



Transcript of Social Cause Panel Discussion: Mental Health

Hosted by: Lindsey Barta (Associate Director, Magnified Giving)

Participants: Nancy Eigel Miller (Executive Director, One in Five), **Dr. Brian Ceccarelli** (Founder, ItsTime2!), **Keith Klein** (Executive Director, Grant Us Hope)

Length of Video: 27:13

Question 1: I'm going to ask each of them to introduce themselves and their organizations and share a little bit about how their organization's mission relates to health.

Question 2: What is the impact of the work that you're doing on the community? Why should students care about this? and why is it important?

Question 3: what does it look like and how are your organizations able to collaborate with one another? You really have a lot of similarities in what you're trying to achieve, it sounds like. How are you able to collaborate with other non-profits achieve these goals?

Question 4: what led you to this work? How you ended up where you are. Why are you passionate about it? How did you end up in the nonprofit field, in general? Also maybe, specifically, this kind of work.

Lindsey (0:00-0:35) : Hi everyone! My name is Lindsey and I'm on staff with Magnified Giving. I'm here today with Brian, Keith, and Nancy and we are here today to talk about the social cause, health. **I'm going to ask each of them to introduce themselves and their organizations and share a little bit about how their organization's mission relates to health.** Nancy, would you kick us off?

Nancy (0:35-1:10): Sure, I'm Nancy Eigel Miller and I'm the Executive Director of 1N5. 1N5's mission is to prevent suicide by erasing the stigma of mental health or mental illness and to promote optimal mental health for all. We work with schools we're working to put education programs into place and that's everything from mindfulness to suicide screens and everything in between. We also really work on stigma reduction to really get people to understand that their brain is part of their body and their mental health is just as important as their physical health.

Keith (1:10-2:00): Hi, my name is Keith Klein I'm the Executive Director of Grant Us Hope. We focus on suicide prevention in schools we take a peer-to-peer approach where we identify young people who can be part of a Hope Squad and educate them around the warning signs, how to have a conversation with a peer that may be struggling, and get that peer to help. We know that 7 out of 10 times those conversations are happening but they don't get to an adult who can actually intervene. So we believe in engaging in empowering young people to make a difference in the lives of their classmates and their friends and their entire communities, so that we can save more lives and particularly in the stressful time that everybody's going through.

Brian (2:00-3:17): My name is Dr. Brian Ceccarelli and I'm the founder of the ItsTime2 organization. Much like the other two people who spoke before me, Keith and Nancy, we also reach out to students from grade levels six through seniors and we go into the schools and actually give presentations to the classes. Our focus is on raising awareness among the students as to the numbers and the statistics that mental health is a big deal and it gets overlooked frequently. Our program really kind of follows the same as Nancy's case we empower the students to say, "hey look, if I had diabetes I would get it treated," or if I had some other physical ailment, I would get it treated.

Mental health shouldn't be looked at any differently. Once we can erase that stigma and allow students to feel comfortable talking about their mental health, I think the suicide numbers will drastically diminish, and that's our goal.

Lindsey (3:17- 3:47) : Thank you all for introducing yourself. We appreciate it. Just to get started, this is a broad question. What is the impact of supporting health-- and particularly mental health for all of your organizations -- kind of focus on mental health--**What is the impact of the work that you're doing on the community? Why should students care about this? and why is it important?**

Nancy (3:37- 4:30) : Well, the one thing we always talk about is that by the age of 14, 50% of mental health has surfaced by the age of 24, 75% percent has surfaced and today it takes 8-10 years for people to get into service. So if you were diabetic or you had a heart condition, you likely would be dead if you waited eight to ten years. With mental illness you're pretty far down the road if you wait that long. Our mission is to identify as early as possible so that people get into services because the outcomes are so much better. Suicide is the second leading cause of death from the age of 10 to 24 and we really want to get that number down.

