

January 2023



## SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION PARTNERSHIP MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

This is the monthly newsletter of the SUPP Coalition. We share information and updates central to our mission: *To strengthen our communities to support alcohol and drug free youth in Lincoln County.*

### A Letter from Healthy Lincoln County:

Dear Partners,

The prevailing wisdom around substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery has too often relied on negative rules and messaging: “Just say no.” “Don’t do drugs.” “Users are losers!”

These slogans mean well but they often, if not always, fail to bring about the desired result. People who hear or read these slogans are left in an empty space with no alternative to the boredom, anxiety, or stress they were trying to escape. Americans have never appreciated being told what to do, or not to do—and the children of today are no different.

So then, how to prevent substance use without relying on negative imperatives? That is the question Healthy Lincoln County will be striving to answer in 2023. Fortunately, positive examples are all around us!

At last month’s SUPP Meeting Laura Morris of Be the Influence Coalition shared a variety of Prevention Through the Arts programs that have been piloted here in Maine. Next week, the Maine Humanities Council will be joining HLC to host the Discussion Project, a participatory event to engage with a selected text in detail. At Tuesday’s SUPP Meeting, our friend and collaborator Peter Bruun will share his experiences producing public events that encourage healing through community, story, and creativity.

We are also cooking up programs to focus on outdoor activities or developing trade skills, with a prevention twist. These structured activities provide valuable experience, get the dopamine flowing, and show students that they are already a part of something worth holding on to.

This positive approach extends beyond the workshop as well. As public health workers, we are learning not to approach people as if they are sick, struggling, or needy. We approach them as if they are leaders who care about their neighbors, parents who care about the future, stakeholders in their own world. We are strengthening an existing coalition.

The articles in this month’s newsletter highlight positive things happening in the community, new members of our coalition, and ways to be constructive and proactive rather than prohibitive when approaching substance use.

Happy reading and stay positive!

# NEXT SUPP MEETING: January 17th 2-3pm

**We can't wait to see you at the next SUPP call!**

Please join us on Tuesday, January 17th from 2-3pm for our next SUPP gathering. This meeting will take place at Healthy Lincoln County's office in Damariscotta. For those who can't make it in-person, Zoom is always an option!

Zoom information below:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88304959155?pwd=K0J1K1R1VTZpRTU5TC82RTJtYUczdz09>

Meeting ID: 883 0495 9155

Passcode: 310038

## Upcoming Meeting Schedule

We listened to the coalition, and we're bringing back both in-person and zoom (hybrid) meetings.

As always, you can find previous meeting agendas and minutes can be found here:

[SUPP Agendas and Minutes](#)

Check out what the group has been chatting about!

Tuesday, January 17th, 2 - 3 P.M.	Damariscotta	Healthy Lincoln County Waldoboro Town Office,
Tuesday, February 21st, 2 - 3 P.M.	Waldoboro	(please check in at Front Desk)
Tuesday, March 21st, 2 - 3 P.M.	Wiscasset	Wiscasset Community Center
Tuesday, April 18th, 2 - 3 P.M.	Boothbay	Boothbay YMCA
Tuesday, May 16th, 2 - 3 P.M.	Damariscotta	CLC YMCA
Tuesday, June 20th, 2 - 3 P.M.	Waldoboro	Waldoboro Town Office,
Tuesday, July 18th, 2 - 3 P.M.	Wiscasset	(please check in at Front Desk)
Tuesday, August 15th, 2 - 3 P.M.	Boothbay	Wiscasset Community Center
		Boothbay YMCA

## You Need to Know About McKinney-Vento



Amelia Lyons wants YOU to know about McKinney-Vento.

She is the Maine Department of Education's Homeless Education State Coordinator and leads a statewide effort to spread the message about this important resource.

The McKinney-Vento Act was passed by Congress in 1987 and remains the only federal legislation to address homelessness. It has been reauthorized and amended several times.

The legislation covers a number of issues relating to homelessness, but Amelia's job is to promote the law's provision regarding access to education for children experiencing housing insecurity. Students who are currently, or have experienced housing insecurity in the last year, are eligible to stay in their current school (or transfer to another school of their choice), receive transportation, food, access to showers and laundry, a phone, physical and mental healthcare, tutoring, and school supplies.

Every state has a McKinney-Vento coordinator like Amelia and every school district has a liaison to help eligible students navigate their situation. But a number of public health, medical, and education professionals had never heard of it. This may be because the resource is underutilized due to political and social miscommunication and the perception that funds are not available to the local school districts responsible for supplying these services.

Under McKinney-Vento, the federal government provides funding to Maine DOE to disburse funds directly to the local school district. Each district must select a staff-member to be the McKinney-Vento liaison, but this usually a district employee who wears many hats. It is at the discretion of the districts to determine which students are eligible for services.

