

CONNECTIONS

The Center Against Sexual & Domestic Abuse, Inc.

Spring 2020

“Safe & Strong” Prevention Education Program Debuts in Superior Elementary Schools

By Sherry Boock

During the past year, in an effort to move toward more preventative education, CASDA’s Children’s Program Coordinator, Sherry Boock, and Sexual Assault Program Coordinator, Nicole Thole, became trained in the Safe & Strong Body Safety Curriculum. This curriculum contains age-appropriate lessons for kindergarten through sixth grade students, broken down by grade level. It defines safe and unsafe touches and helps kids identify trusted adults using a conversational method centered around common scenarios.

While the curriculum has been used in Duluth elementary schools, parochial schools, and Headstart programs for some time, it was only recently implemented in Superior as a pilot program at Cooper Elementary School. With the support of Superior School District Superintendent Amy Starzecki, Sherry, Nicole and Children’s Program intern, Emma Carter, presented Safe & Strong lessons to approximately 820 kindergarten through fifth grade students over the course of two weeks.

Cooper School Counselor, Lori Thompson, appreciated that the Safe & Strong lessons resemble and reinforce the information she provides from the Second Step curriculum used throughout the school district. She found it helpful to have the information presented in a new way from an outside, professional source. So far the feedback from Cooper School staff has been overwhelmingly positive and we look forward to conversations with the school district about how we can bring this valuable information to more students in the future.



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CASDA Welcomes Three New Full-time Advocates

Lisa- she, her, hers

Lisa is our new **Domestic Abuse Program Coordinator**! She is a recent graduate from WITC with a Human Services degree in Gerontology. Lisa has prior experience in the field working at Harbor House as a Life Skills Coordinator. Her role at CASDA is to work with victims and survivors of domestic violence, whether taking referrals from CASDA's shelter program or the greater community. When working with her clients, Lisa provides emotional support and can assist clients at goal-related appointments or court. Lisa also is excited to bring new ideas to CASDA, including trauma-informed yoga, in which she is certified. Besides yoga, Lisa enjoys gardening, cooking, and crystals!



Desirae- she, her, hers

Desirae is our new **Bayfield County Outreach Program Coordinator**. With her experience in Child Protective Services, Desirae is excited for a new change of pace here at the Bayfield office! She is excited to bring a new perspective to CASDA since she has worked with child welfare prior to starting here. Desirae hopes to create a bigger presence in Bayfield and Ashland counties. She would like to promote our programs we offer there as well as community events to build awareness of our services. Desirae's hobbies include hiking with her two dogs, as well as walks by the lake!

Samantha- she, her, hers

With offices at both CASDA and UW-S, Samantha is our very first **Sexual Assault Campus Advocate**! Samantha is a recent graduate from UMD with a degree in Journalism, as well as a minor in Linguistics and Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies. Samantha had been looking for advocacy work to begin after her December 1st graduation, and this new position was just created last fall!



So far, Samantha has been making her presence clear as a campus advocate by introducing herself to students and professors, and she is able to help our Sexual Assault Program Coordinator, Nicole, with any referrals from UW-S or WITC. Samantha also collaborates with the UW-S Gender Equity Resource Center and Student Health Services. In her short time since starting this winter, Samantha has learned a lot through everyone here at CASDA, shadowing meetings and helping to plan and run outreach activities. As an advocate, she has been developing her skills further by listening, supporting, advocating, and sharing stories that need to be heard. Outside of advocacy, Sam is enthusiastic about dog walking, pet-sitting, Star Wars and creating vegetarian meals!

Community Engagement Program Intern Melanie Marana, a WITC Human Services student, helped gather the information for this page. We appreciate our interns!

How Covid-19 Has Affected CASDA's Services

On March 13th, because we wished to respond proactively to the coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak and to do our part in controlling the virus' spread, we began adjusting several aspects of our typical programs and practices. To maximize the health and safety of our residents, staff, and the general public, the following measures will remain in place until at least the end of May:

- Requests for assistance may be made via our 24-hour help line (715-392-3136; 800-649-2921); our website (<https://casda.org/get-help/>) or our general email address (info@casda.org).
- In-person advocacy is available for shelter residents only, until further notice.
- In-person volunteer shifts have been cancelled until further notice.
- The majority of staff members are working from home to limit in-person contact within our offices and common areas.

Despite the impact on our full scope of services, CASDA is committed to supporting victims and survivors of abuse:

- We continue to triage incoming calls and to offer crisis counseling, safety planning, and information/referrals.
- We have migrated support group meetings to an online platform.
- Our advocates have remained in touch with clients via remote channels, wherever possible.
- We are indebted and deeply grateful to PAVSA's Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners, who are still responding to local hospitals based on their availability. When a victim is a Wisconsin resident, a CASDA advocate is available for follow-up support.
- We are offering a limited amount of educational and outreach programming via remote means, such as social media and teleconferencing platforms.

