



YMCA CAPE COD

Preventing Youth Suicide

The Importance of Ensuring Access to Services

March 28, 2023

Our Panelists

Julian Cyr (*pronouns he/him/his*) serves in the Massachusetts Senate representing Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket. First elected to the State Senate in November 2016, Julian is now serving in his fourth term and is among the youngest senators in the 40-member body. Julian's legislative priorities are primarily informed by the unique needs of the Cape and Islands district and his perspective as a member of the LGBTQ community. Julian was the lead author of the 2022 landmark law, *An Act Addressing Barriers to Care for Mental Health*, which represents the most comprehensive reform to mental health care in Massachusetts in decades. Julian graduated with a degree in public policy and community health from New York University, but he will tell you that he learned many of the skills he uses daily from waiting tables and cooking behind the line for 14 seasons at his family's restaurant in Truro.

Kim Mead-Walters, MD, is a wife, mother, grandmother, physician with lived experience. When her beloved 16-year-old son Jeremy died from suicide in 2016, Kim realized that, in addition to the need to raise suicide awareness, there was no grief support available for her family and Jeremy's friends. She and her husband, Davis Walters, created Sharing Kindness, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that provides suicide prevention, mental health education and peer grief support programs on the Cape & Islands. In addition to being the Executive Director of Sharing Kindness, Kim is also a Board Certified Family Physician (recently retired from a 30-year career as a primary care doctor), is a member of the Barnstable County Children's Behavioral Health Work Group, and serves on the Board of Directors at Cape Cod Children's Place. Kim has also recently retired as the Truro Central School physician and as the team physician for the Cape Cod Baseball League's Orleans Firebirds, to allow her to devote more time and energy to Sharing Kindness.

Daniel Rodrigues, LICSW, is the Director of Substance Use Disorder Services at Duffy Health Center in Hyannis. Duffy Center is a Federally Qualified Health Center serving Barnstable County's most marginalized communities where individuals experience homelessness and housing instability. Daniel is a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker, graduating from Smith College School for Social Work in 2013. Since then, Daniel has worked in the field of substance use disorders and mental health in treatment facilities and as a hospital-based social worker in maternity and pediatrics units. At the Duffy Health Center, Daniel provides clinical oversight for all of the health center's substance use disorder services, including the Recovery Build Alternative Peer Group program that supports adolescents ages 13-17 with a substance use disorder. This program—in partnership with Behavioral Health Innovators, Inc.—has sites in Falmouth and Dennis and enables teens to grow supportive networks of peers and navigate behavioral health struggles, including thoughts of self-harm and suicide.

Katie Fauth has been in education for the past 22 years as a special education teacher and a classroom teacher. She is currently a School Adjustment Counselor and the Clinical Coordinator of the Bridge Program at Falmouth High School. The Bridge Program supports students in their return to school after a long absence due to either medical or mental health reasons. It is based upon the Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition (BRYT) program—a nationwide model created almost 20 years ago from Brookline High School and Brookline Center for Community Mental Health. Katie and her colleagues started this program at Falmouth High School 6 years ago, having supported many students since then. Katie is also one of the advisors of Hope Squad which is a nationwide suicide prevention program that brings the light of mental health awareness to all.

Samaritans on Cape Cod and the Islands

Karen Ellery-Jones has been the Assistant Director of the Samaritans on Cape Cod and the Islands for more than six years and oversees the training of crisis line staff members and volunteers, community outreach and education, and is a certified trainer for several suicide prevention programs. Prior to working at the Samaritans, she was a medical features writer for a regional magazine and also an editor and safety analyst for an international care company based in Boston. She lived in London for two years with her British born husband and they now reside in East Sandwich. She enjoys hiking, biking, cooking, films, travel, wine and her two rescue black cats Theo and Charlotte.

Our Moderator

Jacqueline Lane has been the Executive Director of the National Association on Mental Illness (NAMI) Cape Cod & the Islands for the past five years. She is also the principle in a consulting firm specializing in all aspects of non-profit management including fund-raising, marketing, and strategic planning. In the past, she has served on several non-profit boards in Boston and on the Cape. She has a background in retail management and has owned retail businesses. Her first job was that of an English teacher. Jackie's interest and passion for mental health and wellness is the result of watching and participating in her family's struggles as they coped with her brother's serious mental illness, in other words, "lived experience."

Our Co-Host

Tara Vargas Wallace is the YMCA's Director of the Y Achievers program. After working over 20 years in human services for various social service agencies, Tara founded Amplify POC (People of Color) Cape Cod in 2021, a racial equity non-profit organization focused on reducing the racial wealth gap in communities of color. She is the Eastern Region Politics and Civic Leadership Platform Coordinator of the Massachusetts Women of Color Coalition and is actively engaged in her local NAACP and MLK Jr. Action Team. She has been awarded the 2020 "Unsung Hero Award" by the Barnstable County Human Rights Advisory Commission and was a 2020 "40 under 40" award winner from Cape & Plymouth Business Magazine.