The McKinney-Vento Act takes a broad definition of housing insecurity. Homelessness can take many forms, and many children are housing insecure but not necessarily unsheltered. McKinney-Vento funds can be used for students who are couch-surfing with their family, staying in a motel or hotel, staying in a camper or trailer, staying at a shelter, living in a car or a tent, or even in permanent housing if it lacks standard health and safety requirements.

The purpose of the law is to keep students in school, even if they don't have a permanent home. It is the responsibility of individuals living and working in every district to help notice the signs of housing insecurity in youth and help connect these students with the services they deserve.



## Talking Cannabis with Your Kids



Although it is a Schedule I substance under the Controlled Substances Act, marijuana has long held an ambiguous position in our legal, medicinal, and economic cultures. Despite its harmful effects being well-documented, marijuana is considered by many to be harmless, and by some to be a medical panacea. This faith in the drug's positive effects leads many to overlook its negative health effects and potential for

causing substance use disorder. The drug is still illegal in the eyes of the Feds but is now legal to some extent in 48 states. There are good public health reasons to control this substance, but it's historical prohibition and criminalization were caught up in a politics of racism and reactionism. It might not be good for you, but neither is alcohol or tobacco, so why shouldn't it be available at the store? Everyone uses it so why not tax it and stimulate the economy? What was once considered (in pop culture) to be a harmless accessory of musicians and hippies is now a multibillion dollar cash crop.

These questions and ambiguities only begin to paint a picture of the layers of complexity surrounding this ubiquitous drug. All of which leaves parents and educators scratching their heads about how to broach the subject with kids.

ADCARE Educational Institute of Maine recently hosted a program entitled "Blunt Talk: Reframing the Conversation with Youth About Cannabis" which tackled these questions and offered up strategies for how to engage with children and young adults in a meaningful way. The program was led by Jordana Willers, ED. M., a health education consultant from Massachusetts.

Rather than treat marijuana use like other more obviously dangerous drugs like meth and fentanyl, participants were encouraged to recognize how widespread the perceived benefits of cannabis are. Young people are immersed in a world where marijuana is not even considered to be a drug, let alone an addictive one. There is a perception that it helps creativity and focus, while also allowing for relaxation and rest. It's also important to remember that young people have legitimate needs like stress-relief, boredom-relief, peer acceptance, and experimentation, all of which can—however misguided—be met in the short-term by cannabis use. Accepting this and meeting young people in an attitude of understanding and trust is the first step toward having a frank conversation.



Instead of using fear or moralization to steer them away from marijuana, Willers recommends addressing the young person's capacity for choices and self-interest. Show them how a short-term fix can have long-term consequences that outweigh the immediate benefit. Use real examples from your life or history that don't have to do with drugs. Provide them with information about how legalization and commercialization have led to a dramatic increase in the drug's potency—meaning we don't actually have long term data about its effect on the body. Work against the notion that marijuana is not addictive or dangerous. Cannabis Use Disorder, and deaths by marijuana related accidents have both gone up in states where legalization has taken effect. HLC can provide you with access to these resources if you know a teen you'd like to share them with!

Kids aren't stupid, and Willers is encouraging parents and educators to be open and honest with them about marijuana. Don't close off the conversation if it doesn't go your way on the first try. Make sure kids understand they can come to you even if they are using and not thinking about quitting. Keep yourself apprised of the facts about marijuana and talk to them from a place of knowledge, appealing to their capacity to make a rational choice rather than feeling forced by an adult. If a child you know is using, make sure they know there are resources available to help them quit. Examples include Marijuana Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and others.

Families need to know that marijuana is risky and harmful, but it should never be a reason to put up barriers between you and your child. That will only lead them away from you and into even riskier choices.

## Maternal Naloxone

The maternity department at LincolnHealth is now sending new parents home with household first aid kits containing Narcan. The project was first piloted at Farmington-Fairview Hospital and is now being replicated in other hospitals. HLC is providing the first aid kits and the Narcan to LincolnHealth, where staff in the maternity ward are giving them to new mothers and talking with them about Narcan, substance use disorder, and postpartum mental health.

The idea is to reduce stigma around the presence of Narcan in the community. This life-saving drug is, or should be, a key part of a standard home first aid kit. Some would argue that normalizing Narcan means normalizing drug use. This position is understandable but fails to recognize that we already live in a world where drug use is increasingly common. To the extent that opioids and opiates are present in our environment, we are all safer for having easy-to-use Narcan there too.

The program is also careful not to stigmatize new mothers. Staff are trained to recognize that these are supplies and information that are useful to ALL new parents, not just ones who are somehow deemed to be at risk. Overdose doesn't only happen to drug abusers. It can happen to young children who find and take drugs by accident, or to adults who accidentally take too much legitimate medication. These are substances in the environment that can harm us just like any other poison we might come across. Narcan is safe and can save us from this poison.

