Community Mental Health Resource Group Meeting

Date: Thursday, September 4, 2025 **Time:** 6 PM **Location:** Town Hall and Zoom
Attendees: Michelle Warren, Steve (Hap) Whelpley, Lisa Anne Loucka, and Terry Lavely (via Zoom)

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1. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the previous meeting were accepted without changes. A discussion about a monthly event at the Outdoor Center, proposed by Steve Whelpley, was added to the agenda, along with update for the wellness library and QPR training.

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2. NKHS Update (Terry Lavely)

- **Front Porch Facility:** Renovations are underway to add overnight beds. The target opening date is late fall 2025.
- **Training and Events:** Terry provided updates on several upcoming events and training opportunities:
    - **QPR Training:** Terry mentioned this training and will provide further details.
    - **Vermont Suicide Prevention Symposium:** This annual event will be held on **Thursday, September 11, 2025,** in Burlington. The group will share attendance information, and the committee will reimburse participation costs.
    - **American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) Walk, Newport:** This walk is scheduled for **Saturday, September 13, 2025.** Registration begins at 9:30 AM, with opening ceremonies at 10:00 AM. This will be the first day on the job for the new AFSP area director.
- **New Programs:** New offerings are available for all ages, educators, and coaches, including:
    - ***"Maintaining Your Mental Health During Times of Uncertainty":*** A session focused on practical safety planning and mental health tools for challenging events.
    - ***"Caring Communities":*** A proactive training program for supporting individuals after community suicide losses.
- **Action Items:**
    - Michelle will promote **September Suicide Prevention Month** by requesting public service announcements from Terry for the Front Porch Forum and Facebook.
    - Terry will send flyers and summaries of training offerings for the committee to review.
- **Appropriation Petitions:** Michelle, as Town Clerk, cannot collect signatures for appropriation petitions inside Town Hall, but they can be placed on the outside bulletin board. Other group members can collect signatures.

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3. Possible Craftsbury Wellness Walk

The group discussed hosting a **wellness or suicide prevention walk** in October. The walk would take place at the Outdoor Center on existing trails and roller loops, approximately 1–1.5km in length. A mid-October date was suggested to avoid conflicts with the window dressing festival.

Ideas for the event included:

- A **hybrid walk and wellness fair** with activities or stations (e.g., massage, nutrition, Reiki, acupuncture, and grief counseling).
- A gathering circle, refreshments, and brief presentations or videos.
- Inviting **Sterling College students** to participate. More planning is needed before the next meeting.

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4. Ongoing Projects

The following items will remain on the agenda for future meetings:

- Appreciation schedule and plans.
- Narcan training.
- A book request from Craftsbury Saplings to support young children with wellness and grief.
- Updating the website.

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5. Programming Series (Steve Whelpley)

Steve proposed a **monthly community wellness series**, possibly modeled after the existing forestry talks. The series could feature short films or videos (30-60 minutes) followed by discussion.

- **Potential Topics:** Seasonal depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and a general overview of mental health disorders.
- **Target Audiences:** Specific programming could be tailored for groups like Sterling College students, athletes, and younger age groups.
- **Partnerships and Facilities:** Potential partners include Sterling College (specifically the campus nurse, Carol Maroni, and teacher Farley Brown) and local mental health practitioners for a panel discussion. The Touring Center was suggested as a venue due to its parking, AV equipment, and accessibility. Steve will coordinate scheduling and promotion with Lucy Donahy, the new community coordinator.

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6. Wellness Lending Library

The new library, a collaboration will be set up outside of the Town Hall next to a bench.

- **Collection:** The initial selection includes books on anxiety (including children's books), grief, and general mental health. The group plans to add more books on topics like bipolar disorder and encourages community contributions.
- **Promotion:** A book list with Amazon links will be posted on the town website.
- **Additional Grief Support:** Vicki Strong is leading a "Grief Share" support group at the East Craftsbury Library.

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7. Next Meeting

- **Date:** The next meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, October 14, at 6:00 PM** at Town Hall, with a Zoom option available.
- **Note:** The group will need to coordinate via email or phone before the next meeting to finalize plans for October events.

Minutes Submitted By: Michelle Warren