

Michelle: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome. And thank you for joining today's Hot Shot, Mental Health Matters: Supporting Students for a Safe Return to School. Before we begin, please ensure that you have opened the WebEx chat panel by using the associated icons located at the bottom right side of your screen. Please note all your connections are currently muted, and this conference is being recorded. You are welcome to submit written questions throughout the presentation, which will be addressed at the Q&A session of the webinar. To submit your written questions, select all panelists from the dropdown menu in your chat panel, then enter your question in the message box provided and send. If you require technical assistance, please send the chat to the event producer. With that, I will turn the webinar over to Jason Amirhadji. Jason, please go ahead.

Jason Amirhadji: Thanks so much, Michelle, and thanks to everyone for joining us today for it's very special, Hot Shot webinar in our summer series. We're going to kick it off, I'm very honored to introduce our division director, Jayme Brown, from the Office of Public and Indian Housing.

Jayme Brown: Great, thanks Jason. And good afternoon or good morning to folks depending on where you are, we really appreciate you tuning in to this webinar. We are focused on the safe return to school after 18 months of the pandemic. As you all know, schools are really important for social and emotional development, but given the fact that we've all been in the pandemic and there's some uncertainty about the future, we can all emphasize with the feelings of anxiety and confusion that some kids may face. And this webinar's really focused on encouraging you all to develop tools and resources and hear from some existing communities about what they're doing.

As you know, mental health is more important now than ever, and we've really brought in some great folks representing the Public Housing Authorities in Covington, Lynn, and Norfolk to share some of the work that they've been doing, and we hope that their work serves as idea starters for you to bring back to your community and encourage and empower your youth.

This is really part of our HUD Strong Families fall effort. I know some of you are HUD strong families veterans and are very familiar with the work that we do in the summer, but we are also working this fall to expand it for back to school efforts because we know how important that is, and our focus really is on youth and empowering youth.

This webinar, again, we have our partners from PHA, we also have a representative from SAMHSA here who will share insights with you, but we will also, next week, have a webinar on the Delta variant. I know a lot of folks have been asking questions, how is it different than regular COVID-19? So we're going to really dig deep into that as well as cover the more recent announcement that came out today about booster shots. And then on September 1st, we'll be talking about youth vaccinations specifically, where you all can get more information about youth. As you know, youth are kind of a lagging population given the fact that they're some of the last folks to be eligible for vaccines. And

so I know that there's still some surrounding questions with that, and we'll tackle that on September 1st.

As always, I encourage you all to read the bulletins. We put a lot of time, attention and care into those. And to keep you updated on what we're doing, to see some of the highlights from your peers at other sites, they're all encapsulated in the bulletin, as well as some of our past webinars. So please sign up for that. If you aren't already signed up for that bulletin. Before I turn it back over to Jason, I just wanted to give a thank you to him and the work that he's done on all of these COVID efforts in bringing you all these Hot Shots, as well as thanking our Office of Field Policy and Management, in particular Rommel Calderwood. And with that, I'll turn it back over to Jason.

Jason Amirhadji: Great. Thanks so much, Jayme. And thanks again to everyone for being here with us today. So without further ado, I'm really honored to hand it over to Rob from SAMHSA. You're going to hear a little bit about what SAMHSA does, if you're not already familiar with them. And also some of the context that they're seeing on a national level around mental health and mental health for youth, and also some resources that they have available. So Rob, take it away.

Rob Baillieu : Thank you so much, Jason. And on behalf of SAMHSA, thank you so much for including us today, and thank you to everyone for the hard work that you're doing during these difficult times. Perhaps we could advance to the next slide, Jason? Thank you. My name is Rob Baillieu, I'm a primary care physician and senior clinical advisor in SAMHSA, and today I'll talking a little bit about what we've found during the pandemic in regards to youth mental health during periods of isolation, and then basically discussing resources that SAMHSA has that might be able to help all of you, we hope at some stage.

Next slide, please. So as we know, schools are a place where individuals come and they spend a lot of time there, and aside from their home, there's no other setting that has more influence on a child's mental health and wellbeing. And schools are of course a place that provide daily opportunities for educators and other caring professionals to connect meaningfully with children and families to identify problems and offer support. That being said, all school officials are mandatory reporters for suspected abuse, and therefore they serve as a layer of protection for vulnerable and at-risk students who live in unsafe homes. Beyond this, the school provides a level of connectedness and safety to children, and this is associated with lower levels of depressive symptoms, suicidal ideation, social anxiety, and sexual activity, as well as higher levels of self-esteem and more adaptive use of free time.