Why wouldn't we give it out at every possible opportunity?

Any new parent deserves a moment of free mental health counseling as they embark on their journey of parenthood. A basic knowledge of Narcan and overdose prevention is now a key part of that moment. HLC doesn't accept drugs and overdose as part of our society, but for now, at least, we want to provide new parents in Lincoln County with one more tool for their belt.



## Welcome Amy!

Amy Bedard is beginning a new role as Healthy Lincoln County's Program Assistant supporting the Substance Use Prevention and Food Insecurity programs. Amy grew up in Aroostook County and attended Thomas College in Waterville studying psychology. She has a passion for community work and mental health wellness. Amy started her mental health career as a crisis counselor in Central Maine, then moved on to community case management in the Portland area. After working in case management Amy worked as a Benefits Specialist for Unum in Portland. During that time she often missed working closely with people and is excited to help HLC reach out to the community and help provide resources throughout the county.



Amy lives in Bath with her husband, Adam, and their three cats, Puzzles, Peaches, and Daisy. When Amy is not working, she enjoys arts and crafts, hiking, and taking trips to the County to visit friends and family.

## Welcome Michaela!



Michaela Schoeffler of Lincoln Health will be transitioning to a new role as Tobacco Prevention Specialist. In her previous position with the Education department, she connected undergraduate and graduate students to clinical placements within the Coastal Region, (which includes LincolnHealth, Pen Bay, and Waldo), and coordinated Continuing Medical Education programs for healthcare professionals. Prior to that, she worked in rural and urban community health departments and nonprofits doing community health work, including healthy eating, active living health education (for kids and adults), tobacco use prevention policy, and environmental change for healthier infrastructure. She's been shadowing vaping education presentations and Sidekicks trainings. She is still helping out with her old position but looking forward to being in Lincoln County schools in the New Year!

## What's New at Healthy Lincoln County?

The Discussion Project is finally here! In partnership with the Maine Humanities Council, HLC will be hosting a four part series of book club style discussions of Rex Ogle's *Free Lunch*. The meetings will be held on Wednesday nights from 5:30 to 7 P.M. starting on January 18<sup>th</sup> and running through February 8<sup>th</sup>, at the Healthy Lincoln County Office in Damariscotta.



**DISCUSSION PROJECT**  
with Healthy Lincoln County

MAINE HUMANITIES COUNCIL

Ogle's powerful memoir gives the reader a sensory and psychological experience of what it's like to be a poor kid in a rich person's town. We can't wait to talk about it and we hope

you'll join us!

To sign up, please contact Kelsey Robinson at [director@healthylincolncounty.org](mailto:director@healthylincolncounty.org)

Point-in-Time (PIT) Count



Jess and Will will be participating in the annual Point-in-Time Count, a federal program designed to take a census of people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January. We are outfitting the Food Security van with a variety of supplies to help out any folks who are currently unsheltered. We will be canvassing the county and we're looking for any tips on where we might find people who deserve to be counted.



Will's New Year's resolution is to promote awareness of Responsible Beverage Training and Narcan among local business owners and managers. We hope to encourage restaurant owners and shopkeepers to collaborate on a model store program, where businesses can take credit for maintaining healthy, community-oriented policies like having a majority of their sales staff certified in RBS as well as training staff to know about and use onsite Narcan in the event of an emergency.

## New and Upcoming Opportunities

[OUT Maine is hosting in-person professional development trainings!](#)

During March OUT Maine will be presenting a number of live in-person trainings for professionals working with LGBTQ+ youth. Locations include Augusta and Bangor. Some are free and some have fees!

[The Discussion Project](#)

If you want to join The Discussion Project, please email Kelsey at [director@healthylincolncounty.org](mailto:director@healthylincolncounty.org).

Event nights: January 18th, January 25th, February 1st, and February 8th.

[Volunteer!](#)

Will and Jess are looking for volunteers to help out with the Point in Time Count collecting data about homelessness in Lincoln County.

[Exciting Winter Activities at Coastal Rivers Land Trust!](#)

Here is a [list of other great winter resources](#) available here in Lincoln County.

**NAMI Maine Helpline:** Phone: 1-800-464-5767, press 1

Email: [helpline@namimaine.org](mailto:helpline@namimaine.org)

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 988

(press 1 for the Veteran Crisis Line)

**Maine Crisis Hotline:** 888-568-1112 (text or call)

**Crisis Text Line:** Text HOME to 741-741

**Maine Intentional Warmline:** 1-866-771-9276

**For statewide assistance call:** 207-221-8198



Healthy Lincoln County  
281 Main Street | PO Box 1287 | Damariscotta, ME 04543  
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Healthy Lincoln County | 281 Main Street, Damariscotta, ME 04543

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