



# Community Engagement Sessions Comments

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- All comments collected through 25 stakeholder interviews with over 60 community members in the fall of 2023 and six Community Listening Sessions attended by over 230 community members conducted in winter 2024.
- \*\*Asterisks are placed next to a comment when an idea is repeated. Each asterisk indicates a time the same idea was raised.
- (SP) = Spanish-only session comment; (SHI) = Stakeholder Interview Comment

# Basic Needs of Living

## Transportation

- *Keep the bus system free! This is amazing.\**
- *Bus stop access that is walkable from all neighborhoods*
- *More public transportation with longer hours. (SP)*
- *Warming shelters at bus stops*
- *Free transportation to all non-emergent health related appointments. An ambulance ride costs over \$1200! There needs to be a payment plan or debt forgiveness option for those who are food/housing insecure.*
- *We need affordable transportation systems to health care providers in other areas (Boise, SLC, Twin Falls, etc.)\*\**
- *The sense of isolation could be remedied by increased public transportation options and cadence. There is a real camaraderie that can be built by “riding the bus”.*
- *Mass transportation options to/from Twin Falls and Shoshone for the workforce to provide more sleep and downtime and decrease traffic congestion and accidents.*
- *Incentivize car pooling and bus riding. Use Mt. Rides/Govt funds to reward people with \$\$ for carpooling up/down the valley.\**
- *Volunteer call team for transportation of individuals that need help.*
- *An online rideshare app where people can go if/when they need a ride up/down the valley. In D.C., they have “slug lines” where people know to stand and car drivers know to pick up extras.*
- *Bring back the train! Let’s look at some sort of light rail system for the main corridor.*
- *Find more staff/volunteers to drive for “Meals on Wheels” at the Senior Connection. (SHI)*
- *I would like the bus to cover more routes and pass by stops more frequently. (SP)*

## Affordable Housing

- ***Rent control and actual affordable housing options in all of the new buildings instead of none or just a few units in a massive build. City Councils and P & Zs must change the rules for developers so they have a higher percentage of affordable housing in new developments.\*\*\*\*\****
- *Address/change the “in lieu of” fee that allows out of town developers to avoid the need to provide affordable housing.*
- *Part-time homeowners want this to be a resort/retirement community, but it is their comments and power that block real positive change for affordable housing. They say they want affordable housing, but not in their backyard.*
- *We can all be advocates for workforce housing. Instead of responding to every project negatively, we have to speak positively and supportively of them. There is NIMBYism that we can all do our part to counteract.*

- *It is frustrating to see multiple housing developments being built and none devoted to affordable housing. All multimillion dollar condos are being approved but that's not what we need.*
- *Access to homeownership versus renting.*
- *Housing that promotes community connection with shared green space, parks, grills, chess tables, picnic tables, etc.*
- *Focus affordable housing in Ketchum to lessen the traffic and commute.*
- *More housing like the firefighter housing near East Fork.*
- *More incentives for locals and second home owners to rent rooms and mother-in-law suites.*
- *Provide subsidized funds to finish off garages for living and the rent would be locked into affordable pricing.*
- *Affordable housing even for those involved in the criminal justice system. Everyone needs to be supported to create a healthy community.*
- *Affordable housing for basic service providers (like haircuts for example).*
- *A program of lending for those who don't have (documents) (social security number) but who live and work here and would be able to pay for a house if the interest rates aren't too high. (Spanish-speaker comment)*
- *Affordable housing that includes workforce housing for FAMILIES. A 2 bedroom house isn't enough for my family of 5.*

## Livable Wages

- *Wages based on inflation in Blaine County, not on state or national averages.\**
- *Reduce work hours without reducing income. Could a "full-time job" be 35 hours/week instead of 40 for example.*
- *Hospital staff aren't paid a living wage in this community which might be why they only have ½ the staffing they need in the ER alone.*
- *I'm having to step away from my nonprofit work because the pay is so low I have to work three jobs to pay our expenses. I don't have the energy to do it all and so my mental health takes a toll (as does my family's health).*
- *Would like more secure housing, that the rents are low enough to be accessible and my wage to allow it to cover the rent. I work in construction and would like to have higher wages. (SP)*
- *There should be more work that accepts and hires "seniors", elderly, "older" people. (SP)*

## Food Security/Nutrition

- *The Community Table (La Mesa Comunitaria) under the Community School is doing good work. How can we help them?*
- *BCSD needs to source healthier, tasty local food for all students.\*\**

- *A healthy affordable place for kids and teens to go to have snacks and meals (like a food court.)*
- *Let's feed our children healthy food. If I ate fruiti pebbles with cow's milk for breakfast and had a giant soft pretzel with cheez whiz for lunch I'd feel awful too (these are actual meals my children ate when they were receiving school lunch). I'd be lethargic and depressed and certainly not ready to learn. Improving nutrition services throughout the school district has potential to reach a majority of Blaine counties children. Furthermore, healthcare debt is the leading cause of bankruptcy in the US. Providing children with healthy food and creating a foundation for healthy eating at a young age will help them avoid preventable diseases such as obesity, hypertension, diabetes, etc that will negatively impact their finances as adults.*
- *Continued healthy snack programs for kids at high school and all grades.*
- *Education and food available around the role the microbiome plays in physical and mental health.*
- *Help with information and support for planting and growing food at my house. (SP)*

