

Meeting Minutes

Friday, October 17, 2025, 8:30-10:30 am

Lincoln County Health Department, Clinic Room

Members Present:

☒ Aspirus Merrill/Tomahawk Hospitals Amanda Lange	☒ HAVEN, Inc. Nancy Baacke	☒ Inclusa, Inc. Robyn Swart
☒ Lincoln County Health Department Kristin Bath	☒ Lincoln County Department of Social Services Jessi Rumsey	☐ Medical College of Wisconsin
☒ Merrill Area Public Schools Trisha Kubichek	☒ North Central Health Care Holly Westburg	

Partners Present: Ashley Miller, Center for Well-being Inc., Heidi O'Hare Tomahawk Public Library

Agenda Item	Notes	Action Items
1. Call to Order	Meeting called to order by Bath at 8:33 am.	
2. Welcome and Introductions	Welcome and introductions were made.	
3. Approve Minutes of April 11, 2025 Meeting	Motion to approve minutes by Rumsey seconded by Swart. All ayes. Motion carried.	
4. 2026 Coalition Meetings & Updates	- Bath shared that the Live Well Lincoln Leadership Team will provide oversight for the Healthy Minds Coalition moving forward and we will no longer need to follow open meeting requirements. Coalition can still meet regularly to network, share updates and work on collaborative projects. - Group will meet monthly in 2026 from 8:30 am – 9:30 am. Tuesdays and Thursdays had the least conflicts. Bath will send a survey to determine meeting schedule.	Contact Shelley Cohrs if you want to learn more about joining Live Well Lincoln Leadership Team Shelley.Cohrs@co.lincoln.wi.us Complete coalition meeting survey by 10/31/25.
5. Aspirus Funding	Lange shared that funding is steady. We can request funding using the same process as last year. Submit requests here.	
6. Legislative Updates	- Bath shared mental health bills that the Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards (WALHDAB) is monitoring. SB 269: Wisconsin Senate Bill: Relating to: a school psychologist loan program. (FE) SB 72: Wisconsin Senate Bill: Relating to: creating an individual income tax deduction for certain income earned by an individual from the practice of psychiatry or from providing psychiatric or mental health services. (FE) AJR 55: Wisconsin Assembly Bill: Relating to: designating May as Mental Health Awareness Month in Wisconsin. - Rumsey shared Healthfirst is anticipating formula access issues in Lincoln County for WIC participants. WIC will run out of	

	funding by October 31 if a continuing resolution or other Congressional action are not taken. • Rumsey noted Foodshare benefits may be delayed in November. Changes in federal allocations to administer the program. Counties are doing resolutions to request patch funding from the state. There will also be work requirement changes. Monitor FoodShare updates. • O'Hare shared that the WI Department of Public Instruction has reorganized. Currently no funding cuts at the state level.	
7. Annual Coalition Assessment	• Bath reviewed updated Data Indicators. (see handout) • Mental Health America released "State of Mental Health" Report. WI ranks 21st overall. See full report. • Bath reviewed progress on Coalition Action Plan. (see handout) • Bath shared survey results and completed an abbreviated Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (SOAR) Assessment. Additions from the group were noted in blue/ 2026 priorities were highlighted in yellow. (see handout) • A community survey with a summary of coalition activities were shared with the public. No responses received.	
8. Agency Round Robin	Bath, Health Department – Completed Suicide Prevention Campaign in September, ran 988 ads, distributed 76 gun locks at LCHD and public libraries and hosted virtual QPR training (20 attendees). Evaluation results pending. – Asked to do a presentation to the Rotary Club. Partnering with Schlegel with NAMI Northwoods. Others are welcome to join. Date to be determined. Rumsey, Social Services – Fully staffed. Hiring Youth Justice Worker. No longer doing the Energy Assistance Program. Now through the North Central Community Action Program. – Member of Opioid Taskforce. Close to releasing the first round of grant opportunities. Agencies can request mini grants for projects that work to strengthen families (max amount per project is \$10,000) O'Hare, Tomahawk Public Library – Planning outreach for adult winter mental health. Concern about book supply as their main book distributor went under so now purchasing books from a new vendor. Lange, Aspirus Health	Contact Schlegel, NAMI Northwoods, with ideas on how to recruit facilitators for NAMI programs, support groups and presentations. info@naminorthwoods.org