Next slide, please. The school closures during the pandemic have had a profound effect on child abuse reporting, and we know this from various studies and analyses. We've seen, of course, that reports from the DC Family and Child Services Agency reflect a 62% decrease in child abuse reporting during the early part of the pandemic last year, and this was accompanied by more severe presentation of child abuse cases in emergency departments. Schools, to this

end, provide a really important link to services for those individuals with mental health disorders, and of course who suffered physical abuse. And of children nine to 17 years old, it's estimated that approximately 21%, and that's over 14 million children, experience some type of mental health condition, but only 16% of these children receive any type of treatment. But this extremely small percentage of children receiving care, 70 to 80% receive such care in a school setting, making schools really important, and the loss of the school setting particularly impactful for many vulnerable students during the pandemic.

Next slide, please. A person with serious emotional disturbances is defined as an individual with mental, behavioral or emotional conditions of sufficient duration resulting in function impairment which substantially interferes with or limits the child's role or functioning in family, school or community activities. And we know that schools support these children and provide a lot of school-based services to them. One in 10 American children or adolescents are living with a serious emotional disturbance, and as I said, schools play an integral role in linkage to care in providing necessary supports.

Next slide, please. Beyond this, educational attainment is really important, obviously, to children and their future. And research shows that school shutdowns caused by COVID-19 may create longitudinal achievement gaps. In particular, we've seen that among vulnerable or underserved students, there's an appreciable decline in learning and possible engagement with education as well. One study of 800,000 students from researchers at Brown and Harvard, looked at how Zearn, an online math program, was used before an art school had closed in March, 2020. And data showed that through the early part of the pandemic student progress in maths decreased by about half, and the negative impacts is more pronounced in low income zip codes.

Next slide, please. Delayed learning is a particular concern for low-income and minority students, and also those students with disabilities. The Center on Reinventing Public Education, which is a think tank, released a report of pandemic learning policies of 477 school districts in the US, and it showed that only one fifth of students have received teaching over video, and the wealthy school districts were twice as likely to provide such teaching as compared to low income districts.

When it comes to learning online or through video, students with disabilities are at a particular risk because they have more difficulty absorbing information via remote learning. And this is of particular importance to those students who are deaf, hard of hearing, have low vision or our blind, and those with learning disorders such as ADD or other physical or mental disabilities. Next slide, please.

When it comes to providing assistance to the wonderful work that you do and the ever busy work that teachers do, SAMHSA provides a lot of backup. We have our grants program, of course, and this includes their grants such as the Healthy Transitions Program that support mental issues among youth. And some more information about all of our grants and their availability and how to apply to

them, you can find this online through [samhsa.gov/grants](https://www.samhsa.gov/grants). There are certain state's mental health and substance use grants, and these grants can be distributed amongst states into individual [inaudible 00:11:29] or programs to provide for mental health care among youth. We also at SAMHSA produce numerous evidence-based practice guides, and these are available in our SAMHSA store. And the guides cover a variety of topics and provide a variety of information, including informational flyers, in-depth evidence-based practice guides and also informational guides for parents and teachers alike. Next slide, please.

The most [inaudible 00:12:04] link here is the treatment locator. The SAMHSA Treatment Locator provides a way to find local treatment centers and providers in areas that range from substance misuse to mental health concerns, youth mental health concerns, and so the treatment locator can be used to look for other services in particular locations, and to read more about available services within a location. On the left side of the screen here, you can see one of our new evidence-based resource guides, and this guide looks at treatment considerations for youth and young adults with serious emotional disturbances and mental health illnesses with co-occurring substance use disorders. And this is an increasingly common issue we're seeing amongst youth, and this [inaudible 00:12:49] guide lists or summarizes the evidence around different treatment paradigms and provides supportive advice to those going to offer treatment. Next slide, please. Oh, and that's me. That's not me, but that's my talk. And I thank you for this opportunity to speak with you today, and I hand it back to Jason. Thank you.

Jason Amirhadji: Great, thanks so much. And I know you're sticking around to answer some questions during the Q&A panel later. So folks, if you have questions for Robert, please put them into the chat. I'm actually just putting some links into the chat from SAMHSA, including a link to this guide that was mentioned. And, I mean, Robert, a lot of us now through the pandemic have been, maybe, shamefully so, addicted to online shopping, but when you say the SAMHSA store, these are all free resources, right? Folks can just check those out for free? [crosstalk 00:13:42].

Rob Baillieu : Yep, yep, they're all available for free.

Jason Amirhadji: Wonderful. Well, thank you so much for setting the stage and giving really important context and resources. So we're now very pleased to have three sites from throughout the country share some innovative models and sort of promising practices. We're starting off with sort of a very quick take, but I think something that's very powerful from the Brighton Center in Covington, Kentucky. Brendan, take it away.

Brendan Goth: Hi, Jason. Thank you for having me. Can you hear me okay?

Jason Amirhadji: Yep. Yeah.

Brendan Goth:

Great. So my name is Brendan Goth, I work for Brighton Center in Covington, Kentucky, and I work in the neighborhood of City Heights here in Covington. And the Brighton Center was contracted by the Housing Authority of Covington to oversee the jobs plus grants here in City Heights. And when the grant first started, we got the community together and had them actually name the program, so it's called City Futures, which again is the name that the residents came up with.