CASDA administration will continue to revisit these and all other service adjustments regularly to assess the need for maintaining or modifying them based on any new information or directives we receive from government public health officials and our state coalitions, End Abuse Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA).



To ensure social distancing, CASDA took many of our planned Child Abuse Prevention and Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) events online. To keep current on virtual opportunities, such as this April 21st SAAM Q&A with CASDA, the Health Care Clinic, and UWS Gender Equity Resource Center, follow us on Facebook and Instagram!

April is
Sexual Assault
Awareness Month



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DELIVERING TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

The Power of the Breath

by Lisa Jordan

And I said to my body softly, I want to be your friend. It took a long breath and replied... I have been waiting for this my whole life.

-Naayirah Waheed



As a yoga teacher, domestic violence program coordinator, mother and human, I can attest to the power of breath. First of all, it is the only system most of us can control (unlike Tibetan monks, who can control heartbeat, blood pressure, etc., because they are so attuned to their bodies). The moment you notice your breath you come into the present moment. On a day-to-day basis, we tend to be in the past or the future but rarely in this moment. Taking deep breaths (or in yoga we call it "pranayama," prana meaning life force) calms your nervous system and relaxes the mind, which in turn relaxes the body. When we experience trauma, those emotions manifest in the body, causing physical pain. When we practice yoga, including breathwork, we allow those emotions to be released with our exhale. We create a safe space to get out of our heads and into our bodies, which in turn creates healing.

In the near future, CASDA will be offering "Trauma Informed Yoga," which will benefit our survivors on a level they may have not encountered yet, creating a sense of peace and tranquility. This is what makes yoga so powerful. So, the next time you get in your car, before you start the engine, take ten full breaths, ask yourself, "Am I aware?" and see where you are, past or future? The more often you check in, the more often you become present, and, in turn, that leads to a calmer disposition, enabling you to make better decisions with less anxiety. Most of us tend to think the answers are outside of us, like reading a book, taking a pill, asking a professional, etc., but really all of the answers are within us. Give yourself the gift of a new practice and see what manifests for you. Hope to see you on the mat. Namaste'

Why Human Service Professionals Need to Consider Past Trauma

by Emily Borndal, CASDA Intern

My name is Emily and I am a senior in the Social Work Program at the University of Wisconsin-Superior. I became interested in social work because of my job as a Direct Support Professional at a foster care home where we work with children of varying ages and with a variety of mental and physical disabilities. I have been working there for a little over five years. With April being Child Abuse Prevention Month, I have been reflecting on my experience working with kids who have been through trauma and abuse.

One thing that all of the children have in common is that they have all experienced trauma. Because of this, learning about trauma-informed care in my classes and through CASDA's advocacy training has been the most interesting. Trauma-informed care is a practice based on the premise that everybody has experienced trauma and responds to trauma differently, and that human service professionals need to be aware of this past trauma so that we do our best not to retraumatize the people that we work with. For example, if one of my clients had been in a car accident before and now is anxious in the car, we would need to know about that so that we could make a plan for when car rides are needed: possibly providing a certain toy that they liked, a style of music that calmed them, or the opportunity to sit in the car for a few minutes to get relaxed before it starts moving. If we didn't know about their past experience and weren't mindful about trauma-informed care, then we wouldn't be able to give them the care that they need and we would risk retraumatizing them.

One of my clients had been traumatized by abuse that occurred during an everyday activity. Before knowing about that, I always wondered why they were so anxious about this particular activity, and I even got impatient at one point, until I read their story and learned what had happened to them. Being informed of that trauma and how it had affected that client helped me to be able to work with and understand them better. I wish I had known about this practice before I started working with these clients. Since most of the children at my job have no ability to communicate verbally, staff often starts with no idea of exactly how their experiences have impacted them. Because of this limitation, we need to be observant about what seems to work and what doesn't with each individual client and tailor programming to their specific needs. This is the approach that should be followed in all human service areas: understanding that each person has their own things that they are strong at and comfortable with, and that they need to learn how to work through their trauma and use those strengths to get to their goals. Our job as advocates, social workers, case workers, etc. is to help them get to this point.

Agency Updates & Thank Yous

Our Shelter Needs You!

