

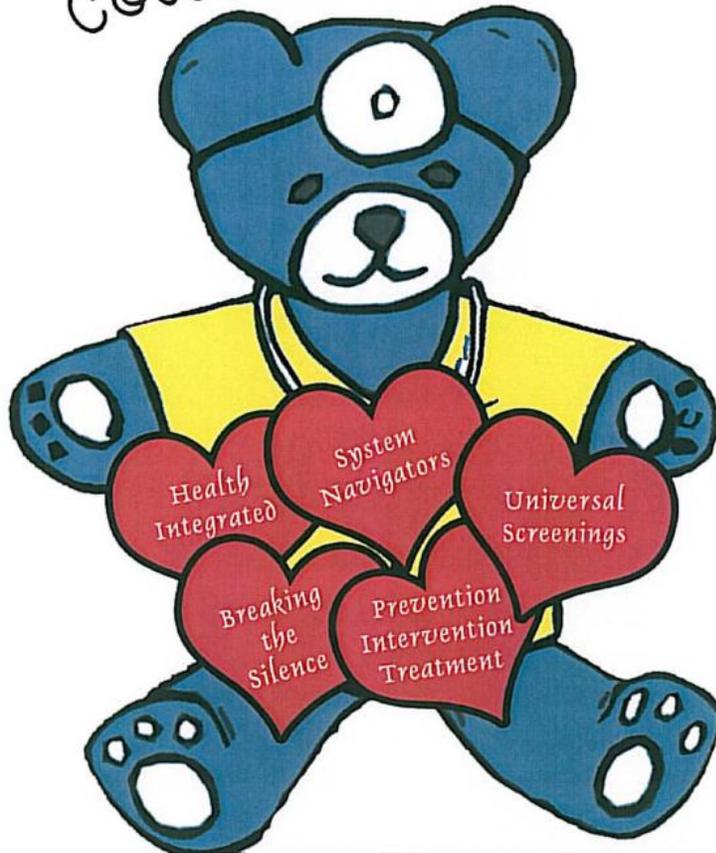


**NAMI**

National Alliance on Mental Illness

# Collier County

Collier H.U.G.S.



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Health Under Guided Systems

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Ensuring Quality Behavioral Health Care  
for Children through Community Collaboration

**National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of Collier County**  
**Health Under Guided Systems (HUGS)**  
**6/30/2014**

*The primary purpose of Collier Health Under Guided Systems (HUGS) is to provide a responsive, culturally competent system of care for children and youth with behavioral health needs. HUGS facilitates collaboration across agencies, as well as both public and private schools to improve access to culturally and linguistically competent services for families. The project provides coordinated, universal screenings and referrals to facilitate early identification and access to care to mitigate the effects of untreated problems later in life.*

- 1) Provide Screening and system navigation to a minimum of 1300 school-aged children**
  - a. Completed 1,600 total screenings this year
  - b. Screenings took place at an unprecedented 16 Collier County Public School Sites
    - i. 98% of children enrolled in the Head Start Program received screenings.
  - c. Provided screening at 6 community partner sites.
    - i. Community partners included YMCA, Marco YMCA, Fun Time Academy, Grace Place, Guadalupe Center, and Immokalee Child Care Center.
- 2) Reach a minimum of 650 children in the Collier School System and provide education on mental illness via *Breaking the Silence* or *Ending the Silence***
  - a. Total participation included 702 children in 4 different high schools that received this education.
  - b. Teaching and administrative feedback was incredibly positive.
- 3) Update job descriptions of system navigators and family support liaison**
  - a. Primary function is guiding children and family members through the mental health care system by assisting with access, developing relationships with service providers, and tracking interventions and outcomes.
  - b. Administer the ASQSE (Ages and Stages Questionnaire) screening tool to families, child care centers, head start classrooms, and community organizations.
  - c. Arrange mental health assessment if warranted and identify obstacles to treatment (barriers include transportation, literacy, and fiscal ability).