But one of the activities that we put together, which took place this past Saturday, was to really focus on the mental health for our youth. And to give some context, the neighborhood of City Heights is a very physically isolated neighborhood here in Covington, and Robert just spoke a bit about the effects that isolation can have on youth. And it is a neighborhood up on top of the hill in Covington with one road in and out, and that road is on a very steep hill. So it can be difficult for youth to leave the neighborhood and participate in other activities. And traditionally their outlet has been going to school and participating in afterschool activities, so this past year has been particularly tough on the youth in this neighborhood.

So the event we had this past Saturday, we called the We Are Community event, and we partnered with two other programs to make this happen. One was another Brighton Center program called Youth Leadership Development. So they work with seventh graders through 12th graders to provide social and emotional learning through various activities. And we also partnered with another local organization called [The Plug 00:16:19] who does community events based around the arts.

So we had an event here in the neighborhood, in the... There's a basketball court, playgrounds kind of recreation area, and the Plug provided us with painting supplies, chalk, just lots of different art supplies. And we provided a space for youth to be able to work on individual art projects. We had a chalk drawing contest, and then we did a community mural where everyone got to participate in a mural that is going to be hung up in one of the offices up here. And there's the picture of the mural that they created.

And this was a great event. We did lots of outreach partnering, of course, with both programs. We had a total of 26 youth that participated, and a wide age range. It was from, I believe, five years old to about 17 years old that came out. And this mural, in particular, was pretty fun. It's on a four by four sheet of plywood, and to start off, the kids got to actually take water balloons filled with paint and throw them at this board to get this kind of base layer of paint in the background. And then after that, got to use spray paint and different things to create this. And underneath we just taped we our community, so we were able to take that off when it was wrapped up.

But the engagement in this activity was absolutely fantastic. All of the youth that showed up were so engaged and so excited to be there. And in particular, there were three young men, about 13 years old, I believe, that are kind of

known in the community as kids who tend to act out a bit and are hard to kind of engage with. And they showed up to the event and were probably the most engaged of anyone there. They won one of the prizes in the chalk drawing contest and won some art supplies that they immediately opened up and started creating even more art and were just so, so engaged with it. They even stopped their basketball game to come and participate.

And the Covington schools, the reason that we chose this past Saturday, was the Covington schools start back at school tomorrow, actually. And last week, right before this event there was another back to school event in City Heights where the youth got to get backpacks, collect school supplies, connect with their schools here in the neighborhood, and so it was really just some combined efforts to try and get these youth ready for school, seeing as a lot of them haven't been in person for almost a year and a half now. So I will pass it back to Jason.

Jason Amirhadji: Great. Thanks so much, Brendan. I mean, what a great idea. And I know folks are sending in some questions about that. So yes, please continue to do so, we're going to have a Q&A panel discussion. But I'm really pleased to hand it over next to the team from Norfolk, Virginia, to share a little bit about their youth mental health model that [inaudible 00:19:49] they've been doing in collaboration with the Eastern Virginia Medical School. So please, take it away.

Julius Norman: Hi, Jason?

Jason Amirhadji: Yep, you guys are on. Go ahead.

Julius Norman: All right, beautiful. Thanks a lot, it's greatly appreciated. I'm Julius Norman with Norfolk Redevelopment & Housing Authority, the client services youth program component. And I'm happy that we're able to present some of the programs that we're actually doing using our youth mental health model. Although we call it youth mental health model, we have a lot of programs that we utilize different strategies. From career awareness strategies, and our whole idea about mental health and health strategy has been that we were looking at that as a way of creating what we call safer communities. So as we begin to go through the slides, we'll look at some of the things that we've been doing here in Norfolk, so you'll see a lot of programs that actually we use to kind of combat and provide what we call protective factors to the young people who are involved in our programming.

Okay, we're doing the slides, great. You can see the objectives that we have, our main thing when we look at these objectives, it's interesting that the whole key was building healthy neighborhoods to create safer communities. And when we say that, we actually mean that. What we try to do is getting young people involved in different programs, creating those programs to help them be healthier, we find that these communities then begin to be safer. What we mean by that is, again, is that, once we have people in the community who are working, when we have young people who are thriving in school, parents

actually supporting their kids in different activities, we find that that does reduce the crime in our communities. So we do a lot of different things in helping residents to gain access to resources and services. So we do promote healthy lifestyle, and we actually encourage those changes by providing different programs, as you'll see on the next slide.

Our community health component and wellness, you see a lot of different activities from Earth Day to leadership workshops and development. We hosted a vaccination clinic, soccer camps, boxing camps. We try to provide a lot of different programs for our residents, and particularly our youth that they can be involved in. During the pandemic, if you look at the last bullet it says, youth feeding programs, with that we provided meals without partnership with the food bank here in the city of Norfolk. And we provided those meals by going door to door, and that door to door led to be something instrumental in us creating programs to answer the need for young people who needed services. When we knocked on the doors delivering meals, we found that we were able to do our check-ins to find out what were the needs of our community? What did the family need? How are you doing? How are you doing in school?