## Childcare & Full-day preschool

- *BCSD expands free preschool to full day instead of just half day. Consider a partnership with BCEF and others to help fund this.\*\**
- *Affordable, quality child care for children under kindergarten age in the south valley that works on a sliding scale.\*\*\**
- *Aftercare options for school-aged children that is affordable and of good quality*
- *Staff incentives to work in after-care, pre-K, and childcare*
- *Larger employers need to provide onsite childcare for employees/community.*
- *Focus on childcare support for working parents so they can work and afford to live here.*
- *There is a group working on childcare and preschool, but one of the biggest limitations is staffing because they can't afford to pay their staff enough so they can afford to live here. So affordable housing is an issue affecting this area too.*
- *After School Community Center that is centrally located in Hailey and open late into the evening so parents can pick kids up after work.*
- *Create a child care collective. A space with various childcare paradigms such as montessori, waldorf, etc., and make it drop-in friendly and subsidized.*
- *More kid-friendly spaces, especially in Ketchum. Like kid corners in cafes, restaurants would help a lot. Or indoor/outdoor play spaces for littles. Give parents support to stay with their pre-K childrens by providing places to go to connect with other parents/kids.\*\**
- *Put a levy on the ballot or explore other revenue options to make subsidized child care an option so that it is affordable.*
- *I need help with childcare at night because I work at a restaurant. (SP)*

# Prevention- Education/Training

## Youth mental health prevention around sleep and belonging

### Sleep

- **Flexible school schedules** to allow for appropriate amount of sleep in the mornings to match teens natural sleep cycle needs. Mayo Clinic says melatonin doesn't kick in for teens until 10:30 or 11 pm. Different start/end times for school could also help with traffic congestion\*\*\*\*\*
- Create a community wide commitment to turning off "tech" at a certain time of night to allow for proper sleep.
- Give kids free time to explore the world and play!\*
- The importance of natural light exposure and adequate dark for sleeping as part of mental health. Teach the science behind sleep and light exposure. Increasing darkness past 6pm. The importance of light upon waking.
- Education around food choices that affect sleep.
- Parent education to control the cell phones at night with a night time shut off button/setting.
- Lack of quality sleep is an individual, cultural and institutional issue due to pressures and what we value (external achievement/being busy/etc.)
- This is a cultural shift. Stop demanding 10+ hour "work days" from our highschool students. Between school, homework and activities, our kids are maxed out. It's no wonder they can't sleep at night. Is the school district willing to have these conversations?\*\*\*
- Exercise, nutrition and sleep education for parents, fosters, caregivers, and grandparents.

### Belonging

- Make mental well-being education a requirement of the curriculum in middle and high school. Teachers would be trained if it is part of the curriculum and it would be easy for students, teachers and staff to discuss and promote it. It would become just a natural part of education\*\*\*
- Training for school staff about the importance of building relationships with their students.\*
- Belonging is about understanding you are nature. You are an integral part of the whole web of community.
- What can I do to become a trusted adult to more teens?
- Emphasis on connection and building relationships with trusted adults. This requires the ability to train adults to work with teens and a low student to adult ratio.

- *Create a Jobs Program with local businesses where students could work short shifts after-school and on weekends and breaks. This would enable students to earn \$, get trained, gain abilities and confidence and a sense of purpose and it could benefit the workforce for local companies.*
- *Bring discussions of character, purpose, accountability back into schools and hold a high standard of conduct for staff and students alike.*
- *Early mental health awareness is key and the biggest need/opportunity is in our schools. Mental awareness at a young age to gain the life skills needed to be healthy and happy.*

## Community mental health training and education

### *Mental Health Related Training*

- **Resiliency training for the community-** *Train adults to be listeners and support and establish a network of available community members. We need to coach people to identify and measure their emotional state. Establish a campaign that details what help really is and a pathway to how you decide. We need more people to learn how to build resiliency along the way and not just wait for people to “break”. Make sure it is widely advertised. Most of us know how to help with CPR or the Heimlich, but we need to be trained to help someone going through a mental health crisis. Offer training for lay people on coaching, life skills and how to support people struggling with mental health issues. Could we create trained community members that they could talk to while they are waiting in queue to get in with a therapist? Larger scale community efforts - make it so when you are going through a traumatic event, you know what your nervous system is going through so it may reduce the long-term impacts. Trained in the model so that everyone has a common language.\*\*\*\*\**
- **Normalize & destigmatize mental health** *and substance use challenges in the community. Movies & discussions about mental health that are free to the community and help destigmatize the conversation. All the different groups which are doing things to help people with mental health issues could participate in something together. \*\*\*\*\**
- **Parents education-** *Parents need help understanding mental health issues and how to speak with their children. A place where parents can take classes from trained professionals. Offer childcare while in class.\*\*\*\*\**
- *Mental health training for teachers and educators.\**
- *Train our coaches/instructors/teachers to praise effort over talent. Focus on the process over outcome.*
- *Doing programs, advertising, and everything possible so that there is education and knowledge about these issues since the Latin community does not believe or is not aware that these diseases exist. (SP)*
- *Emotional support for youth and kids, workshops on prevention and optional treatments on mental health. (SP)*