Keith (4:34-6:40): So great, I guess we're going to go in the same rotation so i'll go next. So Grant Us Hope and with our Hope Squads educating young people is certainly a major target of what we want to accomplish, having spent 34 years as a teacher, and as a building administrator, principal, and superintendent I can honestly and very directly say that young people have more challenges that they're trying to face, not just on the physical health component but also the mental health component. What we're seeing with Hope Squads as they start in schools, and we just crossed over the 150 school mark across Ohio... What we're seeing is that after a Hope Squad's in place for

about a year the culture of the school has shifted. It's shifted to a place where "we're all in this together." It's okay to raise your hand and ask for help if you need it, that worry about being ridiculed or being made fun of because you've asked for help starts to dissipate. We see actually after a Hope Squad's been in place for their second year, we see that about 65 percent of the referrals that are taking place around mental health concerns or suicide concerns are coming from students themselves. Whether it's a self-referral or another student, a Hope Squad member or a non-trained student, who's not trained (with Grant Us Hope). We see 65 percent of the referrals coming from young people. You know, going back to what Nancy, said reducing that stigma so that this generation can be the generation that changes how we talk about mental health, how we talk about suicide, is going to be so important. Being a lifelong educator, I always have put my faith in young people, they very rarely disappoint. I think that's a great place for us to invest our time and our energy because this generation, I believe, will be the generation that changes this conversation.

Brian (6:40-8:50): Lindsay, I don't have much to add to what Nancy and Keith said. I mean, they're hitting on all the major points and all the key components of why we're involved. Like Keith, we believe that kids can help themselves to an extent or at least start the conversation. I like to think that our approach is maybe a little bit different in the fact that we believe that the way that kids treat each other-- by the cyber bullying, bullying, exclusion, and the judgmental nature of kids nowadays, certainly leads to some of this depression. Not necessarily all of it [depression], but certainly some of the angst. I've talked to many parents, many students, and they'll tell you almost 100 percent that the pressure of social media is really overwhelming to them. So we try to point this out during our presentation. We try to encourage kids to, I mean it sounds simple, but be nicer to each other. And to try to understand that we're all in this together, we all have obstacles to overcome. I think once you start to realize that everybody is like an iceberg. I use that

analogy in our presentation, where we have 30% that sits above the surface that everybody sees. Then 70% below the surface, that we're all dealing with something. As all four of us are talking here today, something's going on in our lives that we're dealing with that nobody knows about. The more compassionate we could be towards each other and the more understanding we could be towards each other, I think it goes a long way of doing what Keith is saying: hey I could go and talk to my fellow classmate so that they may understand what I'm going through.

Lindsey (8:50-9:46) : Thank you for sharing those things. You know, it's it's interesting that the three organizations we have represented today are all focused on mental health. For the students watching, please know that there are other types of organizations that focus on other kinds of areas of health that might focus on one specific physical ailment or different things. This [mental health panel] isn't representative of everyone [in the nonprofit health social cause] but I think it's really cool, honestly, that we have three organizations here that are doing similar work. I want to ask you, **what does it look like and how are your organizations able to collaborate with one another? You really have a lot of similarities in what you're trying to achieve, it sounds like. How are you able to collaborate with other non-profits achieve these goals?**

Nancy (9:46-11:12): I think it's a very big problem, it's a very complicated problem, and so it's critical that you work with partners in the community. I think that we're extremely fortunate in Cincinnati that we have Cincinnati Children's Hospital which is the largest adolescent Psych [Psychology] hospital in the country. They really lead the way in that area. I also think that it takes, I say, that you have to build a foundation and then you have to build on top of it. You have to hit it in lots of different ways. There is not one solution. Every climate at every school is different. Reaching out to other partners in the community is a critical piece of what we do. We just did a video series that we

probably worked with about 15 different agencies in Cincinnati, experts in different areas, that put together videos for us that are being pushed out to all the schools. It's, you know, especially during a time like this, we've all had to get very creative. Everything that we did was pretty much thrown out the window and so we had to reinvent how we were going to do the work that we do. It takes a village, as they say. It's connecting with as many people as possible.

Keith (11:12-13:19): Yeah, absolutely and I'm kind of glad to hear Nancy, we weren't the only ones that had to kind of flip the equation and reinvent ourselves. Good heavens, I think from our perspective, we welcome anybody who is going to jump in and help young people wrestle with the issues that they're facing. We welcome them to the table and I think that while we are all focused on mental health and we all are focused on suicide prevention, that we do present different paths to get there. So there are schools that all three of us are in, in different times, different places, because what we do is similar but yet the way we go about it is a little bit different. Like I said, having been a public educator for most of my, well almost all of my, career--Nancy's right in that every school has its own personality, every school has its own climate culture, and it's about finding the best fit. Sometimes it's multiple pieces that plug in to serve the needs of the students in that school. Sometimes one solution makes all the difference in the world and that's what they need to do. So, you know, there is plenty of need out there in terms of young people struggling who need support and health and so we we kind of follow an all hands on deck approach so that we've got all of the needs of that particular school met, one way or another, through one organization or another, and many times it's it's several of us working in in that space with that school to get the job done. The problem is so large at this point that it really does take an entire village. We all have to circle around our young people to make sure that they can grow up safe, healthy, and strong. So I appreciate having others

in the field and coming together and collaborating so that we can best help our kids grow up and be safe.

