

**A Grove Hall
Community-
School
Collaboration to
Promote Mental
Health Supports
for Children and
Families**



Fall 2009
CWC Newsletter
Vol. 4, No. 1

Lead Agency: Alliance for Inclusion and Prevention

*In partnership with: Lilla G. Frederick Pilot Middle School • The Home for Little Wanderers
Family Service of Greater Boston • MSPCC • Children's Hospital Boston • Boston Public Schools*

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**Connecting With Care
Expands to Five Schools**

OVER THE PAST YEAR Connecting With Care grew, meeting its service targets. CWC now provides full-time clinical services to students and their families in five Boston Public Schools: Lilla G. Frederick Pilot Middle School, Washington Irving Middle School, John P. Holland Elementary School, Mather Elementary School, and Young Achievers Pilot K-8 School. Three leading local providers of children's mental health services collaborate with CWC to provide these school-based clinical services. In the 2008-09 school year, Family Service of Greater Boston and Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (MSPCC) joined The Home for Little Wanderers as CWC's clinical partners.

In November 2008 CWC launched its Evening Family Clinic at the Frederick School. Open to children and families from CWC participating schools, the clinic provides an evening alternative to the school day so that busy families can meet with their child's clinician. CWC clinicians are on-site at their schools during most school hours, and they are available at the Evening Family Clinic up to two nights per week.

Trauma Services Fill A Critical Need

CWC'S CLINICAL SPECIALTY in trauma has a significant impact on students and their schools. Prior to the Frederick School's participation in CWC, the school reported the highest middle school suspension rate in the school district. In 2008-09, the school saw its student suspension rate drop to 50% of its 2007-08 rate, a reflection of a student body exhibiting fewer symptoms of traumatic stress. Across all the CWC schools, over 23% of children referred to CWC for treatment in 2008-09 were experiencing symptoms of trauma. In many, the trauma had gone unnoticed prior to CWC's clinical assessment, with symptoms frequently mistaken for depression, ADHD, anger management problems, other disorders, or disrespect or misbehavior. Once trauma symptoms are identified, they can be treated, offering relief to the student, family, and school.

Community Voices:

“Our halls are so calm. We don’t have different children now, but we have a different school environment.”

*Debra Socia, Principal,
Lilla G. Frederick Pilot
Middle School*

“Violence is involved with everyone.”

*Students at AIP’s After-School Program at
Frederick School*

“My child is not safe walking home. He’s been jumped before.”

*Parents of Frederick
student who live in Grove
Hall; echoed by many
parents*

“We talk, and we’re close...but there are always going to be things they don’t show me.”

*Parent of Holland
Elementary School
children receiving school-
based counseling from
CWC*

“This is how it’s supposed to work: One meeting in one place, with all needs addressed!”

*Colleen Mitchell, teacher-
leader at the Frederick
School*

“Work in these areas is key to improving the lives of Grove Hall residents.”

Mike Kozu, Project RIGHT

U.S. Centers For Disease Control Taps CWC As An Innovative Practice

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control’s Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) recognized CWC in 2008 as a “promising innovative practice.” AHRQ developed a detailed profile of CWC’s outcomes, innovation, and replication strategies to post on AHRQ’s *Health Care Innovations Exchange* website, a national resource for providers and policymakers seeking to adopt or adapt effective practices for their own communities. The profile, entitled “Community-Wide Collaboration Provides School-Based Mental Health Services to Students and Families in Impoverished, High-Crime, Urban Neighborhoods,” can be found at: <http://www.innovations.ahrq.gov/content.aspx?id=1876>

In July 2009, AHRQ invited CWC to present a poster at AHRQ’s Summer Institute on Evidence-Based Practice, hosted by the Academic Center for Evidence-Based Practice of the University of Texas Health Science Center. CWC Program Director Dr. Lisa Baron traveled to San Antonio to give the presentation. CWC was one of only 14 programs from across the country spotlighted by the AHRQ, and one of only two working in behavioral health. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Policy, part of the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, supports health care innovations that improve quality of care.

CWC Publishes Recommendations for School Districts

In the July/August 2009 edition of *School Business Affairs*, Connecting With Care project leaders Dr. Robert Kilkenny, Dr. Lisa Baron, and Nechama Katz advise school administrators on how to integrate two unaligned service systems—education and mental health—into a functional and cost-effective partnership. Their article, “Leveraging Mental Health Dollars Into Your District,” is featured in this journal of the national Association of School Business Officials. Based on CWC’s findings, the article details the three conditions that must be met by the school in order to establish an effective infrastructure to support full-time mental health services as a core element of the school’s student support services. The article also describes the costs associated with supporting such a partnership.

Publication of this article grew out of AIP’s role in the Full-Service Schools Roundtable, which recommended that the journal publish an article about CWC’s findings in its special summer issue on full-service schools. To read the article, visit AIP’s website, www.aipinc.org, or click [here](#).

Blue Cross Blue Shield Spotlights CWC

CWC is profiled on the new website of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation. To read our story, click [here](#) or go to: <http://bluecrossfoundation.org/Stories/Grantee-Stories/Disparities/AIP.aspx>. CWC is a recent past grantee of the Foundation’s “Closing the Gap on Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care” grant program.