- *Palo Alto did a great job addressing a suicide problem with youth. Provide innovative training on suicide prevention and discovery.\**
- *Reach out to business owners and ask them to allow giving an hour weekly during business hours to attend parent educational training. I.e. housekeeping businesses at hotels, etc.*
- *Diffusion training.*
- *Need a lot of guidance on depression, when immigrants arrive in this valley they feel alone, depressed. (SP)*
- *Addressing eco-anxiety related to our environment; drought, fires, killing wolves, etc.,\**
- *Education programs for young working adults in the community on mental health/ substance abuse. More real conversations about substance abuse and consequences.\**
- *Coursera offers a free online course through John Hopkins called [“Psychological First Aid”](#)*
- *People don’t come to educational things when they are so busy, but maybe they would come if something fun was attached. What about having a festival or something, like a small party or dance but you have to have the conversation first, do the education first. Even though this is important, people don’t always know that they need to pay attention to it. (SP).*
- *Training for police and law enforcement so they know how to respond in case of being with people in mental or emotional crisis.*
- *Offer holistic health education across the lifespan. Bring individual diversity, community to the center of these conversations.*
- *Beginning in kindergarten, have segments on mental health and each subsequent grade with what is age appropriate and allows for teachers/students/parents to discuss what is healthy, normal and appropriate to expect in life.*
- *Help for adults with depression, and how they can help themselves during an emotional crisis. (SP)*

## Education

- **Trade School- A technical college for the trades so that if you aren’t college bound, you still have a track toward employment. Bring CSI back to this community!\*\*\*\*\***
- **Life skills programs- how to be an adult, how to manage debt and credit, personal finance courses, resume building, business presence, life skills courses\*\*\*\*\***
- **English & Spanish Classes- English language education resources & opportunities for Spanish speakers and Spanish language education for English speakers. Both communities need to try. There are no English classes in Hailey now. They told us (Spanish-speaking community) it was because we weren’t attending with consistency, but some of us were and it was helpful! Because you all are connecting (with) me, I would like to learn more English so I am able to communicate with each one of you all. (Spanish-speaker comment)\*\*\*\*\***
- *All of the immigrants want to learn English but there is no place for them to learn English quickly. They also need childcare while they take the classes. There is a limited number of*



*jobs you can get if you can't speak English. The jobs you can get are tenuous because the treatment is very abusive from the supervisors. (SHI)*

- *Bring in women's reproductive speakers to understand women's health.\**
- *More money allocated towards education, teachers' salaries and access to resources such as healthcare. Resources through the government for secondary education are lacking.\**
- *Teen specific programs like junior achievement, wood shop, resume writing, summer job fair, etc.*
- *Offer a free personal finance app through the libraries.*
- *Teach about healthy eating, plant-based foods to help save the environment and improve health outcomes.*
- *Required education around healthy sexual relationships and explorations with the intention of minimizing sexual assault.*
- *We need people that can help our kids with homework because when we as parents don't speak English we can't help them with the harder things as they get older. (Facilitator told her about the Space and she was grateful and had no idea it existed)*

## **Mindfulness**

- **Mindfulness education for all ages. Youth education of self regulation and support programs for mental health. Let's do this for all students in the county. More mindfulness education as part of middle and high school curriculum. Expand Flourish Foundation's capacity.\*\*\*\*\***
- *Compassionate leaders (Flourish Foundation) equivalent group for adults!*
- *Help Flourish Foundation hire young people so that we can educate the heart and work to develop the inner conditions. Resources to hire young people to be facilitators and they could afford to live here. We have lots of investments in recreation and arts, but we need to start investing more in education of the inner self. (SHI)*
- *Expand mindfulness training/model to law enforcement, medical practitioners, parents, businesses, and athletics.*
- *Having programs to help mothers have some space and time - meditation classes, holistic therapies, and strengthening the feminine part (not sure if she means anatomically or by way of a woman's role and what she has to do). (SP)*
- *Evening mindfulness classes for adults or families.\*\* (SP)*
- *BCSD or BCEF partially funding Flourish's mindfulness program so they can hire more facilitators.*
- *Expand mindfulness to parents and others who influence child development.*
- *I would like for there to be yoga and meditation classes.\*(SP)*

## **Social Media Education**

- **Social Media Parent Education- Direct and consistent parent education and marketing in schools regarding the negative effects of social media and devices on children (Sleep**



**deprivation, anxiety, depression, bullying, lack of social connections, young children having access to devices and unmonitored). Focus on young parents to include mental health education, the importance of screen time limits and social media impacts, and getting them involved in their child's education. Our young kids will be teenagers soon enough.\*\*\*\***

- Spaces free of cell phones, so that young people learn to talk face to face. (SP)
- Social media contract with the community- everyone agrees to “wait until 8th grade”
- It is easy to call social media a teen problem but adults are the role models and many use social media excessively and negatively. Tech limits need to go both ways (adults and kids) so we are teaching through example. Work collaboratively with children to “how do we solve this together” rather than it is just a kid problem and let us solve it for you.\*\*\*
- We now have a cell phone ban in the BCSD schools. It is awesome to see students with their heads up in the hallways and interacting with one another.\*
- Encourage BCSD to take the next step and require cell phones to be left in lockers.\*
- Social media free zones

## Mentorship and Peer Support Programs

- **Mentorship programs. Pair students with community members for weekly connection.\*\*\*\*\***
- Big brother/big sister chapter in Wood River Valley. There are people in the community already talking with the Boise chapter ED to bring a chapter to WRV\*\*\*
- Supportive programs with guides/mentorship and with pairings. (SP)
- High school students receive community service hours answering SP hotline calls.
- Need groups/activities that allow for organic connection and conversations to flow. For example, have a “grandparents meeting group” for all ages to cook together and allow for convo to flow.
- “Adopt a Grandparent” program which would support intergenerational connection and sense of belonging.
- Connect the rest of the community into the Senior Connection. Could teens do projects there? A mentorship program. Peer-to-peer support. Create a multi-generational supportive community. (SHI)
- Paying vetted young adults (20s & 30s) to mentor middle and high school students at teen community spaces. Young adults in our community don't have the resources to always volunteer. \*
- Tap into the Compassionate leaders (Flourish Foundation) current teens and graduates for a volunteer force in peer to peer support.
- Get our generations together. I'm thinking about preschools in elder nursing homes. Adults apprenticing teens or vice versa. Get our youth meaningfully involved with our community.
- Tap into recent graduates who are moving back home because they can't afford to live on their own. They are looking for a meaningful path.