The interesting thing about that is that we would deliver these meals in the morning between the times of nine and 11 o'clock. And if kids were coming to the door and they were asleep, we could check in, "Hey, why aren't you on online, in class?" Or things like that. So by delivering and creating that youth feeding program, that gave us a great opportunity to check in on what the family needs were and exactly what the kids were doing.

You'll see another bullet up there that talks about mental health support groups. We actually run a lot of different programs and that mental health support group was created from a need that our groups or young people who participate in our programs said that they wanted an opportunity where they could just literally talk to folk who could help them with different things that they may be going through that was nonjudgmental and an opportunity for them to share some of the things that they needed in terms of their mental health.

And our next slide, supportive services. We offer a program from college exploration to scholarships, literature, poster contest, summer employment, all of our young people who are over the age of 16 had an opportunities to work into summer employment opportunities here in the city of Norfolk. Community service opportunities, youth work experience for vocational training for young people, these supportive services, that didn't happen by the Norfolk Redevelopment & Housing Authority, but it's a strong partnership that we have with the city of Norfolk, of the food bank, Creststar Health, plenty of mental health facilities. And in terms of EVMS, who's one of our large partners, Hampton Roads Ventures, all of these supportive programs are actually with the help of other city entities that also have an investment in our youth in the city of Norfolk.

And restorative activities, when you see the slide that has restorative activities, that was set up because of COVID-19, we were looking at a way to get our young people back into the feel, a groove of getting back to what we would say, normal. We offer coping and relaxing activities, that we actually had an opportunity that our kids would go to the beach and do meditation, empowerment walks at the Dismal Swamp, destruction room activities, dealing with anger management. All these activities were set up because we were very interested in helping our young people to move forward with their mental health. And that is it from this end. I have colleagues here that... Do you want to add anything, guys?

Jason Amirhadji: We really appreciate that, we're going to get right into the Q&A discussions, so hopefully we'll have members of your team kind of present their perspectives. Particularly on, of course, those mental health workshops that you talked about and some of those restorative activities, so thank you so much.

Julius Norman: You are welcome.

Jason Amirhadji: And now, last, but certainly not least, we have Miriam from the Lynn Housing Authority to talk about their Adulting 101 program. And again, if folks have questions, I'm already seeing in the chat, so please keep sending those along. Miriam.

Miriam Martinez: Thank you, Jason. Hi everyone, my name is Miriam Martinez and I'm financial coach here at Lynn Housing, and I'm going to be talking a little bit about our Adulting 101 workshop. Can I go to the next slide, please?

So a little bit about me, as I stated, my name is Miriam Martinez and I'm the financial coach. I work with all programs in Lynn Housing and also just everywhere in the North Shore area, so anybody can send me referrals if they are in need of financial coaching, just because we know that housing and finances kind of go hand in hand. And working in the Lynn Housing Authority, we've kind of seen that we can help somebody get brick and mortar [inaudible 00:27:40] home, but if we also help them with their finances, then it's a lot more sustainable. Next slide, please.

So with partnering with what's called the NSHAG, the North Shore Housing Action Group program here at Lynn Housing, that specific program works with young adults. I'm so sorry if you hear construction. But the NSHAG program helps youth from 18 to 24 years old that are experiencing homelessness or housing instability, and they help anything from housing, to rental applications, to connecting them with a financial coach or any resources or mental health services. So I've partnered up with the NSHAG program and we created what's called an Adulting 101 workshop, which was a lot of fun.

One of the reasons why we wanted to do an Adulting 101 is because, I don't know about you guys, but being an adult is really hard and confusing. And

especially with young adults who are 18 to 24, they have this mindset of they might really not know who to go to or what questions to ask. And also there is an assumption that they already know everything, when in reality if you're having housing instability or anything like that, you may not know a lot of things or you were kind of just thrust into the situation and you kind of just have to figure it out on your own.

So what we decided to do was kind of go back to the basics of adulting, and a lot of that is going to be with the five categories of mental health, and housing, and finances, next steps, so education and employment. So that's one of the reasons why we created this workshop, which was pretty successful because a lot of the youth and young adults that came asked some really good questions. So we realized, "Yes, they do have a lot of questions. They may not know some of the basics that we kind of just assume and place on young adults." Next slide.