The Foundation also selected CWC as one of only seven grantees to spotlight in its 2008 Annual Report, released in mid-2009. To see the article and photos about CWC in the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation’s 2008 Annual Report, click [here](#).

Connecting With Care Partners and Schools:

Alliance for Inclusion and Prevention

The Home for Little Wanderers

Family Service of Greater Boston

MSPCC

Children's Hospital Boston

Lilla G. Frederick Pilot Middle School

Washington Irving Middle School

Holland Elementary School

Mather Elementary School

Young Achievers Science and Mathematics Pilot School

In Collaboration With: Boston Public Schools

Engaging Policymakers

Over the past year CWC has actively nurtured a constituency for improvements in school-based mental health services, advocating for stronger children's mental health and trauma service systems locally and nationally and supporting the policy agenda that grows out of CWC's findings.

In Boston:

CWC frequently helps local agencies and policy-setting institutions design services and set policies that will better meet the mental health needs of students and their families. Highlights:

- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts invited CWC to present its approach before the insurance company's Clinical Improvement Committee. The January 2009 presentation included CWC's efforts to implement a Standard of Care for school-based children's mental health services; four outcome areas for system reform (finance, access to care, stigma reduction, and trauma); and implications for quality improvement.
- CWC testified before the Boston City Council Committee on Environment and Health at a public hearing on development of a community-based trauma team.
- Following the murder of a teen living at the Bromley-Heath Housing Development, the Tenant Organization at this Boston Public Housing Development asked the CWC Program Director, along with representatives from Children's Hospital and the Boston Public Health Commission, to participate in a forum to develop a standardized set of protocols to guide the community's response to trauma.
- CWC's Program Director spoke before the Grove Hall Peace Council to describe the services that CWC provides to children and their families who are impacted by domestic and community violence.
- Within the Boston Public Schools: The Umana-Barnes High School, a Boston Public School located in East Boston, asked CWC for consultation in designing a similar support infrastructure for its students.

Across Massachusetts:

During this period of radical reorganization of children's mental health services in Massachusetts, CWC has participated in significant committees and conversations that affect policy at the state level:

- CWC sits on the system-of-care committees for two local agencies selected as Community Service Agencies (CSAs) under the Commonwealth's Children's Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI).
- As a member of the Boston School-Based Mental Health Collaborative, CWC drafted guidelines for CBHI for integrating school-based treatment into its new protocols.

CWC Data Corner

Did you know?...

CWC treated 3 times more children in 2008-09 than it did in previous years.

CWC clinicians have provided 5,313 hours of clinical services to children and families.

23% of all CWC referrals during the 2008-2009 school year were children who received specialized treatment for trauma (Trauma Systems Therapy).

CWC is the first school-based adaptation of Trauma Systems Therapy (TST).

The Lilla G. Frederick Pilot Middle School, the "hub" of CWC, is recognized statewide as a trauma-sensitive school.

- CWC testified, by invitation, before the Massachusetts Joint Committee on Mental Health and Substance Abuse about the mental health needs and services provided in Grove Hall and about how schools are ideal sites for the provision of mental health services to children.
- In May 2009, Dr. Lisa Baron and Dr. Robert Kilkenney of Connecting With Care, Principal Debra Socia of the Lilla G. Frederick Pilot Middle School, and Dr. Glenn Saxe of Children's Hospital Boston co-presented a workshop at the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Annual Statewide Conference on Trauma-Sensitive Schools. The 50 educators and administrators in attendance showed strong interest in the Frederick's trauma-sensitive school model, in CWC's model for financing full-time clinicians in schools, and in AIP's school-based infrastructure for linking children with services.
- CWC participates in the Children's Mental Health Policy Forum of Massachusetts Health Care for All.

A National Presence:

Through presentations across the country and a growing online presence, AIP disseminates CWC's model of school-based treatment and promotes reform in children's mental health service systems:

- In 2008 AIP's Executive Director, Dr. Robert Kilkenney, presented CWC at the Technical Assistance Conference of U.S. Safe Schools/Healthy Students Grantees, hosted by the National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention.
- Dr. Kilkenney presented a series of lectures over the 2008-09 school year about CWC and school-based treatment for the Education Dept. at Dartmouth College.
- Dr. Kilkenney will be a featured speaker at the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies in November of 2009. His talk, a co-presentation with Drs. Glenn Saxe, B. Heidi Ellis, and Carryl Navalta of Children's Hospital Boston, will highlight CWC's school-based adaptation of Trauma Systems Therapy.
- CWC presented its approach to a panel of visiting medical students from Korea, who visited the Frederick School in January 2009 to observe our innovative trauma treatment protocols.

We're On the Web!

The Alliance for Inclusion and Prevention's new website, www.aipinc.org, highlights AIP's mission and programs. It includes a detailed section on Connecting With Care. To read about the CWC model, the children and families CWC serves, and CWC's partnerships, click [here](#) or visit: http://www.aipinc.org/cwc_overview.htm.