- d. Develop long-term and sustainable plans for success with families (i.e. identify funding source to allow for successful participation in treatment plan).
- e. Attend IEP (Individualized Education Program) meetings, therapy appointments (as needed), and other community services to support families and ensure success.
- f. Assist families in obtaining medication and prescriptions
  - i. Financial barriers are frequently present with doctor's visits
- g. Provide mobile screenings using the 'HUGSmobile'
  - i. Vehicle was utilized throughout the year and was updated using the logos from our partner agencies.

**4) Increase HUGS presence in the community**

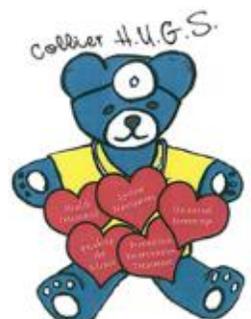
- a. Navigated assessments for 328 children.
- b. Self-referrals from parents asking for information on how to have their child screened have increased by 200%!

**5) Obtain HUGS database / information**

- a. We were recently able to obtain the data entered for the past three years from the David Lawrence Center. We are currently working on entering data and creating a functioning and usable database.
- b. The HUGS database is a resource for partner agencies, and will assist System Navigators in coordinating services for children and families, as well as provide and track overall information on children's mental health improvements in Collier County.
- c. HUGS database will determine the number of children screened and served by site, funding sources, types of services needed and aggregate numbers by provider agency compiled in a standard report.

**6) Increase outreach by Family Support Specialist**

- a. Our Family Support Specialist (Master's level), works with those families whose needs exceed those of a 'case management' level. The support specialist has successfully worked with 50 families this year to:
  - i. Initiate and attend teacher conferences, IEP meetings, speech pathologist sessions, and occupational therapy (if applicable), as well as educate parents in the home to provide continuing care between school and home.
  - ii. Ensure parents are able to fully understand written evaluations, and makes connections to literacy agencies if needed.
  - iii. Initiate and facilitate the family / children support group.
  - iv. Demonstrate and model cultural competency.



- v. Use 'Parents as Partners' model to provide strategies for successful planning.
  - vi. Arrange transportation, links to food banks, and other resources as needed.
- 7) Collect feedback from community partners (comments as follows):
- a. HUGS screens and identifies children that otherwise would not be identified
  - b. This program has the faces that teachers, guidance counselors, CMS nurses, case managers, psychologists, and therapists can call to refer a child and know that the family will be supported through the educational, behavioral, medical, and mental health systems.
  - c. HUGS is multi-cultural, multi-lingual, and multi-talented!
  - d. HUGS participates in the School Readiness Leadership Team (Head Start), Sharing the Commitment Advisory Board, Early Childhood Network, Hispanic Chamber events, Guardian Ad Litem training, and Immokalee Interagency.

#### **Future Plans:**

- 1) Expand outreach across additional schools in Collier County while still maintaining a presence at current ones.
- 2) Increase overall number of children screened and assessed throughout our local schools and community
  - a. This includes more regular use of our HUGSmobile within Collier County.
- 3) Complete and expand on our current database
  - a. Once all information is compiled and database is ready for use, we will then analyze to determine opportunities for additional screening, education, etc.

#### **In Conclusion:**

The HUGS program has been able to maintain its core values of being child-centered, family focused, and family driven. We pride ourselves in having been able to develop and grow the community base that we have, while still fostering a responsive and culturally competent ethic, adhering to all standards of excellence as defined by SAMSHA.



This year, HUGS has been able to complete 328 independent assessments and provide screening and education to a total of 2,302 children under the age of 18 (90% of those meeting the poverty level). The total cost to reach these children is \$108 per child.

By offering early identification and screening, HUGS is able to offer children and families access to a comprehensive array of services, including individualized service planning, family participation in planning service delivery and evaluation, and is able to do so in the least restrictive environment. By staying true to our principles, and encouraging growth amongst our community, our workforce, and our peers, HUGS has been able to grow and impact the lives of thousands of children in Collier County.