Brain (13:19-14:34): Lindsay, you had mentioned that we need to collaborate and actually Keith's organization and our organization partnered, in a loose sense of the term. Keith heard our presentation and he actually felt that there was a good symbiotic relationship because once you have the Hope Squad in place where kids are there to support each other, our presentation really lends to that mantra, if you will, because we encourage kids to talk to each other. So once they hear our presentation, if a Hope Squad is in place it's almost a natural marriage that students then reach out to others. I couldn't agree [more] and I applaud all of the people that are involved in this, because it's not easy, it's time-consuming. It's sometimes sobering to hear the numbers coming out and when you hear of a student at any school whether you spoke there or not take their own lives-- it's just, it's heartbreaking. So, like Keith and Nancy both said, the more people that we can get on ball involved raising awareness that's what we're all about.

Lindsey (14:34-15:27): For sure, that's really cool, and and I hope students for those of you watching that you see how cool it is that when you support one of these organizations, you're really contributing to this whole network of organizations who are doing this work together and partnering together and collaborating together, so your impact in giving, or volunteering, or serving really goes far beyond just the impact of that one organization. I think that's really cool and I hope that's encouraging to the students. I'd like to ask personally for each of you, **what led you to this work? How you ended up where you are. Why are you passionate about it? How did you end up in the nonprofit field, in general? Also maybe, specifically, this kind of work.**

Nancy (15:27-16:32): Yes I'll go first again, seems like a good rotation, we're into it now. I lost my husband to suicide in 2008 and it was very much out of

the blue. He was loud and goofy, and we knew nothing. I was in the manufacturing field doing research and doing marketing. So [this is] a totally different arena. I spent about two years educating myself about what I had missed and what was going on in this space and then I decided to create our organization. It's very different, it's a departure, from what I was doing before. I say that I loved my job before. But this job I wake up every morning and I feel like I'm making a difference in the world. It's a good thing in my work hours I put my heart and soul in it every day and I know we're making a difference. So it feels very worthwhile to be doing what i'm doing, absolutely.

Keith (16:33-19:01): I think probably all of us bring passion around this issue to the table. That's what makes it, for me anyhow, that's what makes it great work. Grant US Hope was founded after Diane, our founder, lost her son Grant to suicide. I can't imagine losing anyone to suicide, let alone a child or in this case at this point in my life grandchildren. I'm very proud of the fact that we've taken what has been a very bad personal experience and turned that into a positive. Her commitment is that she doesn't want other families to have to go through what their family went through. For me personally, after spending all of the years I did in schools and around kids, quite honestly I lost too many kids in the schools that I worked in to suicide. We went through one stretch when I was a high school principal and we lost three kids in two months. I've seen [others] experience what that kind of a loss can mean. Not just the young people and the staff in a school but an entire community. When I decided to retire from public education and move into this work, for me it's really about: how do we help young people grow up and know how to have these conversations? Be able to sit down and have these conversations? Typically it's a kind of a generational thing. The folks that have a hard time talking through some of this are adults. My experience in high schools is that young people aren't afraid to talk about much of anything. So let's give them information and get them talking. We ought to be able to talk about mental health and suicide the same way we talk about lung cancer and heart disease.

We've got to get it to that point. [If] we can't talk about it, we can't fix it. That's been the driving force for me in terms of getting connected with this organization and knowing that across the state we are making an impact. We are helping young people figure it out before they get to the point of feeling like they have to make a potentially deadly decision. Very rewarding work. For me I get to be back around young people again, which is what my whole professional career has been about.

Brian (19:01-21:12) : My path was a little different. I didn't have any sentinel event, if you will, that led me into this. I was an orthopedic surgeon for 30 years and when I saw maybe six eight years ago what was going on as far as the general climate of our country, the racism, the hatred, and the divisiveness. I really wanted to start an organization that addressed maybe the social injustices more than anything else and then it evolved into meeting different people and [learning about] bullying. Then turned into, "well when I was bullied, I tried to take my own life," and I met several people through that approach who had tried to take their own lives. When I heard the statistics and numbers I thought, "oh my gosh this is something that I really wasn't aware of." I think when you give the numbers to people, they are astonished. When you hear that 6,200 young kids take their lives every year, they can't believe that number. Though those meetings, if you will, I met other young kids who actually have been part of our presentation. I think that's what is really powerful is last year we had two seniors who had tried to take their own lives in sixth grade, eighth grade, ninth grade, several times and they were part of the presentation to the other students. When young people hear other young people saying, "hey, I struggled. I know what it's like. I've been at the bottom of the barrel and now here I am. I've risen above that." And [students see that] they're both on to college this year. They did additional videos for us this year that I [show] at the presentation saying, "hey, I was here at one point you can get out of this abyss if you will and rise above it and now here I am going to college." So that really has inspired me to meet these young people

that have overcome so much to get out of that hole, to want to help other people. That it's inspired me to continue this mission.

