

# Mental Health Collaborative: A Multi-disciplinary and Comprehensive Approach to Improve School Mental Health

Presenters:

Melissa Di Scala, Psy.D – Irvine Unified School District Coordinator

Amber J. Ramirez, MSW, LCSW – USC Clinical Associate Professor

Suzanne Campbell, MSW – Recent MSW Graduate



**MENTAL HEALTH**  
& *Wellness*  
Support • Resiliency • Empowerment

**USC** Suzanne Dworak-Peck  
School of Social Work

# Presentation Objectives

- Participants will be able to learn several strategies on how to successfully create a Mental Health Collaborative for their district.
- Participants will be able to identify three to five partners within their district and community that can assist in developing a Mental Health Collaborative.
- Participants will be able to identify three strategies of how to successfully evaluate their Mental Health Collaborative.

# IUSD and History of Mental Health

## ➤ Irvine Unified School District

- High SES, high achieving student population, 95% attendance rate, 95% graduation rate, 14% Title 1.
- 6 Comprehensive High Schools, 1 Alternative High School, 6 Middle Schools, 3 K-8 Schools, 24 Elementary Schools
- 33,000 students

## ➤ Irvine Family Resource Center

- Grant-funded for the past 11 years-now District-funded; community agency collaboration
- Clinic-based mental health support by 2 licensed staff for students and families
- Resource linkage and Parenting classes



# Review Components of a System of Care Model for MH Collaborative

- In a system of care model:
  - Mental health services are stakeholder driven
  - Services are provided in close proximity to stakeholders
  - Consider the effects of culture and linguistic diversity of stakeholders
  - Utilize data to improve and increase services
  - Accountability and program evaluation components



# IUSD's Creation of a Mental Health Collaborative

- IUSD saw a need to:
  - Gather stakeholder input
  - Utilize the Interest-Based Bargaining Process
  - Participate in collaborative decision-making
  - Be “outcome-focused”



# Results Year One

- Identified 4 areas of need:
  - Personnel Resources
  - Material Resources
  - Professional Learning
  - Community Collaboration
- Presented 8 personnel options to Executive Cabinet for Mental Health Support
- Cabinet selected the option of hiring licensed staff for high schools
- Subsequently, approval was given to hire additional Master's level clinical staff for elementary school sites





# Mental Health Collaborative - Year Two



**MENTAL HEALTH**  
& *Wellness*  
Support • Resiliency • Empowerment

**USC** Suzanne Dworak-Peck  
School of Social Work

# Mental Health Collaborative - Year Two

- Goals
  - Continue to gather feedback around needs/gaps
  - Gather feedback around how services are working
  - Collaborate on additional focus areas
  - Program Evaluation component with USC School of Social Work



**MENTAL HEALTH**  
& *Wellness*  
Support • Resiliency • Empowerment

**USC** Suzanne Dworak-Peck  
School of Social Work



# Identifying Stakeholders

- Diversity and inclusivity of Stakeholders
- District and School Levels
  - Representation of all schools, all levels, and all professions
- Community Base
  - Non-profits Human Service, High Education, etc... Any that can benefit School Mental Health

# Involvement of Stakeholders

- How does participation benefit the stakeholders?
- Provide clear outline of the Mission/Vision and Purpose of Collaborative
- Provide clear outline of the time commitment and their role
- If they can't then ask who can?



# Leveraging Resources

- Resources – time, space, knowledge, money, services, etc.
- Internal Resources
  - What partners within the District or school level can bring resources to the Collaborative?
- External Resources
  - The same for external but also how can the collaborative/district provide resources to community partners as well?



# Mental Health Collaborative Process

- Mission, Vision, and Purpose
- Set schedule
- Interactive activities to gather feedback
- Provide updates and progress
- Education



**MENTAL HEALTH**  
& *Wellness*  
Support • Resiliency • Empowerment

**USC** Suzanne Dworak-Peck  
School of Social Work



# Evaluating Mental Health Collaborative

- **Interviews** – In person and **phone**
- **Surveys** – In person and **online**
- Focus Groups
- **Observation**

\* **Bold are methods used to evaluate IUSD MH Collaborative in 2016**



**MENTAL HEALTH**  
& *Wellness*  
Support • Resiliency • Empowerment

**USC** Suzanne Dworak-Peck  
School of Social Work

# Online Survey

- ▶ All participants invited to complete
- ▶ 10 to 15 minutes to complete
- ▶ 25 participants
- ▶ Response Coding
  - ▶ Likert Scales: “Extremely Adequate to Extremely Inadequate” and “Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree”
  - ▶ Open-Ended Questions
- ▶ Conducted Theme Analysis and Tallied Results of Likert Scales



# Online Survey Cont.

## Goal #1:

- How did the respondent view access to mental health services at their school site or within the District?

Sample Question:

- “Currently, I feel there are adequate school-based mental health services for students at my/their school site.”

## Goal #2:

- How did the respondent see their role/contribution in the Mental Health Collaborative.

Sample Question:

- “I feel my contribution to the Mental Health Collaborative will have an impact at my school site.”



# Phone Interviews

- Key Stakeholders Selected
- 20 to 30 minutes to complete
- 8 Participants
- Goal: To further explore more how to best improve the Mental Health Collaborative.
- Sample Question: “Were there any aspects of the Mental Health Collaborative you would’ve liked to spend more time discussing?”
- Conducted Theme Analysis







# Observation

- Outside perspective (MSW Student) and University
- Inside perspective (facilitator of Collaborative)



**MENTAL HEALTH**  
& *Wellness*  
Support • Resiliency • Empowerment

**USC** Suzanne Dworak-Peck  
School of Social Work

# Results

- Common Strengths of IUSD Mental Health Services
- Common Strengths of IUSD Mental Health Collaborative
- Common Areas for Improvement of IUSD Mental Health Services
- Common Areas for Improvement of IUSD Mental Health Collaborative

# Recommendations and Next Steps

- Narrow Focus of Work: Use the first meeting to have the collaborative decide on one big area of Mental Health for the district that they want to focus on.
- Key collaborative members are identified as representatives from their stakeholder groups to actively participate in collaborative and report back to their stake holder groups.
- Need to include data wherever possible to support any decision that is being made.
- Having meeting notes available after meetings
- Utilize graduate level interns to support the Mental Health Collaborative.



# Questions?



**MENTAL HEALTH**  
*& Wellness*  
Support • Resiliency • Empowerment

**USC** Suzanne Dworak-Peck  
School of Social Work

**Melissa Di Scala, Psy.D**

Irvine Unified School District Coordinator

[MelissaDiScala@iusd.org](mailto:MelissaDiScala@iusd.org)

**Amber J. Ramirez, MSW, LCSW**

USC Clinical Associate Professor

[amberram@usc.edu](mailto:amberram@usc.edu)

**Suzanne Campbell, MSW**

Recent MSW Graduate

[campbellsuzanne020@gmail.com](mailto:campbellsuzanne020@gmail.com)



**MENTAL HEALTH**  
*& Wellness*  
Support • Resiliency • Empowerment

**USC** Suzanne Dworak-Peck  
School of Social Work