

THE CONNECTIONS STAR

Connections at Project Harmony Newsletter



Spring 2022 Groups

BY CIERRA SVAGERA AND ERIKA RODRIGUEZ

Connections has 38 groups occurring this Spring. This is the highest number of groups our program has ever had! The groups include: 19 Expressive Arts Therapy, 3 CBITS (Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools), 7 Bounce Back, 7 Coping Skills, and 2 Circle of Security. The majority of our groups are held in a school-based setting but the 2 Circle of Security groups are being held at our partner agencies- Parent University and Learning Community Center of South Omaha.

Connections is serving roughly 200 students this semester through these groups. We would like to thank our providers, school counselors and mental health coordinators for helping make these groups such a success within Connections.



Therapist Spotlights

BY PATRICE GARRETT

Connections is honored to show off the talented therapists that contract with our program. This month we are featuring Catherine Howard, Daryl Howard and Elizabeth "Liz" Harrison. We are so lucky to have them serving Connections' children and families.

Catherine Howard

Catherine Howard of H&J Counseling is an LMHP and LCSW located in the Bellevue area. Her areas of expertise include working with the LGBTQ community, grief and loss, parent-child attachment and adoption. She is trained in several evidenced based models including play therapy, CBITS, Circle of Security, TFCBT, and Expressive Arts. Catherine has worked with the Connections program for 3 years and has served 144 clients. She has provided both individual as well as group services.



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Daryl Howard

Daryl Howard LIMHP, also of H&J Counseling, has expertise in the areas of anger management, depression, mood disorders, conduct disorders, and ADHD. He is trained in TFCBT as well as CBITS and Bounce Back. Daryl has been with Connections for 6 years and has provided individual and group services. He has served a total of 117 clients during his time with us.



Elizabeth Harrison

Liz Harrison LIMHP is with Perceptions Therapy. Her areas of expertise include anxiety, trauma, grief and loss, parent child attachment, and parenting education. She is trained in play therapy, Common Sense Parenting, Motivational Interviewing and EMDR. Liz has worked with the Connections program for a little over a year and has provided individual services to 19 clients.



Connections New Employee Spotlights

BY CHEYANNE MACCLAIN

Here are some new faces at Connections.

Odaliz Santoyo Garcia

Odaliz, known by friends and family as “Odo”, has joined Connections as an individual MHC for the OPS school districts. She brings excellent experience from her former positions at Promiseship, in the OPS school district as a bilingual liaison, and as a family support specialist with Child Saving Institute’s SAFE and TYPP programs. Odaliz hopes to provide Connection’s families with help and resources by breaking stigma barriers and educating on the long-term benefits of mental health services.

Outside of work, Odaliz loves nature and enjoys spending her time camping and hiking at national parks. She has already been to six, but hopes to experience all 63. She stays active at home with her son by walking her two dogs, but is always on the lookout for a new adventure!



Free Summer Programs for Children

In Omaha, we are fortunate to have many opportunities for youth to engage in the community for free over the summer. One program that focuses on developing skills in technology is the Do Space Summer Passport Program. The program begins June 4th and continues until July 31st. Children ages 3-13 can attend. Children will code, make, learn and explore while they engage in this program. Children can even win prizes for completing different tasks at Do Space.

Another free program that is available to children is the Summer Reading Program hosted by Omaha Public Library’s. Children can participate in the program from June 1st to July 31st . Children will need to complete any combination of 10 activities or reading/listening hours to receive a prize. Prizes range from a book, voucher for a book from the Friends of Omaha Public Library book sale, Omaha Storm Chasers ticket voucher and chances to win additional prizes. There is also an adults program where adults can win a voucher for a book from the Friends of Omaha Public Library book sale.



Katie Gilroy

Katie onboarded with Connections as an individual MHC for the Millard and Ralston school districts. Katie brings a wealth of knowledge from working as a crisis counselor at Nebraska Wesleyan University, followed by her crisis counseling experience with Nebraska Strong Recovery Project through Region 6, where she specialized in the impact of COVID-19 on our community.

She hopes to positively impact families and help them thrive by providing opportunities for Connections clients to access to mental health care at school and home. Katie is passionate about houseplants, collecting rocks and crystals, bullet journaling, doing colorful makeup looks and spending time with friends and family. She loves documentaries about nature and crime, and encourages all who visit her workspace to partake in her M&M dispenser for a sweet treat!



Kenya Faith

Kenya is the newest addition to the Connections program as our Administrative Assistant. She worked for Project Harmony previously as an Administrative Assistant for Children's Services for over one year, and brings great organizational and multi-tasking skills with her. Kenya is finishing her bachelor's degree in psychology from UNO, and plans to start their masters program in Industrial/Organizational Psychology in the fall.

Kenya loves listening to, and discussing, music which is one of her greatest passions as evidenced by a symbolic representation she has in the form of a tattoo. She also enjoys painting, hiking, and her baby brother who is just a toddler! Kenya hopes to bring a source of warmth and comfort for all colleagues and clientele she engages with. Her motto is "you have nothing to lose by being kind".

Upcoming Trainings

BY LINDSEY STEVENS

Connections is pleased to announce that we will be offering free CEU opportunities to our contracted therapists.

The next opportunity to earn CEU's will be during our April and May Book Study on the book *Hope Rising. How the Science of Hope Can Change Life*. This book study will be offered again, look out for the next opportunity!

Project Harmony will be training in TFCBT this summer as well as a DBT in Schools group model. In the meantime, check out the following Project Harmony Trainings:

5/11- Working Together Across Cultures

5/19- Dealing with Discord

5/26- Engaging Through Empathy



Additional Project Harmony Trainings that may interest you can be found here:

<https://projectharmony.com/training/calendar/>