

# BEHAVIORAL HEALTH GRANT

## Introduction and Grant Recipients

2018

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2019

### MILTON SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION COALITION

MSAPC developed three new programs through the behavioral health (BH) grant. The *Overdose Response Team*, led by the Milton Police Dept., provides families struggling with addiction with the support and resources they need to get on a path of recovery. The *BH Systems Navigation* identified mental health resources and potential partnerships to help the Milton Public School system address the substantial mental health challenges of its students and families. The *Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition (BRYT)* program at Milton High School provides a dedicated room for teens returning from school after a prolonged absence—usually due to an acute mental illness.

### SCITUATE BOARD OF HEALTH & HINGHAM HEALTH DEPT.

The towns of Scituate and Hingham partnered as the *South Shore Clutter Reduction Collaborative* to address hoarding disorder (HD), associated clutter, and related stigma, by establishing a group treatment intervention for Hoarding Disorder (HD) using an online platform, offering peer support group leader training, and hosting a public education event.

### BOSTON CHINATOWN NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER (BCNC) & ENHANCE ASIAN COMMUNITY ON HEALTH (EACH)

BCNC and EACH offered Mental Health First Aid trainings and a Mental Health symposium, with the overall goal of decreasing cultural stigma on mental health, and addressing language and cultural barriers to seeking help for Asian families in CHNA 20 towns.

## HIGHLIGHTS

The Behavioral Health grant program supported local projects that addressed substance use and/or mental health in CHNA 20 towns and considered one or more risk factors associated with disparities in outcomes, including: 1) stigma, 2) trauma, and/or 3) cultural competency. The goals of the grant were to improve access to behavioral health care to those most vulnerable, support efforts to develop and foster cross-sector collaborations and partnerships, and invest in evidence-based programs.

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1

year project period

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3

grant recipients

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\$62,500

awarded in grant funding

# BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

## Program Outcomes and Lessons Learned

2018  
-  
2019

### **SUSTAINED/MOBILIZED PARTNERSHIPS**

Grant recipients built on existing partnerships to create buy in and ensure effective project implementation, while also establishing new partnerships with organizations and agencies outside of the health sector (e.g. faith communities, education systems).

Grant recipients noted the importance of engaging all partners during the planning phase of any project to identify roles and opportunities for sustainability.

### **USE OF BEST PRACTICES**

Use of best-practices included the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Mental Health First Aid, and building off of social emotion learning strategies.

The BRYT program and online hoarding treatment programs are both innovative programs that have sparked interest across the region. Future funding will dictate whether these programs can be replicated in other communities.

### **ADDRESSING SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH**

All three projects addressed stigma as a significant risk factor for behavioral health issues through community education events and program implementation. Specifically, grantees aimed to reduce barriers for accessing mental health services, including cultural and linguistic barriers, limited transportation, and co-existing disorders that make individuals unwilling or unable to leave their homes (e.g. social phobias, anxiety). All projects included the cultivation of a safe and supportive environment in which community members could access services and resources without shame or fear.

### **PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY: LEVERAGING RESOURCES**

Due to the stigma associated with mental health services, all projects faced low program utilization and recruitment challenges. Similarly, as behavioral health is not prioritized in the same way as other aspects of health (e.g. chronic disease), there is limited funding for services and resources. For this reason, grant recipients emphasized the importance of effective community outreach in highlighting the importance mental health services, as well as intentional project promotion. Only after years of advocating for mental health programs in Milton HS has the BRYT program been added to the school's strategic plan and included in the town budget.

All grant recipients have applied to external funding opportunities to promote sustainability. Two of the three projects are currently working with healthcare partners to expand behavioral health services for the region.