- *Programs that transcend different age groups, for examples high school students helping elementary school students.(SP)*

## Community Building

### Bilingual Community Connectors/peer support

#### ○ **Bilingual Connectors\*\*\*\*\***

- *Have a permanent office in our community with bilingual accessibility. Someone who can give counseling and life-skills classes. (SP)*
- *Many of us Latin people don't know about these supports and services. I didn't know you could get vouchers for Family Health Services. I thought the Hunger Coalition was just food. How are we supposed to find out about these things? (SP)*
- *People need help connecting with the resources because the families just don't know what is available to them. Each organization should have an outreach coordinator OR we should have lots of connector positions in the community. (SHI)*
- *Connecting doesn't mean just referring to the people, it means helping the family navigate the online applications and registering. I want to teach them how to work within the system. Ideally, the goal would be to help these people and then have them be the connectors. (SHI)*
- *Organizations who have Community Connector positions should spend more time out in the community or at other organizations or schools and libraries to "meet people where they are at".*
- *We need someone who has after-hours office hours that could help people navigate computers, paperwork (housing, college), write their resume, apply for jobs, fill out forms, pay bills, etc. It may seem small, but it is so important to be able to navigate this world.\* (SHI)*
- *Spend time in the schools. Bilingual help is critical. A position in the schools which is a bilingual liaison to help families and students.\**
- *Requiring some level of Spanish study/fluency for community providers or always having a bilingual representative (onsite) available.*
- *I think more services to provide Spanish classes to English speakers who are keen to learn Spanish and help our Spanish speaking community would be so helpful.*
- *Specific strategic plan for the Hispanic Latino Community that is led by them. Involve the Hispanic Latino American Taskforce that Romero is leading.*
- *Information in Spanish in more than one place about community help, events, etc. There needs to be an emphasis on being told IN Spanish that your voice is needed. I think sometimes because of the language barrier or immigration status many Latinos do not think they have a voice or don't use it. There may also be an issue of literacy preventing*

someone from reading information, so the radio is a useful tool - or recorded messages in the Doc office or on the health line in Spanish or other places.

## Youth & Multi-Generational Spaces, Programs, and Events

### Teen-Specific Space

- **Revive the old movie theater as a youth center in Hailey. Have theme rooms in each movie/screen room such as board games, music, art, writing, pool, ping-pong, etc.\*\*\*\*\***
- **Purchase or construct a building dedicated to teen activity and connection. It should be in Hailey core, easily accessible by foot from WRMS and by bus from WRHS.\*\*\***
- Use the Community Campus as a Youth Space.
- Open until 11pm! Or offering hours that work for teens and working families.\*\*
- City of Ketchum should take a long-term view and buy the movie theater in Ketchum to create a youth center.
- Gravity Gym could build out a space for teens to go after school with activities other than weights that would be staffed by wellness coaches serving food and education that support well being.
- A youth program or afterschool place that is not blatantly about mental health. Just providing a space for youth to be youth will help.
- Needs to be organized and run by youth. Maybe it could be a class or credit in high school for business management. Get the school district and county to contribute \$\$ to get it up and running. Lease space and have a high school class plan the space and events and then run it.
- Put a levy to the voters to fund this as a community. Our teens need a place to be together.
- Partners could collaborate to offer mental health support services on-site.
- Fund organizations that are already running successful teen programming to help design and lead the programming.
- Teen center in Ketchum.\* Teen center in Hailey.\* Teen center in Bellevue.
- Offer free transportation from around the county to a teen space.

### Multi-Generational Space

- **A family resource center in a central location that offers support for food, mental and physical health connections,, enrichment for all generations. It could be a library center. It could be a safe space for all people to gather and participate in all sorts of activities. Spaces for intergenerational gathering that does not require money. Teen space is okay but we all need a place to connect. \*\*\*\*\***
- Well-funded place/center where our community could go for a variety of services where there could be mental health practitioners onsite (who are being paid the same as

*private), a place with snacks for teens, or support groups, not just for teens but for parents (parent education programs), toddler/mom groups, placed in Hailey in the center of town. It would be wellness-based, community support. A hub for the community where everyone is on the same page, that has someone that is coordinating the resources and helping people to connect to the different services. One-stop shopping. (SHI)*

- *Local care center and self-help groups that combine activities for the community in general, integrating the entire community. (SP)*
- *Have a permanent office in our community with bilingual accessibility. Someone who can give counseling and reflective classes. (SP)*
- *Community Action Center similar to the Pullman WA Community Action Center. They have similar mental health issues in that community.*
- *A community space in Hailey free of charge (not just for teens)*
- *Create places where people from various walks of life gather. People who don't have a lot in common, still get together. There is an opportunity for people to come together and do things together where everyone feels welcome. The challenge in this valley is that people stay in their bubble here, in particular, interest groups, and don't co-mingle with diverse groups. (SHI)*
- *Offer mindfulness classes at the center for all ages.*
- *Is there a way to build a safe space for teens and community childcare together? This could encourage social relationships and community connections along with building connections with trusted adults.*
- *We need a YMCA in Hailey!*
- *Indoor soccer/multi-purpose use center that would allow events, birthday parties, soccer, lacrosse, classes for ages littles to adults. \*\**
- *Utilize the Granary in Hailey. Advertise "Community Dances", they happen but they aren't well known.*
- *Entertainment center perhaps with free dance classes at night.*
- *Mental gymnasiums- clubs that focus on their mental health. These are not exclusive and is open to the community. One in North and South Valley. This would be a multigenerational space with young people with elders. Are the adults creating something for the kids that they think will be good, or are the adults doing the things right alongside the kids because they believe in the value of it? (SHI)*
- *Missoula created a new 4-story library that has space for family organizations and other nonprofits that support the community on the first floor of the library. (SHI)*

