

708 GENEVA COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

May 14, 2019 7:00 P.M.
109 James Street
Geneva, Illinois

Kennedy Forum Foundation Presentation
Guest Speaker
Cheryl Potts

1. INTRODUCTION OF THE GENEVA 708 MENTAL HEALTH BOARD AND WELCOME TO THE COMMUNITY ATTENDING

In a special event organized by the Geneva 708 Mental Health Board recognizing that May is Mental Health Awareness month; guest speaker Cheryl Potts of the Kennedy Forum Foundation was invited to moderate a discussion on mental health issues and related topics. Vice Chair Hamilton began the meeting by sharing the purpose of the Geneva 708 Mental Health Board as well as the mission statement. Vice Chair Hamilton introduced members of the Geneva 708 Mental Health Board, and then asked the several service providers and others representing mental health agencies in attendance to introduce themselves. Guest speaker and moderator Cheryl Potts was introduced. The meeting was well attended with approximately forty members of the community, including several members of Geneva's civic leadership and professional members of the mental health community.

Ms. Potts discussed the purpose of the Kennedy Foundation and the connection to Patrick Kennedy and the Kennedy Family. Ms. Potts also discussed personal connections, convictions and to her mission and family's struggles with mental health as a clear driving force in her work. Ms. Potts' initial message is to encourage people to continually discuss mental health to help encourage an evolution of discussion, to encourage care and treatment of mental illness, removing stigmas. Ms. Potts discussed that while one in four people suffers from a form of mental illness, only about forty percent of those, will seek help due to shortage of services and stigma. It was discussed that Illinois has a suicide epidemic and for every one person who is a suicide victim another twenty five have attempted.

Ms. Potts asked attendees to share and discuss observations and opinions of mental health related issues that are either being poorly addressed, or not addressed at all in local communities. Board Member Christine Kautz brought up drug use in teens and a news article written, discussing that it is believed nearly 70% of local teens are using, primarily pills, recreationally. St Charles 708 Mental Health Board Chair Carolyn Waibel added that benzodiazepines are known to be of primary concern. It was discussed that addiction to narcotic prescription drugs takes place in as little as five days. Insurance parity and denying of claims for mental health services was discussed. To further discuss the topic of children and mental health services, Ms. Potts stated that of the 102 counties in Illinois, 84 are currently without a local practicing child psychologist, leaving the State of Illinois a veritable desert of services providers in this aspect.

Ms. Potts asked members in attendance to speak further about observations and opinions on areas of challenge in the community.

An attendee discussed that in terms of services lacking; was a place an individual suffering from drug addictions could be taken to stabilize as an alternative to jail. From that sparked further topics as follows:

- Not enough physicians that can manage medication assisted treatment (MAT) in the area. It was discussed that there is one with Delnor Hospital who is currently working to train more.
- Lack of coordination between agencies, courts, homeless populations, ambulance services, and lack of funding to help with coordination and integrations. The gaps in reimbursement costs are large and it's making help an individual may have received a lost cause in some circumstances.

Ms. Potts discussed and encouraged advocacy and people approaching Springfield for policy changes; as well as calling local representatives to advocate for change.

Ms. Potts asked the community to offer discussion on what has been observed, that the communities were willing to take on in terms of mental health issues. Board Member Christine Kautz offered work a local church is doing to discuss social media bullying and its long-term effects on young people and brain development.

Attendee shared an observation / opinion that discussion on stigmas was generational with the feeling that discussing things like ADHD or anxiety meds seem to be more openly discussed with teens, while their parents are completely closed mouthed about these topics.

A positive opinion shared with regard to social media, was the fact that kids are seeing high-profile or celebrity individuals openly sharing mental illness. The thought here is that potentially open discussion will shift with the next generation.

A question was asked by an attendee of a law enforcement individual in attendance; his opinion on legalization of marijuana that seems may happen in the state. Response discussed the "mixed-bag" of situations likely to arise from legalization of marijuana. Illinois Public Health Association produced information on legalization of marijuana and what Illinois should consider in terms of legalization, as well as things learned from states such as Colorado and California.

Ms. Potts recommended reviewing an informative, unbiased report on the topic by searching Google for "Illinois public health association adult use cannabis" the report should be available.

Attendee discussed a point on how challenging it can be to get messaging out beyond interested individuals such as those in attendance and how they can get more support from communities because it's so difficult to get support at a state level. Further emphasized by a Board Member was that starting small; churches, community organizations and schools can help destigmatize. This sparked further discussion about the school, parent, child/student relationships. Ms. Potts used this opportunity to discuss the Kennedy Foundation seeking access to people by connecting with large employers and bringing messaging to people in their workplace. The feeling is by "going to people where they're at" it can be effective messaging and that it would transcend from the workplace to home.

An attendee discussed the value of the local community 708 Mental Health Boards, because of the local control and ability to immediately address and support issues in their community.

Attendee asked for opinion on the position of the Federal Government and “is it at this point every state for themselves” in terms of mental health assistance. Ms. Potts discussed the power through legislation that individual states have in this realm.

An attendee commented and recommended individuals interested in further looking at this topic read about the “Medicare For All” initiatives.

Chair Shogren thanked attendees for their thoughtful participation and comments, recognizing how well-versed attendees are in the subject of mental health. Chair Shogren reinforced and encouraged individuals to continue taking their “small steps” toward bigger outcomes in discussing and advocating for mental health awareness and support initiatives. Chair Shogren thanked attendees for making the time to participate, as well as Civic Leadership of the City of Geneva in attendance and finally Cheryl Potts for her work and for speaking this evening.

2. ADJOURNMENT

The presentation ended at 8:20PM

All Scheduled Meetings for the 708 Geneva Community Mental Health Board to begin at 7:00 PM unless specifically noted