



WATAUGA COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITY
INITIATIVE

DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

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WCCI 2020-2021

Upcoming Meetings

Meeting Dates for 2020-2021 year:

Until further notice, WCCI meetings are by Zoom beginning at 8:30 am on the second Thursday of each month. Meeting dates are below. The Zoom link and password are as follows:

<https://zoom.us/j/92959886225pwd=TkJaUGFMTUY2aG13K2ZQMmdmNjlFU09>

Meeting ID: 929 5988 6225

Passcode: 262131

WCCI meeting will be held from 8:30-10:30 am.

NO MEETINGS JUNE OR JULY

August 13

Sept 10

Oct 8

Nov 12

Dec 10

Jan 14

Feb 11

March 11

April 15 (April 8 is WCS spring break)

May 13



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WCCI WEDNESDAYS

Upcoming Schedule

WCCI will be hosting monthly conversations by Zoom about trauma and resiliency. These conversations will be with people impacted by ACEs, as well as agency staff and providers. They will be held every Wednesday on Zoom until further notice. They will begin at 12:00 noon.

Zoom Link: <https://zoom.us/j/93894662207?pwd=Wjc3eU9SL3JMOXJpQSs5UkxYaUd3UT09>

Meeting ID: 938 9466 2207

Passcode: 440689

| Date | Who is Joining | Topic |
|-------------|---|--|
| Dec. 2. | Marisa Cornell (Valerie, Mollie, Ashley, Mackenzie) | Mediation and Restorative Justice - LEAD, Youth programs, and Other Supports |
| Dec. 9 | Emily Harwood and McKenzie Hellman | APPHealthCare: Partnering with Businesses to Become Trauma-Informed |
| Dec. 16 | Sarah Donovan | "The Trauma and Resilience of Human Migration: Supporting Our Immigration-Affected High Country Neighbors" |

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Emily Harwood

Emily Harwood is a Health Promotion Program Manager at AppHealthCare. She received her Bachelor's degree in Exercise Science from High Point University and Master's degree in Public Health from East Tennessee State University. Emily was born and raised in Boone, NC and has lived there for most of her life. Emily works alongside community members, stakeholders, and her colleagues at AppHealthCare to implement policies and programs that address root causes of poor health in Watauga, Ashe, and Alleghany counties. Understanding ACEs and the implications of adversity on a community has transformed the way she approaches her work in public health. Emily joined WCCI in August of 2019 and is currently serving as co-lead of the WCCI Prevention Committee. Emily and her colleagues at AppHealthCare are currently working alongside WCCI to implement a project focused on creating trauma-informed businesses in Watauga County. In her spare time Emily enjoys hiking with her husband and 75 lb golden doodle.



Resiliency in 60 Seconds

Resourcing and Connecting

This skill was shared during the WCCI Conversation with Western Youth Network.

Tap into a positive memory of someone who has been a resource for you for a few seconds. Take 1 minute to reach out to them. If you're unable to reach out to this person, reach out to someone else. It can be someone you have a close connection with or someone you haven't seen in years.

What self care can you think of that you can do in 60 seconds?

Resource for Resiliency: Rapid Reset

- **Take A Sip**- Take a long, full sip of a drink. Think about the physical sensations.
- **Tap Side to Side**- Also known as bilateral stimulation. Cross your hands and tap your shoulders for 60 seconds.
- **Ground**- Notice the physical sensations that support you.
- **Push Up Against A Wall**- Notice the physical sensations.
- **Take a Walk**- Notice the sensations of walking. Get fresh air, if possible.
- **Sing/ Hum**- Notice the sensations in your face, chest and your breathing.
- **Do Heavy Work**- Notice the pressure and sensations in your muscles.
- **Orient**- Look around the room and bring focus to the details of something that catches your eye (A variation of this includes looking for something specific, such as things that are a certain color)

Interview Transcript

One of our WCCI interns, Brittney Craven, sat down (virtually) with Denise Presnell, to talk about the importance of identifying and understanding our emotions and having a support system to help us in processing our choices and emotions.

Here is the link to the full version:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1k-8GoKBFL4msknVcQ7zfyOcqwBFpCkIfQTZG0XUFBIE/edit>

Brittney: Would you share with us a bit about your background in trauma work?