### **Teen-Specific Programming Ideas**

- **Options for youth if you aren't in sports. Not just a place to go, but real activities options for them to do. Like an arcade, affordable bowling, movies, trampoline, Pool tables, mini-golf, rock climbing, video games, or a youth coffee house of the youth. This place needs a food court option. Spending time doing something other than**

**hanging out on their phones. Give kids a chance to move away from the social norm of drinking.\*\*\*\*\***

- *More classes and activities that kids want to go to like tuning your skis or woodworking or painting skateboards. More “cool” activities that kids would go to.\*\**
- *Can community programs come into the schools and provide art club or other activities non sport related? Whatever happened to after-school clubs?*
- *Address boredom. Not everyone here skis, bikes or hikes. Always include food.*
- *Students run businesses like a coffee shop that has open mic night or a resume class or mentors.*
- *Programming can’t be just a “one and done.” Having a physical space with a group of people that are there every day with these kids knowing that they can come and that they will be seen and greeted, encouraged, supported, and coming with a sense of purpose. Again and again and again. It is a sub community that develops that rides along with the kids so they know it is there for them no matter what.*
- *Make the YMCA free for youth!\**
- *5 feet of snow doesn’t mean the same thing to everyone. If you are a winter athlete, great. But what about if you aren’t? Where are those middle school students going? Not everything has to be sports. They need places to mess around and not get scolded. They don’t need to be programmed every second but they do need space to be together and be kids. While it seems like youth activities are abundant here, those activities are skewed to all outdoor activities. So for the group that is interested in outdoor activities, has the time to support this, and has the financial situation to support it, then yes lots of things to do. BUT, there are so many that can’t!\*(SHI)*
- *Spaces for teens that offer open activity (hang out space) and programmed activities led by organizational partners (ie. SVMOA, Flourish, Libraries, etc.)*
- *Fund programs that offer high-quality programming for teens that have a low student to staff ratio. Programs need to respect teens independence, meet them where they are at, and focus on relationships and learning from mistakes.*
- *Offer cooking classes for teens to teach them young how to cook and eat healthy.*
- *Get all kids and teens involved in sports. Offer sports programs to teens that are recreational rather than high-level competition.\**
- *Skate night, bowling night, movie night offered free to the teen community and that are underwritten by a funder.*
- *Teen programs to invite inspiring young people to come speak to help remind kids that it is a big world outside of our small town.*
- *Partner with Sun Valley Company on local events for teens or schools outside of the programs they are currently supporting. Just ask! SVC is willing!*

### **Multi-Generational Programming Ideas**

- *A sense of Belonging is so fundamental for every individual of every age. Helping people (not just youth) find this is vital and needs to be fostered in our mountain community. Every NGO should make this a priority in every interaction.*

- *When events happen in a community, make a concerted effort to connect participants to each other, not just passive listeners who attend and then leave. There is this assumption in the valley that “everyone has friends” but that’s obviously not true. There is a nationwide crisis of loneliness and the same is true in our valley. As a community, we are encouraging people to reach out and connect with one another whenever possible.*
- *Weekly or biweekly coffee house evenings with storytelling, writing workshops, music, poetry readings, sharing.\**
- *Therapy through art programs.\**
- *Create community driven small groups for all ages and genders outside of religious institutions to help take away societal pressures from the party scene and to help connect people outside of the bars. Specific events focused on vulnerability practices like freeform movement and dance that are “Substance-Free”.\**
- *Provide physical activities that prevent dementia and anxiety and depression like ballroom dancing, fencing, pickleball, etc.*
- *Designated places (ie. benches outdoors) where people know they can meet and connect.*
- *Access to experiences (outdoors) can be an issue for some to tap into the resources we have to be mentally well in this community.*
- *Create a program for donated ski passes for kids.*
- *Working with local businesses to get them to offer events that allow for community connection (ie. Maude’s would offer a board game night).*
- *More events that blend different communities together.*
- *Neighborhood connection social interactions as a way to encourage connection.*
- *Community supported assigned day of rest (sabbath).*
- *Gratitude email chains*
- *Community “Eat-Ins” or “Potlucks”. Offer a meal sharing model wherein 3 to 6 families living in the same neighborhood could cook big batches and then share food. Each family would return home w/ 3 - 6 different meals.*
- *Create a “gift room” where a person in need in the community is identified and folks can create uplifting notes, letters and they are sent in an anonymous package to the identified person in need.*
- *Have a “Spring Fling - Dance in the Street” event!*
- *Offer a Respite program. Service of “Family Overnight Respite”. Many families could use an overnight home for a parent or kiddo. There are none in our area [ARCHRespite](#).*
- *Ask each community member, “How do you want to (How can you) help others?”*
- *Support groups focused on cultivating connection through specific dialogue workshops.*
- *Age specific game nights that are offered at different venues like churches, Community Campus, libraries, etc.*
- *What if we had a community walk to recognize and bring more awareness to mental health? All the different groups which are doing things to help people with mental health issues could participate in something together. Remembering and commemorating people who have been lost to suicide is so important for those left behind...this could be*