	– Will be reaching out to partners as Aspirus works on their new Community Health Assessment/ Improvement Plan. Baacke, HAVEN, Inc. – Have had funding cuts. General uncertainty with future funding. – Welcomed three new staff. Agencies encouraged to make referrals. Office hours are 8:00 – 4:30, but staff are flexible and can work later hours if needed. Westberg, North Central Health Care – Community Treatment Program is fully staffed. – Won this year's WI Children's System of Care Champion Award through Children Come First Program. The award is for the work being done in the Community Treatment, Outpatient and Behavioral Health Units. Swartz, Inclusa – Recently did a community day where they distributed 300 snack packs to Merrill and Tomahawk School Districts.	
9. Next Meeting Date and Agenda Items	Next meeting will be determined based on survey results. Will review prioritized projects. – Poverty Simulation/ACEs education for schools, partners and the public – Screening of "Maid" Film/ target teens – May Mental Health Month – Social Connection Campaign – Suicide Prevention Month Outreach – Updates from School Raise Your Voice Clubs at meetings – Mental Health Presentations for Families – No Return Mental Health Book Collections at Libraries	Bath to invite Raise Your Voice Club Leaders to next meeting.
10. Adjournment	Meeting adjourned by Bath at 10:27 am.	

Minutes submitted by: Kristin Bath, Public Health Educator, 10/21/25

Key Indicators

Healthy Minds						
Indicator	Baseline		2023	2024	2025	Source
Mentally unhealthy days Average number of mentally unhealthy days reported in the past 30 days (age adjusted)	Lincoln	4.5 (2019)	4.5 (2020)	5.1 (2021)	5.7 (2022)	County Health Rankings (Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System)
	WI	4.4 (2019)	4.4 (2020)	4.8 (2021)	5.4 (2022)	
	US	4.5 (2019)	4.4 (2020)	4.8 (2021)	5.1 (2022)	
# of ACEs Percent of adults that report 2 or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)	Lincoln	36-39% (2018)	--	--	--	CDC (Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey)
	WI	37% (2017)	--	--	--	
	US	--	--	--	--	
Anxiety in Students Students who experienced significant problems with anxiety (past 12 months)	Lincoln	41% (2019)	--	--	--	WI Department of Public Instruction (Lincoln County Youth Risk Behavior Survey)
	WI	49% (2019)	--	--	--	
	US	--	--	--	--	
Depression in Students Percent of high school students who reported feeling so sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 or more weeks in a row that they stopped doing some of their usual activities in the last year.	Lincoln	26% (2019)	--	--	--	WI Department of Public Instruction (Lincoln County Youth Risk Behavior Survey)
	WI	29% (2019)	--	--	--	
	US	37% (2019)	--	--	--	
# mental health providers Ratio of population to mental health providers	Lincoln	1,450:1 (2021)	1,500:1 (2022)	1490:1 (2023)	1420:1 (2024)	County Health Rankings (Area Health Resource File/ American Medical Association)
	WI	440:1 (2021)	420:1 (2022)	400:1 (2023)	370:1 (2024)	
	US	350:1 (2021)	340:1 (2022)	320:1 (2023)	300:1 (2024)	



Yellow = 2025 Priorities

Abbreviated Action Plan Snap Shot 2025

Mental Health and Emotional Well-Being Action Plan

Goal 1: Lincoln County residents will have increased knowledge and access to behavioral health resources that support mental health and emotional well-being.