Thank you to the generosity of our funders:

Robert Wood Johnson
Foundation's Local
Funding Partnerships

Blue Cross Blue Shield
of Massachusetts
Foundation

Amelia Peabody
Foundation

The Boston Foundation

In-Kind Support:
Boston Public Schools

What Is Connecting With Care?

CONNECTING WITH CARE REACHES OUT TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES to help them cope with emotional challenges in the face of trauma in Grove Hall and neighboring communities. The program is a community-guided, culturally competent mental health system reform and treatment model that brings a specialization in trauma and a focus on local sustainability.

Partners in the collaboration are Alliance for Inclusion and Prevention ("AIP"), Lilla G. Frederick Pilot Middle School (a Boston Public School), Children's Hospital Boston, The Home for Little Wanderers, Family Service of Greater Boston, and MSPCC. Currently serving five Boston Public Schools, Connecting with Care provides individual, family, and group psychotherapy during the school day and at the Evening Family Clinic, based at the Frederick Middle School, up to two evenings per week. Project RIGHT, the lead local community organizing entity in Grove Hall, also collaborates with the project.

Key Characteristics of the CWC Model

Initial phase—6 years: 2005-06: planning year. 2006-07: gradual ramp-up. 2007-11: Demonstration project.

A system reform model to reduce disparities in care and align with long-term systemic reform, building in sustainability from the outset.

Cultural competency: Clinicians with demonstrated experience serving children and families from diverse ethnic/racial backgrounds; resources of Children's Hospital's Somali Refugee Project/Project Shefa; community guidance, leadership and public education through coalition of diverse grassroots groups; understanding of cultural strengths and barriers to care.

Multiple funders, blended funding: Private, public, third-party.

Community based, community driven, building community capacity: "Connecting With Care" responds directly to the community's vision: We operate out of the community's self-selected "hub" (Frederick School). The program builds on key community organizing and leadership vehicles (Grove Hall Comprehensive Community Safety Initiative + the school's Governing Board). The two-pronged program balances immediate direct services with a multi-year process of building the community's capacity to continue services after the grant.

Clinical innovation: CWC works toward meeting a Standard of Quality Care for School-Based Mental Health Services. The model builds in time for clinicians to do significant consultation, case management, and collaboration. The Standard of Care ensures that families participate regularly in children's school-based treatment. The Program Director position within the school integrates mental health with the daily work of school social workers, teachers, and mental health agency partners. Trauma Systems Therapy is a proven model of treatment. Trauma specialization as a core competency and core way of understanding the environment will inform all our work with families.

Funding innovation: Incentives for provider participation that meets the Standard of Quality Care for School-Based Mental Health Services.

For more information about Connecting With Care, contact:

Dr. Lisa Baron
Program Director
Connecting With Care
Lilla G. Frederick Pilot
Middle School
270 Columbia Road
Dorchester, MA 02121
617-635-1650 x167
fax: 617-635-1637
cwcinfo@aipinc.org

Dr. Robert Kilkenny
Executive Director
Alliance for Inclusion
and Prevention
Washington Irving
Middle School
105 Cummins Highway
Roslindale, MA 02131
617-469-0074
fax: 617-469-3281
cwc@aipinc.org

Nechama Katz
Planning Coordinator
Connecting With Care
617-327-2779
nekatz@comcast.net

View our website:

www.aipinc.org (click on
"Connecting With Care")

Who Is It For? The Target Population of Connecting With Care

CONNECTING WITH CARE TARGETS youth of Grove Hall and surrounding communities and their families. This is a predominantly minority and low-income neighborhood. It has a strong and diverse network of community-based individuals and groups who come together and work with public institutions to support the neighborhood's children and families. Connecting With Care currently serves students and families in 5 partnering schools in Grove Hall and in neighboring communities, with the Lilla G. Frederick Pilot Middle School in Grove Hall as its hub.

The Frederick's student demographics are somewhat representative of the entire population of students: 58% of Frederick students are African-American; 37% are Latino. The student body includes refugees from war-torn Somalia. Over 13% of students, and many more parents, speak limited or no English. More than 93% are low income. About one quarter are in Special Education classrooms. Most students (and families) are Hispanic, African-American, Cape Verdean, Haitian, Somali, Asian, or Native American.

Barriers to Care: What Keeps Boston's Low-Income Youth and Families From Receiving the Care and Support They Deserve?

1. Lack of providers available or of culturally competent or linguistically matched providers.
2. Access barriers, such as transportation, scheduling, parents' difficulty in organizing appointments, language differences, child care needs, lack of health insurance.
3. Attitudinal barriers, such as social stigma associated with mental illness; community distrust of "the system" based on history of discriminatory practices; hesitation to give psychotropic medications to children when many families have seen the negative impact of drugs on their community; variety of cultural beliefs about mental, emotional, and physical health and healing.
4. Service delivery barriers—Providers cannot provide services in schools because they lose money on it—lack of on-site coordinated support for clinical services within host schools; twelve weeks of school vacation; low reimbursement rates; high cost of collateral contacts; limited parent engagement; lack of connections with children's community supports. Limited treatment options lead to ineffective treatments. However, schools are ideal sites for overcoming many of the barriers listed above.