*a part of the walk...to do it in someone's memory and do something like carry a stone with a name to keep or create a memory cairn...?*

## Volunteering

- *Volunteer call team for transportation of individuals that need help.*
- *More volunteer opportunities- What can we do to encourage giving of our time and talents (based on our experience) via volunteering? Giving produces wellness in all ages.\**
- *Encourage more genuine community service for kids. Not just a requirement they have to fulfill.*
- *Create a volunteer call list for deliveries of food and supplies for people in need.*
- *A single place where all of the organizations involved in the initiative could list and report volunteer opportunities for those who want to help but aren't sure where to start.\**
- *Use [JustServe](#) in the community to connect nonprofits with volunteers. Many nonprofits have needs but lack the help.*
- *[PUG stewardship on Trails](#) has opportunities for humans of all ages to help.*

## Resources coordination, collaboration, and communication

### Collaboration & Coordination between Resources

- **An organization to coordinate services together so we work as one.\*\*\*\*\***
- *We need a county employed mental health leader/coordinator/provider.*
- *Create a nonprofit to carry on the work of this initiating group to get all of us working together and coordinating care for our community. It should be a County funded initiative but if they aren't going to do it, then let's privately fund it.*
- *Create a Community Partnership Liaison to help connect patrons with various resources. Ideally, this position would be bilingual. Have one office that would know all the resources and know how to connect folks with all of the different community resources. (SHI)*
- *I'm hoping that this work will get us a comprehensive plan that speaks to what we say as a community is important. Not just this organization or that organization but we are all saying this is important and the different nonprofits can jump in and collaborate to work together better to support families, workers, etc.*
- *Better coordination between the needs of the community and organizations. (SP)*
- *Monthly meetings between the resources providers to collaborate and learn from each other.*
- *We need to get all of our bilingual community support positions working in the community together at least once a month to work collaboratively on services/care as well as communication solutions.*
- *Sometimes it is hard to know what other nonprofits are doing, we have an interagency meeting every other month to share information. It's people that work in these industries*



*and nonprofits that just put their head down and do it, so it is work and it takes time away from our patron support work to reach out and work with partners. (SHI)*

## Communication

- **A directory of sources for mental health resources but that would also be more than just that...something that would have programs, spaces, and volunteer opportunities all in one place. Resource guide creation to help people understand what is available and how. We need easy access to find information about various programs, including mentorship opportunities.\*\*\*\*\***
- *A community website that anybody can access to learn about mental health. It could have short videos on empathy, resources, what mental health conditions look like, how to ask for help, how to find help, how to help someone.*
- *One number for people to call for help for themselves or others. The receiver of the call has specific questions to ask the caller and that info is sent out to all community resources who would then take the follow up according to the need.\**
- *There are so many great support services such as Hunger Coalition, Core Loss Team, BC First, Center for Community Health which reduce barriers to access but it would be helpful for the public to have one point of contact that helps you figure out where to go to get help. (SHI)*
- *Social Media Utilization*
- *Access to mental health care is too confusing and difficult. Provide a step by step guide and a way to disseminate information.*
- *Do all school counselors have a resources list and ideally regular meetings and connections between all schools and key programs and people in the valley?*
- *A way to communicate small jobs available around the community to help get folks working. A job “bank” or recruitment group to place bilingual workers.\**
- *We need more co-op options where people can share and pool resources.*
- *Keeping information in front of the community in the newspapers,, TV and radio, about organizations and places to get help either for yourself or training on how to support family and friends struggling with mental well-being.*
- *More communication/marketing about services such as crisis center in Twin Falls proactively, text to talk to report for teens, etc.*
- *A “Wellness Opportunity Fair” that advertises what we do have available to help.\**
- *How is information being disseminated? It isn’t always seen online so maybe old school paper efforts. Unfortunately, Mt Exp. is way too expensive to take out ads.*

## Spanish-specific Communication

- *Exploring Dedicated Spanish Language News Outlets. Considering the diversity within the Latino community, it would be beneficial to explore the potential interest in a dedicated Spanish language news outlet, crafted from a Latino perspective. This could manifest in various forms for local, such as radio or print media. As a note, the current Spanish*

*language radio is based outside of Blaine County, prioritizing news from elsewhere. Understanding the community's preferred information channels could greatly improve our communication strategies and ensure important information is readily accessible to all.\*\**

- *A synthesis of services and information in one place - maybe a handout you can get in the grocery store of whom to call for specific needs (and the info ahead of time of who has Spanish-speaking help.*
- *Could a section of the newspaper be added that is in Spanish or maybe students could help start a bilingual or Spanish-speaking newspaper.*
- *Clearly there are already a lot of places and people from whom Spanish-speaking people could be getting services and help, but they do not know and are not informed about them!*
- *Given the prevalent use of social media, particularly Facebook and Whatsapp within the Latino demographic, we should consider creating a Facebook group page. This Facebook page would act as a centralized platform for all 501(c)(3) organizations working with the Latino community to share new and existing services. This initiative would not only streamline communication but also make it easier for community members to find and access the resources they need.*
- *Administration of the Centralized Platform and to ensure the effectiveness of this platform, there would be a dedicated "administrator" responsible for managing the site. This could either be a third-party individual hired by the collective or a staff member from one of the nonprofits who also serves as an admin. This concept is not entirely new; in 2021 Park City Community Foundation had successfully established a Facebook page with a significant following from the Latino community. One of their staff members, dedicated among other duties to Latino Community outreach, managed this page.*
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# Mental Health Care