Objective 1.1: Implement one strategy annually to increase access to local resources by eliminating barriers and supporting effective navigation

Strategy	Outcomes
1.1.1 Identify, maintain and expand resources. (Ex: Maintain and promote local resources directories and guides)	(-) Grief Guide updated 1/2025 (ongoing distribution) (-) 988 Magnets updated 5/2025 (ongoing distribution) (-) 988 Wallet Cards updated 5/2025 (ongoing distribution) (-) MH & AODA Resource Guide updated 5/2025 (ongoing distribution)
1.1.2 Enhance local referral systems by identifying community information hubs and promoting resources widely and through various methods. (HE) (Ex: Partner Transportation Meetings, Social Connectedness, etc)	Ongoing - Live Well Lincoln Partnership Team held Transportation Meetings (connects to accessing mental health care) (-) Developed Event Promotion Checklist with Media/ Partner to help promote events (social connection)

Objective 1.2: Implement 2 strategies annually that build robust, collaborative networks that include diverse partners and community members aimed at increasing awareness, resources and support.

Strategy	Outcomes
1.2.1 Increase knowledge and awareness of providers and stakeholders' roles and responsibilities within the behavioral health system. (Ex: Hold partner networking opportunities - Healthy Minds meetings)	Ongoing - agency round robin is standing agenda item at coalition meetings
1.2.2 Build upon existing cross sector networks that serve school aged children to support resource sharing and navigation. (Ex: Participate in MAPS Mental Health Matters Alliance)	(-) Attended annual MAPS Mental Health Matters Alliance meeting 5/7/25
1.2.3 Promote and support community prevention partners, local advocacy groups and youth mentor programs. (HE) (Ex: promote/ support NAMI Northwoods, MHS & TSD Raise Your Voice Clubs)	(-) Presentation to Kinship Mentors and Caregivers 4/30/25 - focused on ways to support children's health, 11 participants (-) Booth at Tomahawk Raise Your Voice Club Color Run 5/31/25
1.2.4 Maintain and recruit leaders, partners and community members to the Healthy Minds for Lincoln County coalition through various methods. (HE) (Ex: quarterly media activities, booths at events)	(-) Quarterly Press Release (Feb QPR Training, May Social Connection, July Updated MH Resource Guide, Sept Suicide Prevention Month) (-) Booth at Children's Fest 4/5/25 (-) Tomahawk Home Sport & Travel Show 4/12/25 & 4/13/25 (-) Tomahawk Community Baby Shower 4/24/25 (-) Tomahawk Raise Your Voice Club Color Run 5/31/25 (-) Tomahawk Library Family Event 7/31/25 (-) Tomahawk National Night Out 8/5/25 (-) Merrill Community Night Out 8/19/25 (-) Harley Employee Health Fair 8/27/25
1.2.5 Recruit coalition champions to assist in developing an advocacy network that supports policies, infrastructure, and programs. (P) (Ex: seek out funding to support action plan)	\$10,000 Aspirus donations received

Goal 2: Lincoln County residents will have strong support systems that provide connection and emotional support.

Objective 2.1: Implement four strategies annually that promote, educate and support mental health and emotional well-being through community engagement and open conversations.

Strategy	Outcomes
2.1.1 Implement community campaigns and programs to increase awareness and knowledge	(-) Parent Event for Pine River School for Young Learners 1/16/25 - 11 participants (-) QPR Training (Virtual) 3/17/25, 17 participants, Tomahawk Library 4/4/25, 6 participants, TB Scott Library, 13 participants (-) Calm strips distributed to schools and youth serving groups (2,919) (-) Social Connection Campaign & Challenge May & June 2025 (116 challenge entries, billboards, digital, newspaper, radio, Facebook ads, flyers and Facebook posts) (-) Ongoing promotion of ADRC and T.B. Scott Free Library Programs (Memory Cafes, Dementia Brain Health)
2.1.2 Continue to explore and integrate evidence based programming and training that targets school age youth. (HE)	(-) Ongoing Teen Mental Health First Aid (MHS sophomore class) (-) Ongoing -Raise Your Voice Clubs at both school districts (-) Ongoing -Botvin, ART, Learning to Breathe, Free Talks being offered through schools and social services

