Services Division, Department of Children and Families**

**Karren Meyer [came after introductions and vote on Conall Halvey]-  
Drivers Safety Education at Leland & Gray**

2. Announcements

a. Any short announcements from individuals/organizations

b. Vote on Conall Halvey as new member of WRVT Advisory  
Board

**Majority Vote- affirmative (9) ; Negative (0) ; Abstain (3)**

**Conall Halvey was voted into WRVT Advisory Board**

3. Presentation on ACEs (adverse childhood experiences) by Tracy  
Binet-Perrin and Amy Goldberg

Presentation key notes:

- Discussion of how the central nervous system works and the part it  
plays in understanding the world around us. When we talk about  
ACEs, we are talking about ways that people have adapted from  
those factors.

- Stressful experiences (especially frequent and over longer time)  
change brain chemistry and development. Too much continuous  
stress/trauma is actually toxic to your nervous system and will  
prevent neural pathways from being developed. These changes and  
adaptations can present themselves in various behaviors (and often  
may be misattributed to other reasons).

- “When biology collides with social expectations we run into  
trouble”

- Especially important when occurring in early childhood because of greater impact on development.
- Effects can differ between genders.
- Building resiliency factors is also much more important to occur earlier rather than later.
  
- The ACE study- broad range of enduring effects (health and social) of adverse childhood experiences. (1700 adult participants [18-94])
- ACEs are common and not limited to one population category and the effects are not limited to one area of impact.
- Examples of ACE-attributable problems were discussed.
- **ACEs do not affect everyone the same.**
- Three main parts of resilience-building: 1) Individual Capabilities [kids being made to feel important/valuable; self-efficacy; self-regulation] 2) Belonging (caring and competent relationships) and 3) Community, Faith, and Cultural Process and fostering thriving communities [allowing different voices to be heard and providing resources, support, and partnerships].
- Community Capacity Development- Leadership Expansion; coming together around issues of importance to the community; Shared Learning; and Results-oriented decisions.

**Person-of-Note to look into: Naomi Burke Harris, featured in the film, *Resilience* (see her Ted talk here: [https://www.ted.com/talks/nadine\\_burke\\_harris\\_how\\_childhood\\_trauma\\_affects\\_health\\_across\\_a\\_lifetime](https://www.ted.com/talks/nadine_burke_harris_how_childhood_trauma_affects_health_across_a_lifetime)).**

**PDF copies of information from presentation were distributed (attached to this email).**

#### 4. Facilitated discussion

Topics discussed:

Began with individual conversations to discussion of impressions of information from presentation and relevance to each person's work.

Presentation evaluation was disseminated and collected.

Re-grouped for larger discussion about questions and how to move forward in our work and community with addressing/mitigating ACEs and their effects.

- It was discussed how important it is to let others know about ACEs because it is fundamental to prevention work. “If we don’t know about it, imagine how many others don’t know anything about it.”

- The importance of hope and positive-action was highlighted.
- Parents can be one of our strongest forces for change (both in families and legislation in this area) when empowered effectively.

- The question was reintroduced on encouraging funders for work addressing ACEs. The idea was presented to educate funders/legislators as much as possible on ACEs to prime them for understanding when grant-writing.

- Current legislation progress was discussed. As well as lack of buy-in within some parts of government and community (“pull yourself up by your bootstraps” sentiment is prevalent).

  - Important to educate and reach the doubters.

5. Tentative next meeting – Wednesday, August 15, 3:15 – 5:00 at Leland & Gray: Proposed topic, *Vermont’s New Marijuana Law Explained, and Facilitated Discussion Led by Local Legislators and Law Enforcement*. **(Note, in order to accommodate more legislators and law enforcement, this date may change and move into September).**