Lindsey (21:12-21:33): Thank you, the last question that I want to ask is really just directed towards the students who are watching. **If these students are interested in this topic and in this cause, what is your advice to them on how they can get involved, what can they do just to contribute to solutions and make a difference?**

Nancy (21:33-22:30) : One in Five has quite a few youth organizations that we run. We have a youth council for suicide prevention that we run with Children's Hospital, we have about 50 kids on that. We do the Innovation Challenge in the summer which is youth coming together and coming up with solutions. We have quite a few Interns and we also have Brand Ambassadors. So pretty much when everybody has echoed. We believe that youth is going to change this conversation faster than the adult population. So we engage with them as much as we possibly can. So if somebody's interested in getting involved, I always tell them use your voice, push people, don't let things [go] if you think that there's a problem at your school. Don't let it go, say something to someone and push them to take action. Your voice is very powerful, use it! If anybody wants to get involved with us we have lots of opportunities.

Keith (22:30-24:02) : Thank you, and just to piggyback on what Nancy said, young people have a voice. Sometimes you may not feel like you do as a young person, but you do and it's so important that you share with those adults who are in your world. Your principals, your teachers (etc.) what is important, where you see needs occurring. We get through [to connect with people] whether it's from students themselves or from building principals or parents in a community. We're getting multiple calls each week about, "hey we really want to start a flip squad in our school, we think this is a part of the solution to taking care of some of the issues that we're facing." As Nancy said, be your

own advocate. Step up and talk with your building administrators, your parents, etc. about--look we need to do more than what we're doing right now. There are multiple programs out there that you could bring to your school but it was taking that first step as a young person empowering yourself being your own advocate and talking one-to-one with school leaders and others adults that are around your community, that's all a very important piece young people can lead. They can lead in amazing ways and this is a great opportunity to step up and make a difference. Save lives in your own school.

Brian (24:02-25:39) : It's hard to follow Nancy and Keith, by the way. I wish I would have gone first, but I would echo what they said. Our goal, much like theirs, is to involve young people as much as we can in the process. Last year we hosted a teen forum which was very successful, meaning that we had kids from different schools, different races, different religions, sit around a table and we ask the questions: "hey, what can we do to help you?" and "what are we missing as adults?" I think that putting kids in a room together and allowing them to take ownership of the conversation rather than us as adults maybe not recognizing what their problems are...we think we know but I don't think we really truly understand...and allowing them to guide us into being a part of the solution is critical. I applaud both of these groups and organizations that are doing that. I couldn't agree with either of them more. If I had my way I would love for every student who feels there's a problem in their school to be able to speak up to their counselor, their principal, and say, "hey look we need somebody to come in to educate us on what we can do as a school to improve the environment and erase the stigma." I think that's how the solution is going to take part right there.

Keith (25:39): I'll put my money on the young people. Every time. I'll put my effort, my money on them any day of the week.

Brian (25:39): Totally agree with you.

Lindsey (25:42-27:12): Yep, did you hear that students? That's so cool. This is awesome and I do want to reiterate that the social cause of health is really broad and the organizations that we've heard from today are all focused on mental health doing that through empowering youth. So students I do encourage you if you're interested in health and other arenas within the health you know take a look at the Magnified Giving website, take a look at some of the other organizations. But I hope you're encouraged to see three organizations who think that youth are so powerful and important. That all three of them are attacking this issue by empowering you. I hope that that's encouraging to you. I think it's cool to see. Maybe speak with today organizations who are collaborating on the same issue so you can get an understanding of the way that they work together and there are a lot of organizations that have similar missions but they go around it in different ways and that's really valuable and really important. So students I hope that it was valuable for you to watch this. Brian, Keith, Nancy thank you so much for offering your insight and your wisdom today and students we will talk to you hopefully in the next cause conversation so have a great day and thanks for listening thanks for having us thank you!