So the how, so this workshop was a three-day workshop and we provided... We intentionally connected with students or community organization partners that are around Lynn specifically, because that's kind of our target audience. And we connected with outside forces and organizations, so people with mental health. We connected with MassHire for career pathways. We connected with Salem State and North Shore to provide education opportunities and talk about scholarships or any next steps. We also connected with YouthBuild who helped get them to have their GED. And yeah, we partnered specifically with people who... Like, I was just a facilitator for the day, but we were able to partner with people who are kind of expertise in that specific category. So again, in terms of mental health or career, we wanted all the youth to be able to be plugged in and know, "All right, in this community these other resources that I can go to and these are the other people that I can also ask questions if I need to, maybe." Next slide please.

So again, partners and topics that were discussed is, What is Mental Health?, by Emily Johnson. She's a case manager at Lynn Community Health Clinic. She did an amazing job about what... Kind of as an adult we wanted to make sure that kids are taking care of their wellbeing and their mental health and to connect them to resources and such as like therapists or anything like that. A few of them had questions about health insurance, these are all kind of adulting questions that even I myself struggle with, and I struggle with health insurance and all that fun concept.

We had Ana Campbell, who's the Lynn Community Service Director from JRI. She talks about self-advocacy, this was a really important one to kind of, again, show the young adults to advocate for themselves, to speak up, to ask questions because we understand that they may not know it all, but we also don't know kind of what's going into their heads. So asking questions in every environment, whether it comes to health, or new doctors, or even with us, to ask good questions and not to just assume. It was super important, and it was even super impactful for myself.

For employment, we had the North Shore Youth Career for MassHire, and they talked about job employment and applying for jobs and what it looks like. And just even practical tips of just retaining a job and what that would look like.

For finances, we had Scott Brogan from Primerica. And he talked about budgeting, and we kind of went over a mock budget of, "All right, if you're a young adult and you want to live alone, this is how much you're looking like. This is how much it's going to cost in terms of expenses and bills, and then this is how much it would look like if you were to have an hourly wage." And things like that. So kind of helping them connect the dots and looking more long-term, which is really good.

And then Merlinda Marseille from LHAND, she is the NSHAG case manager here at Lynn Housing. And she talks a lot about housing, kind of housing 101, about rent, about giving them resources of what it looks like to apply to the RAFT, or ERAP or ERMA or anything like that, but also what it means to have a security deposit. We realized a lot of kids... Or not a lot of kids, even just adults in general don't realize that you should be getting back your security deposit and what that looks like. A lot of people just kind of don't realize that when they move are suppose to require that back. So just having a lot of good foundational kind of 101 practices as an adult, we kind of went over, which was a lot of fun. Next slide.

Yeah. So this is a flyer, as I stated it was a three-day course. Everybody was super engaged and it was just really helpful, again, to kind of go back to the basics. Because of the NSHAG program, there are already a lot of kids enrolled into that program, so the outreach was a little simple and easier because those are kind of the target youths that we were thinking about. We are hoping to extend the Adulting 101 workshops to not only just housing instability, but also even for kids that are probably leaving high school, entering college, or even before that. Because yeah, everybody can kind of get a little help from like, "Oh, these are the basics of what health care is or what health insurance... Or what does mental health or wellness or anything like that look like."

So yeah, it was all via Zoom. We provided gift cards for people who attended and asked great questions. And there were also some providers that were also able to receive some resources. One of the biggest goals from the Adulting 101 that we wanted to accomplish was to have them lead with actionable steps. So if they spoke to somebody from the mental health or wellness, there was an email that they can reach out to that that person would connect them to any questions that they had about health insurance or about finding a therapist or what that'd look like. So we wanted them always to have practical steps to what it'd look like if they were interested in moving, what it'd look like in terms of finances and things like that. We always wanted an actionable step during each of the workshop days, which was super important.

Next slide. I think that's it, if I'm not mistaken. Yes, I think that's it. And yeah, it was a lot of fun to have, and it was just realizing vitally important for the youth

to be informed, especially in kind of this crisis time of COVID. Again, I feel like if we assume that people know it all, then they'll miss a lot of the small and kind of important details, and that was kind of our hope and our goal with the Adulging 101.

Jason Amirhadji: Thanks so much.

Miriam Martinez: [crosstalk 00:35:56]. Thanks so much for everyone for listening. Jason, you can take it away.

Jason Amirhadji: Of course. Thanks for all the presentations. And we've got 20 minutes here for Q&A, so folks, please send in your questions through the chat. We'll be helping to moderate the Q&A. Just to kind of kick it off, and this is for everybody, so I heard a lot of really innovative models around sort of using art and community engagement, using this Adulging 101 to engage with youth, and then sort of that partnership around mental health with the local medical school over the summer, which is wonderful. As we're now moving into the back to school, really returned to school, and now heading back in person this year, how are you all thinking about continuing or expanding these programs? How do you see these as being... Do these translate into afterschool activities? Are you planning weekend engagements? What's going to be your strategy during the school year to continue engaging with youth around mental health? And again, this is for any of the speakers or even Robert, if you have some thoughts or recommendations from sort of the [inaudible 00:37:05]. And you may just be on mute if you're talking.

