



Annual Report 2019-2020



About SERAC...

Our Mission is ...

To engage and unite the individuals and communities of eastern CT around issues related to addictions and mental wellbeing across the behavioral health continuum through needs assessments, capacity building, and advocacy.

Our Areas of Focus are...

Mental Health

Substance Abuse

Problem Gambling Awareness

Suicide Prevention



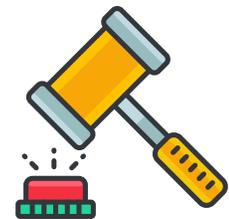
Assessment



Education



Advocacy



Action

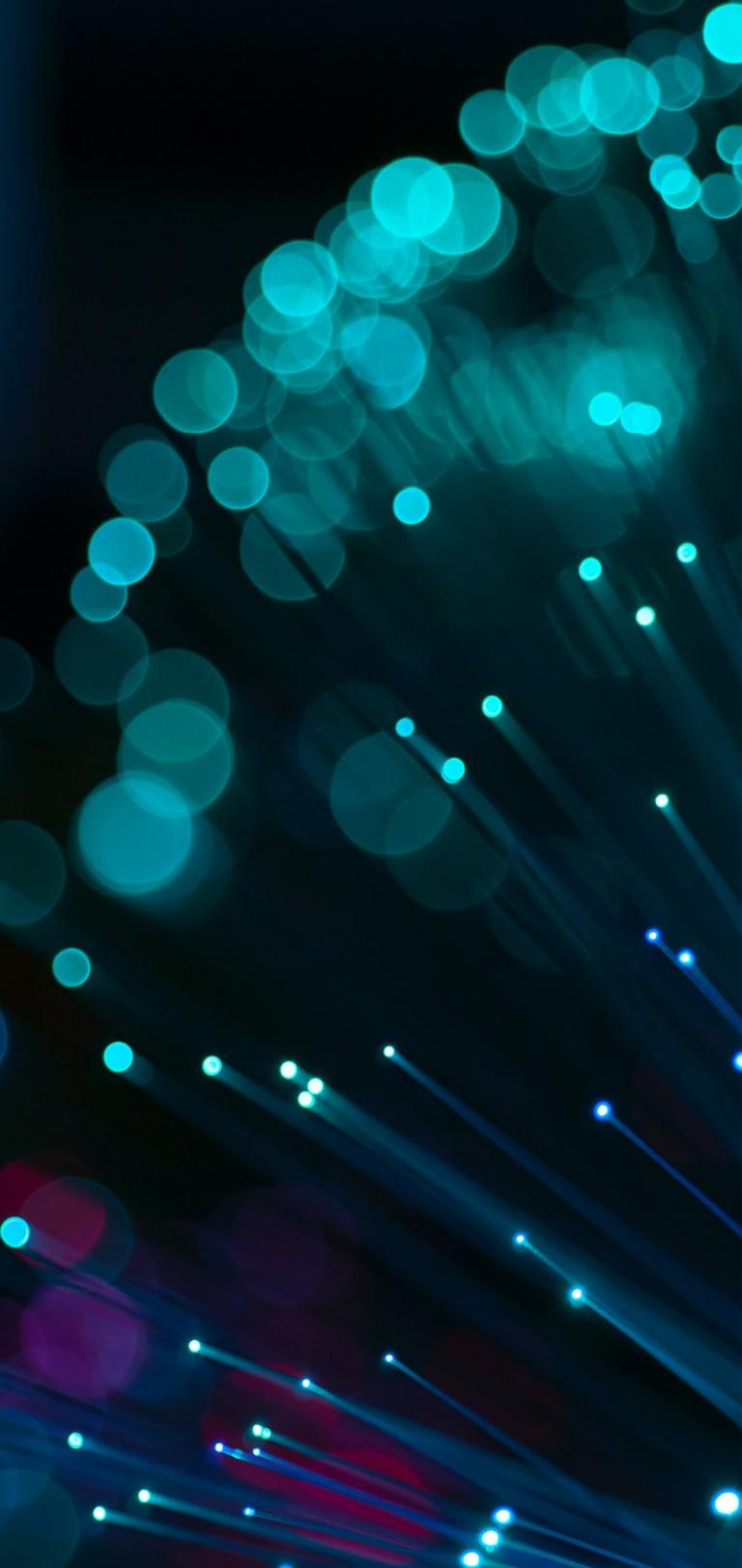


Table Of Contents

- 04** Chairperson's Remarks
- 05** Needs Assessment Data
- 06** Substance Abuse and Misuse
- 07** Mental Health
- 08** Suicide Prevention
- 09** Problem Gambling Prevention
- 10** Board Members
- 11** Staff
- 12** Funding and Campaigns

A message from
SERAC Chairperson,
Christopher J. Sandford...



Chairperson's Remarks

Typically, at this time of the year we all gather to celebrate the success of SERAC in the larger community. As a Board and a community, we are particularly excited to celebrate our 30th year as an organization.

As we all know, SERAC plays a significant role in all of our communities. Specifically, we engage and unite individuals and communities around issues related to addiction and mental well-being across the behavioral health continuum. We are only as successful as your support and partnership.

Coretta Scott King once said, *"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members."* Judging by the community partners we have and their accomplishments I can assure you that our greatness comes from our larger community. We are all drawn to the work of helping people in need for many different reasons. No matter how we all ended up here at SERAC, we should be proud of the work we are doing in this region. It is not easy, it is often thankless, and it is never-ending, but our efforts are very necessary.