During the current public health crisis, CASDA is still supporting victims and survivors of all ages. **THE NEED FOR OUR CRITICAL WORK WILL CONTINUE BOTH DURING AND BEYOND THE PANDEMIC.**

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, **we had to cancel our April "Spring Into Giving" Donation Drive**, hosted each year by Walmart, where generous community members re-supply our shelter with many of its most-needed items. Last year, this drive raised more than \$7,000 in goods, cash and gift cards! **Not being able to hold it this year is a huge blow!**

If you are in a position to help, an updated emergency shelter wish list is printed here, and on our website, you can also find a Paypal "Donate" button, and a link to our Amazon wish list (OR - consider shopping locally for similar items, especially if a business will ship or deliver directly to CASDA!) <https://casda.org/get-involved/>

Thank you to our community for your ongoing help during challenging times!



Emergency Shelter Wish List - updated 4/7/2020 *most-needed items in bold*

Cleaning Supplies

Disinfectant Spray & Wipes
All-purpose cleaners
Bleach
Pine-Sol
42+ gallon heavy duty garbage bags
Dryer Sheets
Dish Soap
Scrubbing pads/sponges
Laundry Soap
Windex
Toilet bowl cleaner

Personal Care/Hygiene

Toilet Paper
Paper Towels
Hand Soap - Antibacterial
Shampoo & Conditioner
Facial Tissue
Deodorant

Food

Cereal
Canned Meat (tuna, chicken, etc.)
Oil
Flour
Sugar
Sauces (spaghetti, gravy, alfredo, etc.)
Coffee
Boxed dinners
Soup

If safe-at-home orders are lifted by August, watch for our **Sam's Club Donation Drive** August 6th, 7th & 8th from Noon-7pm

We currently do not need dried pasta; we have plenty.

SUPPORT GROUP

WHEN

Wednesday

April 15th - June 17th, 2020
7 pm to 8:30 pm

WHERE

*CASDA (virtual)

***Due to COVID-19, we will be offering support group through teleconferencing only until further notice. Please contact your advocate for more information.**

****Must be a CASDA client; please arrange an intake if you are not currently working with a program.****
Call 715-392-3136

APRIL 15: SELF CARE
APRIL 22: KNOWING YOURSELF
APRIL 29: DANGEROUS PATTERNS PT 1
MAY 6: DANGEROUS PATTERNS PT 2
MAY 13: COACHING - GOALS
MAY 20: CONFLICT PT 1
MAY 27: CONFLICT PT 2
JUNE 3: COMMUNICATION PT 1
JUNE 10: COMMUNICATION PT 2
JUNE 17: COACHING - DRESS FOR SUCCESS

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR...

- Every grantor who has allowed and urged us to adjust our projected 2020 projects and budget in light of the current Covid-19 crisis (such as Wisconsin VOCA, Wisconsin DCF, Head of the Lakes United Way, and more).
- All the individuals and community groups who anticipated the blow to our regular fundraising efforts and have already sent generous donations or organized drives to help make up the difference.
- 2019 grants that allowed CASDA to: create survivor "Fresh Start Bins" filled with basic household supplies; upgrade worn flooring in our shelter and welcome area; add more child-friendly furniture to our children's play area; and more.
- ALL OUR CLIENTS, and SURVIVORS EVERYWHERE, FOR YOUR STRENGTH AND PATIENCE during this especially challenging time.



EVERYONE who attended our New Year's Eve Gala or contributed other support to "Behind the Mask!" Special thanks to our 2019 Major Sponsors (listed on p. 3 and including additional 2019 silver sponsors Graymont, LLC and JMR Financial Group), Nummi Jewelers, Bernick's, Skin Deep Tattoo & Piercing, Halvor Lines, How Sweet It Is, North Shore Bank, Cash Wise Liquor, Amsoil, Ikonics, the Main Club, Superior Beverages, Saratoga Liquor, Northland Special Events, Christi Willette, Barker's Island Inn, Allete Office Services, Border Town Betties, CASDA Board, Staff & Volunteers, and every Auction, Prize & Wine Donor.

April 19-25th is Volunteer Appreciation Week!



Those who can, do.
Those who can do
more, volunteer.
~Author unknown

CASDA would like to thank **all** of our interns and volunteers! We appreciate you for **EVERYTHING** that you do!

99 community members volunteered for CASDA during 2019.

Introducing Our New Spring 2020 Interns!

Mariah is a Community Engagement/Human Resources Intern this spring! She is studying psychology at UMD with a minor in public health. She is excited to learn how to provide advocacy services to victims and survivors. Mariah's favorite movie is *The Hunger Games!*



Intern Mariah

Best wishes to all of our graduating interns!



Intern August

August is our Sexual Assault Program Intern! She is currently going to UWS for Criminal Justice. August is excited to learn about working with clients and the behind-the-scenes work. Her favorite movie is *High School Musical!*



Intern Emily

Emily is interning with our Community Engagement Program and is pursuing a bachelor's degree in Social Work at UWS. She is excited to learn about the dynamics of working with survivors of domestic violence. Her favorite movie is *Cool Runnings!*

Mailing label here