## More mental health providers

### *Recruiting/Hiring/Training Therapists*

- **Subsidized counseling or endow provider positions.** *Psychiatrists and counselors with money available to those who are in need through grants or endowments. Insurance doesn't pay therapists a living wage which makes it hard for therapists to accept insurance. Subsidize the funding gap that exists with insurance? Recruit and attract therapists here\*\*\*\*\**
- *Offer office spaces to therapists at a reduced/subsidized rate so we have more counselors who can afford to make a living here in the valley.\**
- *I know of a woman in Boise who is finishing a Masters in Psychology and wanted to move back to the area but could not find a place to live. I also think there may be clinicians that do rotations. Perhaps they could have a small practice here in the valley with shared, subsidized office space for when they are here. (SHI)*
- *Organizations could pay an additional stipend to attract and retain qualified bilingual professionals.*
- *Is there community funding available for a person willing/wanting to become a mental health care provider? It is a minimum of \$45k to get licensed which is cost prohibitive.*
- *One issue is housing and another issue is an affordable wage. If somehow this could be a part of the initiative, we need to provide housing for mental health providers and also a place for them to offer services at an affordable and livable wage/ flexible schedule.\**
- *Need easier educational access for those interested in becoming a mental health provider such as online classes or night classes. Provide scholarships to attract more enrollment in mental health professions\**
- *Larger organizations and businesses can subsidize housing for bilingual mental health providers.*
- *As a therapist, it is difficult to make a living while providing therapy for those who can't afford to pay full price due to a number of factors; 1. The insurance billing process is time consuming and often gets denied because of a technicality resulting in nonpayment. Insurance companies pay only about 50%/60%. 2. Reimbursement for EAPs through local organizations including Probation, The Advocates, Blaine County School District, and St Luke's Center for Community Health are at a dramatically lower rate (\$65/hr instead of going rate of \$130-\$150/hr.) 3. Add increasing rent and the costs of being self-employed and it becomes increasingly difficult to make a living as a therapist in this valley and support therapy for those who can't pay full price out of pocket. I thought it would be helpful to hear what private practice clinicians are also navigating.*
- *Bilingual education support for mental health providers, modeled on the bilingual program for teachers offered at BSU.*

- *Offering training classes for professionals at a subsidized rate.*
- *Blaine County needs to increase our property tax which is ½ of most other communities and then agree to put funding toward the things that support mental well-being. Fund mental health as it is a RIGHT, not a PRIVILEGE.*

### *Access to Therapy*

- *Access to mental health services for students. I am a BCSD educator and have students who have to go out of Blaine County to get services. The high school is in desperate need of school counselors.\**
- *Funded scholarships (by Blaine County) for folks from the LatinX community to go to school in order to obtain credentials to private therapy. We have to subsidize this if we want this in our community!*
- *Utilize retired trained mental health professionals as support for those in need.*
- *Parents can't get their child to an appointment because it is in the middle of a work day. Accessing care is a challenge and when you are down and struggling, it is hard to take the initiative to get the help you need.*
- *Advocacy for patients to be able to select their own mental health providers and not have it dictated by their insurance companies.*
- *Mental health neurological testing is cost prohibitive and requesting aid and working through the referral system is overwhelming.*
- *Financial help for families or people with the need for mental health condition help - and that people know that there is the opportunity to receive help. (Spanish-speaker comment)*
- *Offer subscriptions to services like Better health through the school system for students.*
- *Large businesses/corporations should have mental health employees on their staff.*
- *More help with mental health for children and youth with supplementing the costs of psychologist/counseling.(SP)*

### *Group therapy/support led by trained professionals*

- ***Community-based financial support and space for professionally run support groups for\*\*\*\*\*:***
  - *the loved ones who are supporting those suffering with mental health issues*
  - *Suicide talk support groups*
  - *Generalized Anxiety support group*
  - *LGBTQ Youth support group\**
  - *Young Adult support group*
  - *Parents support group*
  - *adult education and mixed topics\**
  - *Counsel circle*
  - *12 Step program for youth\**
  - *Located at the schools*

- *Frontline providers to prevent burnout*
  - *Mirroring groups that are offered in English like Al Anon or AA would be beneficial if offered in Spanish*
- *Help with family therapies to help with family problems. Help with families so they can live better. Help with therapies. (SP)*
- *Moving toward a group model would allow us to see more people more cost-effectively. There are hurdles but there may be an effective, thoughtful way to do that. People are not shy and open to sharing. There is a sense of connection and normalcy when they hear from others who are having similar issues. (SHI)*
- *Headspace app for county, school district, etc. This offers therapy, psychiatry, coaching, meditation resources via app or telehealth.*
- *School to facilitate “random pick” support groups where teens get randomly selected to participate. Includes substance abuse support system.*
- *Group work spaces that are low/no cost.*
- *A center of help for couples and families with relationship problems. (SP)*
- *Offer/create a local meetings guide/app so that everyone knows what group support opportunities are out there.*
- *School district wide group counseling for all students and access to individual counseling for all students. Offer skills workshops for pre-teens and teens. Use nonprofit support to offer Spanish group support.*

