

Community Prevention & Wellness Initiative

Partners for Healthy Communities

Coalition Mission

To build and sustain a healthy South Whidbey Community



Coordinator

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Lauri Johnson is a Certified Prevention Professional. Her passion for youth started in 1996, and later to serve in Americorps. She has ten years of combined experience as a Family Support Specialist, volunteer coordinator, and parent and family educator.

SW CARES Coalition is housed at the SWCC.



South Whidbey CARES Coalition

Community Advancing Resilience Education & Support



Community Prevention and Wellness Initiative (CPWI)

CPWI is a partnership of state agencies, counties, schools and local prevention coalitions supporting communities in preventing alcohol and other drug misuse and its negative consequences. CPWI priorities include reducing underage drinking, marijuana use and opioid misuse/abuse among middle and high school aged youth. By providing evidence-based practices and promoting the positive changes in communities, we can build healthier communities.

About the Coalition: Communities and Schools Working Together

The South Whidbey CARES Coalition was founded in November 2018 when the South Whidbey School District was awarded the CPWI grant. By the end of December 2018, a coordinator was hired, and the efforts to prevent substance use and increase youth empowerment began. Organizations and individuals come together as partners to examine the Healthy Youth Survey data, available resources, and prioritize evidence-based strategies to have the greatest impact on South Whidbey. Partners include Langley Police Department, Island County Public Health, Readiness To Learn, Island County Human Services, and South Whidbey School District.

The strengths of the SW CARES Coalition start with the passion and commitment to a healthy community, and the desire to see youth connected and thriving. The coalition prioritizes diversity, equity, and inclusion, and in 2021 voted to be an anti-racist organization with the understanding that this priority is a marathon and not a destination.

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About Our Community

The South Whidbey Community is defined by the lines of the South Whidbey School District #206. The District is sixty square miles serving approximately 1,398 students K-12 including traditional and alternative education programs.

Whidbey Island is known for its natural beauty, outdoor recreation, commitment to the environment, marine conservation and enthusiasm for the arts. Tourism, small scale farming, ship building and family owned businesses are the heartbeat of South Whidbey.

South Whidbey is considered rural with limited access to public programs and resources that exist in metropolitan areas. Local non-profits do what they can to fill the gaps. Many travel off island for employment, medical appointments and any major shopping with a short ferry ride across the Puget Sound. The Washington State Ferries serves as the only means off the island on the south end. When these services are disrupted or overloaded it impacts supply and demand. Those who live here love it for it's local charm and breathtaking scenery. Some families have resided here for generations, and many Coast Salish people still live, work, and engage in today's community. The land prior to becoming "Whidbey" was known as island Tscha-kole-chy (Cha Coal E Chey) of the Coast Salish people.

About Prevention Programs in our Community

The SW CARES Coalition's strongest evidence-based strategy against youth substance use/misuse is the coalition itself, by increasing community connectedness. Collaboration and a shared effort to build resilience and offer education and support to youth and families improves our community. Focusing on solutions, being HOPE-centered, and trauma-informed drives the coalition to be thoughtful and intentional throughout the Strategic Prevention Framework. SW CARES aims to reduce underage alcohol and marijuana use while increasing accurate public awareness of risk and protection. In addition, SW CARES partners with Readiness To Learn to implement evidence-based direct service programs to increase positive family management and communication.

Programs currently being implemented:

- National Rx medication takeback
- Starts with One opioid prevention media campaign
- Student Assistance Prevention/intervention services
- Project Success in grades 7-12
- Guiding Good Choices for caregivers of children ages 9-13.
- Strengthening Families Program 10-14 for youth and caregivers
- SPORT Prevention Plus Wellness for youth in middle and high school

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For more information
about CPWI visit
www.TheAthenaForum.org

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