Denise: I'm trying to be more open about sharing that I come from a high background of trauma. I knew absolutely nothing about trauma. I practiced for 20 years and then decided to go back and get my master's degree. I started my master's in 2013, so I had already been practicing for a very long time. When I was getting my MSW, my last internship was with Jennifer Warren at Western Youth Network and she said to me, "What do you know about ACEs?" and I honestly thought she meant a card game like Spades or Hearts so I said, "Nothing." She said, "You need to talk to Crystal Kelly. She's kind of the area expert." I have run a faith community/school collaborative for several years. At the time, this was fall of 2016, I asked Crystal to come and do an hour presentation with the faith community/school collaborative on the trauma basics. Every time I tell the story, even though this happened four years ago, I remember that moment because it felt like a seismic shift, Earth shifting on its axis, lightning bolt, light bulb, whatever you want to call it. I remember it clearly and going, "Well, they're talking about me." My trauma had impacted my brain, and I've always had this warrior identity, just ready to take on whatever. I realized that's not necessarily who I was born to be, that's who I was created to be from all the trauma. That was the beginning for me of starting to understand how trauma and resiliency impact people.

Brittney: So, what is your favorite aspect of working with individuals of trauma or trauma work?

Interview Transcript

Denise: I think that message of hope. Brains can heal, grow, and change. We talk about this in the WCCI presentations, but for people who grew up in trauma, you feel completely alone, completely unworthy, and like you don't belong anywhere. I had this lack of connection and very poor self-image. Some of that got healed when I met my husband because he is a very present, very loving, and very consistent person in my life. When we talk about positive, consistent, caring relationships, he was one of those for me and he didn't come along until I was 24. Then it wasn't until I started learning about the trauma work at 47 years of age and starting to surround myself with people who were positive and consistent and not just who happened to be nearby in proximity that I really started to understand and literally feel my brain changing in my head. I now talk about myself in terms of my old self and my new self. I feel my brain now when something happens, I literally feel the part of my brain that was engineered in trauma telling me, "Let's react like this," and then the other part of my brain who now knows better telling me, "It's okay. You have more options than fight, flight, or freeze. You don't have to remove yourself from the situation. You can stay present and you have other options." So to have that experience personally and to understand that for a lot of people I work with, their brains are doing some of those same things. I am able to talk with people about that experience and say there are other options for you, you don't have to live in this identity that was created for you.

Brittney: You've touched on this a little bit but what would you want others to know about trauma or trauma work?

Denise: Positive interactions can help heal people's brains. That's a huge thing for me I think. We have a responsibility to be that caring, compassionate person that people haven't had. Once you know about this, I feel like you have a responsibility not only to change how you are in the world and how you interact, but to also pass it on.

Brittney: What does resilience mean to you?

Interview Transcript

Denise: I think the most important thing about resilience to me is you don't have to be born with it. You can strengthen it. A big area for me was learning how trauma impacted me. I really thought when something bad happens today, that's it. It's going to be a bad day, that's all there is. You can continually work on changing how your brain reacts to things and the emotions that you feel. Resilience, I think, is the ability not only to bounce back but to recognize when you're struggling. You have to be really brave and vulnerable to admit that you have a hard time sometimes and to be open to change. Being able to react in a way that is productive instead of destructive. I saw a quote one time that said there are not enough therapists in the world for all the people that need help regulating their emotions. Therapy is fantastic. Therapy probably saved my life twice but for all the people who can't get into therapy or don't have insurance, we need to be a community that helps take care of each other in a more effective way.

Brittney: That's all the questions I have... is there anything else you'd like to share?

Denise: Probably just to say to take care of each other. We're all supposed to be okay all the time. Create a system of safe adults that you can go to when you need help because you're going to need help. Not "if" but "when". So, who do you go to that's safe for you, that helps you process, helps you find resources? Part of taking care of yourself is that you have adults who are safe who can process things with you, that are non-judgmental, compassionate, caring, and consistent. If you don't have that, start looking for them, not just people in your proximity but people that are actually good for you.

Special thanks to Denise Presnell for her work in trauma, as well as, her time leading in WCCI! Join us again on November 20th, for our final interview of 2020.