Okay, well folks maybe think about that, lets give our panelists a few minutes to kind of ponder that question. Let me ask something else, specifically, it sounds like we have some questions on the phone. Michelle, is that right? Do we have some folks on the line who want to ask a question over the phone?

Michelle: We do not currently have any questions on the phone, but I do want to remind folks, if you would like to ask a question via phone, please press pound two on your telephone keypad to enter the question queue. Once again, pound two will enter you into the [inaudible 00:38:05] question queue.

Jason Amirhadji: Thanks, Michelle. So another question just for the panel or for Robert, [inaudible 00:38:11] from the federal level, these are all great ideas, it sounds like it took some real thought and work to put together. Sites may not really have started or have done much at this point, but are thinking about it, so what does it really take to kind of implement something like this? I heard a lot of great work that has been done in the past to build connections and community so that these things could be successful. But if folks were to start today, what would you recommend as sort of first step to try and do activities like that?

Miriam Martinez: I can probably answer this one, this is Miriam from Lynn housing. So to start the Adulging 101 workshop, it was vitally important for us to connect with other

agencies and organizations that we know of and connect with or even though we were somewhat unfamiliar with, it was very odd for me, but to send an email blast to a bunch of organizations to see anybody that was interested. It was vitally important for us to realize that, hey, we are not the experts in everything and that's okay, we don't need to be. But partnering with others that are around this community was super beautiful and nice to see. And yeah, it was kind of a introductory email and kind of a blast.

And because of COVID, everybody is a lot more like digitally savvy, so we were able to have meetings and I was able to connect with a lot of different providers and work alongside with them and networking, which was awesome and also super helpful for any of my future clients, because now I have a better connection with people that are in organizations and other providers. So it feels super elementary and basic, but also, for me personally, because I'm kind of an introvert, it was super helpful to kind of get out of the shell and just send out an email blast to a bunch of agencies saying, "Hey, who would be interested in presenting and speaking, given the opportunity?" And yeah, it was really interesting and really beautiful to see the community kind of coming together and saying, "Oh, we're all a part of this, and we do want to help the youth and give them information and resources and make sure that they're all plugged in."

Jason Amirhadji:

Great. Yeah, it sounds like partnership is certainly a key component to this, right? We don't all have to be experts, at mental health, certainly, but there are folks out there at the state local level. Robert, can you talk just a little bit, I know SAMHSA supports departments of mental health and another sort of entities like that, who should folks look for if they're not already working with a health partner or a mental health partner?

Rob Baillieu :

That's a really good question. And I think just looking at the community is really important. So looking at who's around you, what services they offer and coordinating with them, as we suggested earlier, is essential for making those early linkages. And then federal agencies like SAMHSA are really good at looking at the broader treatment landscape.

So at SAMHSA we're very much focused on substance abuse and mental health issues, and so the treatment locate the treatment locator is very helpful because it allows you to enter a zip code and then you can find different resources related to whatever question you have. So looking at sort of mental health resources, explicitly, you can find them on the treatment locator and you can certainly talk to those individuals, create linkages and treatment providers are really keen to provide treatment across different modalities. So not just in office, couch-based treatments, but as it's been discussed today, all the wonderful art therapy options, engaging youth in different activities, all those things represent really important treatment paradigms. And so treatment providers that [inaudible 00:42:12], which is many, many, many, really love engaging in those different types of strategies.

So I think if your community is looking to make linkages, I would recommend having a look around your local area first, seeing what's out there, talking to people you find. But then if you want a broader perspective, then looking at the SAMHSA Treatment Locator can help you find specific individuals, and then should you want to better understand some evidence-based programs, we also have resources in our SAMHSA store, which of course is free and downloadable to anyone. So those resources include flyers, information pamphlets, to very technical science-based guides and a whole bunch of other resources and references too. And I hope that's helpful?

Jason Amirhadji: Yeah. No, thank you so much. And I think it sounds like folks could probably use that treatment locator that we pasted into the chat, of course, to locate treatment options for folks not just limited to youth in their community, but also potential partnerships in addition to checking out some of the other resources there, so thank you. Other folks want to weigh in either on either these questions around sort of how to get started and build those partnerships and then sort of what your thinking and plan is for kind of continuing this work in the back to school, return to school and then throughout the school year?

And again, if any of the sites are talking, you're just maybe on mute, just check that. All right, well let me ask another question while folks are considering. Again, please continue sending some things in through the chat. There was a question about youth listening sessions. So have you all sort of done a focus group or listening session with youth? How do you really get to understand their concerns and what's going on out there?

Julius Norman: Hi, Jason.

Jason Amirhadji: Yeah, go ahead.