Lincoln County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) 2018-2023

2.1.3 Support and expand peer support groups and community informed programs that promote family engagement and social connectedness. (HE)	(-) Tomahawk Public Library & T.B. Scott Free Library awarded funding from Aspirus for Summer Family Activity Packs and other mental health projects (-) Ongoing promotion and partnerships with library initiatives/events
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Healthy Minds Annual Survey 2025

Each year the Health Department asks coalition partners to reflect on the past year and provide input on strengths, challenges and opportunities as we continue to work together to improve mental health outcomes in Lincoln County.

We ask you to please share your feedback by completing this survey. This will help us determine the best way to use resources and prioritize activities for the upcoming year.

Survey results will be reviewed at the Healthy Minds Coalition Meeting on October 17th . Thank you for your input!

6 responses received 9/23/25-10/7/2025

Community survey was shared with Healthy Minds Activity Highlights via social media and WJMT during this timeframe, no responses.

Results reviewed with coalition at meeting on 10/17/25. Additions in blue.

What positive trends are you seeing with mental health in Lincoln County?

6 responses

✦ Summarize responses

Acknowledgement

Awareness of mental health and the benefits of being well.

In May, we noticed people talking about mental health and checking out books about it.

I am seeing an upward trend of those who are "accepting" of mental health – what I mean by this is that I used to work with students who'd say that their parent/guardian doesn't "believe in mental health." But, I really don't hear that as often anymore.

Increased awareness; slight but better provider to person ratio.

More providers such as Behavioral Health Clinic, school-based mental health

- Collaboration/ relationships among partners.

What gaps or challenges are you seeing with mental health in Lincoln County?

6 responses

◆ Summarize responses

Pay scale

Generational behaviors with families, as I don't think they know a better way. Or how to make those changes.

Parents, and adults; should we do a month game night, art (crafts) or book club to bring people together. Childcare is the problem people have coming to things.

We're still struggling to find outpatient therapists - I think the whole world is struggling with this though!

Mentally unhealthy day numbers are climbing; schools reporting significant behaviors; worse than ever before. Suicide rates concerning.

Continued access issues with insurance coverage and number of providers for the need

- Staff experiencing burnout/ turnover. Frustrated with limited capacity.
- Vacancies in behavioral health positions due to lack of qualifications (can't serve people without the staffing).
- Shortage of youth therapists (nationwide challenge).
- Families need the support (not just the youth getting services).
- Loneliness in older adults - finding resources, making new friends after a loss or relocating to the area. Social connection after retirement can be a challenge.
- Loneliness for people with a disability and lack of transportation (impacts connection and ability to access resources).
- Negative trends with phones, digital devices, AI (there may be more awareness, but still a problem).

What Healthy Minds activities were you proud of or did you find successful this last year?

5 responses

◆ Summarize responses

Keeping up with any new laws

The activity of having people connect with others in their lives, and get out in our county. I also enjoyed educating parents at headstart, with that young family population.

The May and September displays and information hand out.

I'm proud of all the work being done. Even when it feels like the needle may not be moving, the effort is worth it.

Promotion and support of programs for youth (ART, RYV, Learning to Breathe)

- Social Connection Campaign

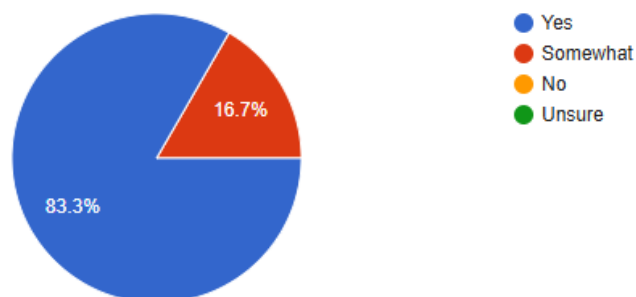
The following are Healthy Minds goals . Do these still seem appropriate?