On behalf of the SERAC Board and staff, I want to thank you for making our community better. You are doing the real work. Although our efforts have become significantly more difficult during a time when our country is grappling with social injustice and political strife during a world-wide pandemic, what you are doing matters now more than ever. Looking at all SERAC has accomplished over the last 30 years should fill you with pride. I know I am honored to be part of a group so deeply committed to improving the lives of others.

I also want to take this time to thank all the Board members who are currently serving or who have served in the past. Your dedication to SERAC and its mission over the last 30 years is nothing short of an inspiration and a testament to what can happen when good people step forward to help.

Stay safe and be well,
Christopher J. Sandford, Chairperson
SERAC Board of Directors

A snapshot of the 2019-
2020 regional assessment
and data collection
efforts...



Needs Assessment & Data

A core function of our mission is to conduct needs assessments and assist in the local collection of data to support data driven prevention planning at the state, regional, and town level. This year SERAC participated in the following data collection efforts:



In the spring of 2020 SERAC conducted a bi-annual Community Survey on adult perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes on youth substance use.



In partnership with CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services a bi-annual readiness survey was conducted in early 2020.



A new Regional Youth Summary Report for 2018-2019 was compiled this year. The sample represents 11 towns and almost 10,000 youth in the eastern region of CT!

To access full reports please visit our website:

<https://www.seracct.org/technical-assistance/needs-assessment-and-surveys/>

A glance at this year's initiatives on substance abuse & misuse prevention efforts in the region...



Substance Abuse Prevention

This past year SERAC had several ongoing initiatives to address substance abuse & misuse prevention across Eastern CT.



In partnership with DMHAS, SERAC awarded Local Prevention Council grants across the region for the 2019-2020 year. The focus of statewide prevention efforts under this initiative is to reduce vaping rates.



In the fall of 2019, SERAC received the Partnerships for Success-Strategic Prevention Framework Grant from SAMHSA to address underage alcohol, nicotine, and marijuana use in the northeast region of CT.



State Opioid Response Grant supported local efforts to distribute the Live LOUD Campaign through billboards, radio advertisements, and print mailing. It also increased access to safe disposal through at home disposal and security interventions.



This past year marked the final year of the STOP Act Grant to prevent underage drinking. Activities under this grant were directed toward engaging youth members across the region. Schools and local youth serving organizations have assisted in sustaining the efforts for youth leadership.

A look at mental health awareness and promotion activities...



Mental Health

This past year SERAC has increased their efforts to address mental health risk factors related to the prevention of addiction and suicide .



SERAC completed a data summary on mental health indicators from youth surveys conducted in 2018-2019. Catchment Area Councils members participated in priority planning and received training to expand prevention activities to include substance abuse, problem gambling, and suicide.



In March 2020, SERAC provided Mental Health First Aid Training for the Town of Windham. This training is provided through the Mental Health Training Awareness Grant from SAMHSA. Under this same initiative SERAC also launched "Bring Light to Mental Health" awareness materials to help decrease stigma for marginalized populations.



In April of 2020, Teen Voices launched! This is a virtual youth group consisting of representatives from various towns in the region. These students meet monthly to discuss current issues and the impact on youth mental health.

A glance at this year's initiatives on suicide prevention efforts in the region...



Suicide Prevention

This past year SERAC had several ongoing initiatives to address suicide prevention across Eastern CT.



SERAC coordinated a Regional Prevention and Postvention Team Meeting for eastern CT. Members have been focusing on developing community level response plans.



Question Persuade and Refer Training for Suicide Prevention was offered across the region along with naloxone administration training. SERAC has distributed over 750 naloxone kits. Staff members also become trained in Talk Saves Lives.



In May 2020, we held a regional virtual training on issues related to working with LGBTQI+ youth populations. Thank you to Nicole Kowall for providing this training to our regional key leaders!



Writer's Block Ink facilitated a session with our regional Adolescent Learning and Leadership Institute on mental health and health coping!. Over 60 students from across the region participated in this session.

CT Suicide Prevention 5 year plan visit

https://www.sprc.org/sites/default/files/Conn_Suicide-Prevention-Plan-2020.pdf

Eastern regional efforts to increase problem gambling awareness and prevention...



Problem Gambling Prevention

This past year SERAC coordinated several initiatives to address problem gambling awareness and prevention.



Youth groups from the towns of Mansfield and East Lyme created public service announcements on problem gambling that was hosted on the regional Wellness Tvs across the region.



Congregation/Community Awareness Program (CAP) training was provided to 4 congregations and their members to increase awareness on starting conversations around problem gambling, suicide, mental health, and substance abuse.



The Regional Gambling Prevention Team meet quarterly this year to engage new key leaders in prevention efforts. This year 9 individuals completed the Gambling Prevention Certificate in partnership with CT Problem Gambling Services.



In March 2020, regional public service announcements were hosted on sixteen SERAC Wellness TVs for Gambling Awareness Month. These messages reach over 35,000 residents in eastern CT.

Chairperson

Christopher Sandford
Woodstock Academy

Vice-Chairperson

Brenna Jaskiewicz, M.S.
Licensed Professional

Counselor

Treasurer

Kate Alves
Chelsea Groton Bank

Secretary

Stacey Lawton
SCADD

Board of Directors

Members

David Brailey
Mitchell College

Oliver Jones
Community Member

Mark Juhola
Killingly Police Department

Dawn Nietos-Mattos
The Quintal Agency

Melinda Smith
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