## Crisis Care

### Someone to Call

- **Crisis Response Team- In the meantime until we have a Crisis Center, could we create a Crisis Response Team? BC First is working on this. SOS Team for crisis intervention. Provide a crisis hotline that connects to a team and helps in emergency situations. Coordinated care plan for mental health crisis. Mobile crisis unit is low cost with high value\*\*\*\***
- *We need an alternative to calling 9-1-1 for mental health crises. 9-8-8 doesn't always work and then if they need someone to come, they still need to send EMS.*
- *Make the YES program accessible in Blaine County. (Youth Empowerment Services)*
- *We need to change our response to people who are managing their well-being or are in crisis- be curious and not judgemental.*

### Someone to Come

- **Mental health trained professional to ride along with EMTS/Emergency Response. A community paramedicine program to be out in the community in a preventative way which would alleviate strain on the EMS system who is seeing a huge increase in calls.\*\*\*\***
- *Trained advocates to accompany law enforcement to mental health situations. Crisis responders instead of police in a mental health crisis.\*\**
- *24 hour or 12 hour rotation of councilor assistance that First Responders/EMS can call if they respond to a mental health emergency.\**
- *Education for first responders so they are prepared to take care of patients who are dealing w/mental health issues when they call 9-1-1*
- *The call volume at WRRFR increased by 45% from 2020 to 2023 (15% in 2023). I'm not sure what the specifics are for Ketchum but have heard their increase was similar. A high volume of calls are due to anxiety, depression, suicide ideation and failure to thrive (hard time managing meds, food insecurity, lifestyle challenges, etc). These numbers are very striking and, paired with the nature of the calls, creates a vivid picture of the mental health issues in our community.*
- *The Magic Bus concept to respond to mental crises.*
- *Survivor Support: On-call trained staff to respond to death scenes to support the survivors. They would assist the First Responders, Law Enforcement, Coroner by supporting survivors with the goal of reducing trauma. I was involved in this program in Summit County, CO and happy to chat more.*

## Someplace to Go

- ***Crisis center that is part of a larger continuum of crisis care. Highest priority is a safe place to see professionals to get help. A crisis center is a must have. There are people tonight that are going through a mental health crisis and going to a police department or an emergency room. There is only one St. Luke's Mental Health staff member that floats between Boise, Twin, here, so if she isn't here that night, you are getting sent home. Intensive outpatient program! Build an acute inpatient psych and detox facility with an accompanying intensive outpatient treatment program. \*\*\*\*\****
- *Intensive outpatient program for kids and teens. We had to do an online one which was very expensive and wasn't really the same as in person care.\**
- *As someone who worked at St. Luke's in the ER (love them all) but they are not equipped to handle mental health issues and it is very much a shame how individuals are handled.*
- *Support for youth and adults with substance problems with places to meet together and have support in crisis.*
- *Mental health centers in both Ketchum and Hailey.*
- *Mental health center with case management services and a crisis center that isn't affiliated with St. Luke's Health System.*
- *A social worker in the Center for Community Health office that could see people immediately in the crisis moment to bridge people until they can get longer-term care. (SHI)*
- *Youth advocacy center in Boise is pretty successful. We had a meeting with community partners last year to sort of brainstorm on this idea. It would need to be a safe space to talk and it would need to have direct resources there, not let me refer you somewhere else with providers that are trained and able to talk with people in crisis. (SHI)*



## General/Other

- *Police officers should not have a certain ticketing quota to meet. They should have more than 3 months of training and should have basic human interaction training. They come off as aggressive, predatorial and scary. There are four different police officers that have committed felonies here in recent years including murder. No trust in local law enforcement. \*\**
- *Mental health issues aren't limited to low income families.*
- *Share your story with others.*
- *Address elder mental health.*
- *This is a shared crisis. It is shared by our mountain towns; we come from Park City, it is there, Jackson Hole, Vail, all of these. I would encourage us to model what is working in other communities and get those ideas and share them. Some communities are further along. They already have a crisis center. My focus is to travel around and learn from them.*
- *So many of us get up every day and work to address these issues so I don't really understand why we are moving in the wrong direction.*
- *I worked at a private school where all the staff were on the same page with wrapping their arms around every student and caring about each individual. How do we get to that same place in this community of caring for one another when we live in times of a divisive political climate such as we do? How do you get this caring concept to all points in the community to come together as human beings?*
- *Police response and over policing. This is an issue despite well-meaning police and it's not just profiling Latinx but definitely across the board with all of the teens/kids. Bullying/scare culture.*
- *Purpose-driven work options for youth and adults that pay a living wage.*
- *Warm Springs Preserve as a true community-led reclamation for all ages. Most of life's programs can be solved in the garden and nature.*
- *A good solution solves many problems. There is a lot of overlap in many of these themes that are represented in the four categories represented in the action idea buckets.*
- *Because guns are so prominent in suicide, a 48 hour waiting period for a gun purchase and free gun lock with every purchase of a gun.*

## Suggested Exemplars

(other communities and/or programs doing good work in the mental well-being space)

- [Eagle Valley Behavioral Health in Vail, CO](#)
- [Pullman, WA Community Action Center](#)
- *SupreMe Moms- A new nonprofit emerging in Idaho to work on the wellbeing of mothers as a nexus for the well being of many others (children, spouses, aging parents). Shannon McGuire out of Boise.*
- [Children's Health Council at Stanford University.](#)
- [What School Could Be](#)
- *Coursera offers a free online course through John Hopkins called ["Psychological First Aid"](#)*
- *The [Samaritan Counseling](#) Center in Denver offers faith-based bilingual counseling and is a good model.*
- <https://www.naco.org/resources/promoting-health-and-safety-through-behavioral-health-continuum-care>