Julius Norman: This is Julius from Norfolk. When I hear you talking about the listening sessions, here in Norfolk, we had existing groups of young people that were between the ages of 16 to 24 who were going through employment opportunities, trainings, and they had a lot of concerns. So what we did was linked up with a mental health facility that allows the young people just to come in and talk. It was kind of one of those things that were created just because young people had a need that they said that they wanted someone to talk to. So we had plenty of mental health partners here in the city of Norfolk, and they were more than willing to provide those particular services or just to partner with us just to see if they can listen to different concerns. So it wasn't anything that was planned by us, but it was just a need that the young people said that they just wanted the opportunity to create a group and have people who had like experienced or concerns that could come together and just talk about what their concerns were.

Jason Amirhadji: Oh, that's wonderful. Thanks for sharing that. Other folks?

Brendan Goth: Hey Jason, this is Brendan from Covington. As far as listening sessions and that kind of thing, the work with our program in City Heights here, we really try to let our progression with the program be driven by the voices of the residents. So we try and really bake in feedback, both into the events that we're doing and have individual feedback sessions, because of course we want to provide events and activities and services that the residents want more so than what we might think they want, if that makes sense?

So a lot of times with our events, we might have surveys or just have Q&A's at the end to get feedback from residents and see, "Hey, is this the kind of event you want to see? Is there anything else you would like?" Those kinds of things, so that we can really use that information directly from them to drive the work forward. And those kinds of feedback sessions are a big part of what drove, most recently, our community events. And as I mentioned before, that's how we actually got the name of the program, and it seems to work pretty well for us for the most part.

Jason Amirhadji: Great. No, I appreciate that. It sounds like the feedback sessions sort of add engagement loop, it's just coming into this as a one-off, but it shows you all are really dedicated. So another question, this one actually is about the mask mandate and around parents. So how are you kind of looking at... So not just with masks, but I'll broaden the question even with vaccines, right?

We know that parents and children and youth don't always have the same outlook on things, they may have different opinions about masking or vaccinating or just taking safety measures and precautions because of the pandemic. Are you all looking at any of the work that you're doing as two-gen approach, so to reach the parents through the children or vice versa? And if so, do you have any suggestions or maybe just lessons learned about doing that?

And I'll even say, I mean, obviously we know a lot of parents have mental health concerns, right? So are you sort of using any of these strategies to engage with parents or to offer resources to parents or adults as well? Just, how are you looking at sort of the two-gen approach? You may be muted again, if you're talking.

Michelle: Once again, if anybody would like to ask a question over the phone, please press pound two on your telephone keypad to enter the question queue.

Jason Amirhadji: We'll give our sites a few moments to kind of think that over. And in terms of another question, in terms of mental health and youth engagement, are you doing any sort of vaccine outreach as part of that? Obviously, isolation has been a big part of what youth and everyone has experienced over the past year and a half, are you doing anything to encourage youth 12 and up to get vaccinated so that they can return to school and in some sense returned to normal? And if so, it sounds like another part to that question was how do you deal with consent concerns? Whether I guess it's about engaging with youth on mental health, to make sure that the parents are comfortable, can anyone talk to sort of what

they do around ensuring that they have consent and that they have conversations with the parents to make sure that they're comfortable?

Rob Baillieu : Hi, this is Rob from SAMHSA. I think in terms of mask mandates and vaccine outreach, from a mental health perspective it's really important to have those frank and honest conversations, which we've seen in some parts of the country degenerate into real arguments. Certainly for children, they're in this difficult [inaudible 00:50:47] because they often know how their parents feel about vaccines and see this in contrast to general mandates across states. And so having those frank discussions in different environments in a non-threatening manner, so not trying to enforce a particular view within the schools on a child, but understanding where they come from. And thus understanding potentially their parents' perspective is a useful way for schools and housing authorities to particularly understand the positions of their constituents and potentially create targeted strategies around encouraging mask use and vaccine uptake with in schools.

Jason Amirhadji: Great. Yeah, thank you for that perspective. Other folks want to share me what you're seeing on the ground in terms of that? Okay, let me ask another question in through the chat, we just have a couple more minutes here before we wrap up. So I want to give also all the panelists sort of a chance to maybe address all of these questions, just a final round and last thoughts. But a question around social media and how did you're using social media to engage with youth, if anyone wants to speak to that?

Brendan Goth: Hey Jason, this is Brendan from Covington.

Jason Amirhadji: [inaudible 00:52:18].

Brendan Goth: We put a lot of effort into our social media, right now it's Facebook and Instagram. And Instagram is really what we use to try and engage the younger portion of our demographic. And both, we really just try to keep very regular and varying content on. And what really seems to be the most popular is content that engages the community. So one of our recent posts was about the event we did on Saturday, and there's pictures of the kids painting and staff painting with the kids and doing the chalk contest and all that, and we get a lot of engagement with posts like that. We do success stories for residents, maybe they completed school, or they got their dream job, that kind of thing. And we'll do success stories for them, and that has a lot of engagement.