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(1) Community members will have increased knowledge and access to behavioral health services and resources that support mental health and emotional well-being.

(2) Community members will have strong support systems that provide connection and emotional support.

6 responses



If you answered "Somewhat" or "No", please share your thoughts and suggestions.

1 response

I think we may need to dig deeper into the root causes and address societal or environmental factors or dig deeper into info on resilience and grit. I'm not sure.

What topics or activities would you like to see Healthy Minds focus on this upcoming year?

4 responses

◆ Summarize responses

Free services

Not sure what this would look like, but more encouragement of community/connection. Supporting families in spending that time, outside of organized activities and with others.

Would like to do more in September, we needed to schedule and plan better.

More campaigns and material distribution.

- **Poverty Simulation/ ACEs Education – Tentative October 2026**
2 day offering (Community session 10/29/26, In-service for Merrill & Tomahawk School Staff 10/30/26)
Only costs are lodging, mileage and meals for events. No facilitator fee.
Simulation is 3 hours, minimum participation 90/ maximum 109
MAPS would be willing to host for school staff/ community location TBD.
Trisha to follow up with MAPS Admin, Jessi to check availability with instructors.
- **Screening of Maid Film at Libraries - target teens**
- **May Mental Health Campaign**
Repeat Social Connection Campaign. Make small updates. Do in April and May or just one month. TBD.
- **No Return Mental Health Book Collections at Libraries**
Recommend books as a group, expand to other topics.
- **Suicide Prevention Month Outreach**
Displays at libraries, other outreach TBD.
- **Updates from School Raise Your Voice Clubs at Coalition Meetings**
Invite Katy Holz and Cassie Cerny to next meeting
- **Mental Health Presentations for Families**
Bath to follow up with Ashley to see if she is interested in providing to families.
- **Group Activities once a year that focus on re-energizing/ incorporate educational opportunity**

Are there certain groups in our community that you think we should prioritize with our education and outreach?

5 responses

✦ Summarize responses

Low income

I really like our focus on parents, to hopefully help the future generations improve their mental health. Also isolated individuals and building a community for all if possible.

Caregivers, parents, and young people in the area.

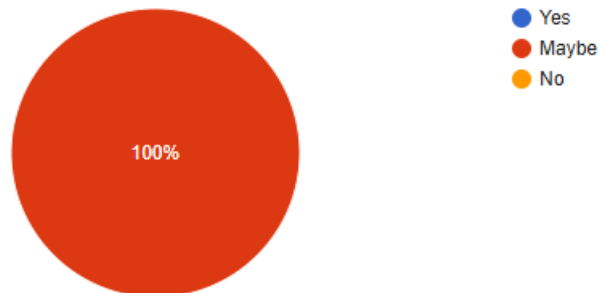
Those that we might ignite a movement to help, people/service minded - churches?

There is a "new" and growing Veteran's group that meets regularly at the Eagle's Club. I wonder if there would be any interest for outreach opportunities there?

Are you interested in being part of a project based work group or taking on specific tasks this upcoming year? (Ex: planning a training, campaign, or event, being a presenter, developing materials, media, manning a booth at an event, etc.)

 [Copy chart](#)

6 responses



If you answered Yes or Maybe, please include your name and what topics or activities you are interested in.

2 responses

Ashley Miller, where my experience can be beneficial to the mission

Heidi O'Hare, Library May and September display with information. Maybe an event with the Tomahawk teen group at the library. We have a teen program person.

What other thoughts and feedback would you like to share?

1 response

I think Kristin does a phenomenal job compiling materials, campaigns, etc. I'm so appreciative of the work she does. We have to just keep coming to the table to search for solutions. We are a small group and it is hard to make a big impact. It would be nice to get more involvement.