But also we use it as a way to keep the community up to date with events that we have going on. And we have a good relationship with the president and the vice president of the community council here, and they share pretty much all of our posts on their personal Facebook pages that have that much broader of a reach throughout the community. And we do see a lot of residents saying, "Oh yeah, I came to this event because I saw something about it on Facebook." Or, "My son saw something on Instagram about it." And we've been slowly but consistently growing our following and our engagement. I hope that's helpful?

Jason Amirhadji: Great. Yeah, thank you so much for sharing that. Folks like me who maybe knew of Instagram from a while back, it's sort of shocking for me to learn that it's now sort of a social media platform integrated with Facebook. But I think it's a rapidly evolving space. TikTok, I know it's really big a couple years ago and now my father's on it. So there's always a new platform, right? So glad to hear that Instagram is sort of the way that you all are doing that and I'm sure folks have different platforms that they're using. So I know we're about to wrap up here. I just want to give everybody a quick 30 seconds, a key takeaway, any leave behinds you want to share for participants from your experiences and anything else you want to share. We can start, Robert, with you.

Rob Baillieu : Thank you, Jason. I think that the main thing I'd like to share is that this period of time has been hard on the youth, it's been hard on everyone, really. And so when those people return back to school, it's really important to have discussions around how people coped during COVID-19, how they're feeling, strategies to help improve a sense of security within schools, as well. And I know that places a real burden on teachers and administrators, but I think from a mental health perspective, it will really help reset the agenda. It can really help make children feel listened to and heard, and it can help teachers and administrators better understand potentially how they can cater to the needs of their students. Above all, thank you for the work you do and the work that everyone else on the call does as well. It's wonderful to hear these incredible stories and all these activities that have been done, so thank you for including me today.

Jason Amirhadji: Thank you. And maybe really quickly if we could just go down from our presenter order. Brendan, if you want to share any last thoughts.

Brendan Goth: Yeah, definitely. Really for us here in City Heights, the most important thing is really just engaging these youth, being a positive influence in their lives and knowing that they have a safe space in their community. We put a lot of effort into making sure that our office is a safe space for anyone and everyone who needs it. And youth know that they can come in, if they're having a hard day, they have something they need to talk about, they know that they can come in here and that's very, very important for us, so that if nowhere else, then, at the very least, they do have a safe space here. And that's really kind of the building blocks for progressing into the next stages of addressing... Mental health is just building that relationship and creating that safe space. Yeah, and thank you to everyone.

Jason Amirhadji: Thank you so much. The team from Norfolk, do y'all want to share?

Julius Norman: I'd just continue to say to continue to listen to what our young folks are saying to provide some answers or opportunities so they continue to grow. Continue partnerships that we have here in the city of Norfolk, so that we can provide answers and opportunities for young people to continue to grow and [inaudible 00:57:28] in those opportunities to make sure that they're safe. That's basically it for us, thank you.

Jason Amirhadji: Thank you. And, Miriam?

Miriam Martinez: Yeah, I'm just going off what everybody stated already in terms of kind of being an open space for youth and young adults to come in, having them be able to ask good questions and just not assuming that they understand or know it all because as an adult, we don't know at all. So just providing a safe space, but also a place for them to share, especially during these hard times. And yeah, and just kind of building that community and partnerships with others.

Jason Amirhadji: Well, thanks so much and thanks to everyone for attending today. Please join us next Wednesday, this is, as Jayme mentioned at the outset, one of our three Hot Shots for sort of pre-Labor Day, wrapping up the summer. Next week, we're going to talk about Delta, I'm sure everybody's been hearing about the Delta variant. As Jayme mentioned, even this morning, there's some news that the CDC is going to be authorizing a third dose for folks who received the mRNA vaccine, that's the Pfizer and Moderna. So we're going to do a deep dive next week and talk about, why are we experiencing this resurgence of Delta? What's different about it? You can see there from the graphic, that, of course, it's more transmissible, so that's one issue. But what else is going on with this, and how are we going to get to the end of the pandemic? Keeping in mind, that the variants that we don't even know are yet to come.

So please tune in next week. You can, again, sign up for our bulletins. All the registration links are there, and we'll provide those also in the follow-up from this presentation for those who attended today. And just another plug for September 1st, building off of today's presentation, we invite you to join us for our Jab It Up initiative on youth vaccination. This is in partnership with the CDC, they're launching their Little Jab Book, which is a set of tools, resources, and strategies for increasing youth vaccination. They're really the experts in this space, and we're very happy to be able to share this with you. And so please do tune in if you want to hear straight from the CDC what we should be doing around youth vaccination. As Jayme mentioned, that's really where the numbers are lagging, and it's also where infections right now are disproportionately located in youth population.

So please do tune in September 1st. We know you all are doing a lot of great work to support your communities in the return to school, just throughout the pandemic and we appreciate all of you taking the time to join us today for this very important topic on youth mental health. So I look forward to seeing you at our future Hot Shots, and again, please sign up for the bulletin. But thank you so much for joining us, and take care and be safe.