

Rural Health Promotion

Shawna Beese

Assistant Professor & County Extension Director



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

Annual Report July 2023 to June 2024

Rural Health Promotion Updates

As we close the second year (2023-2024) of the Rural Health Promotion program, there are some early impacts I would like to share!

23 Certified:

Whatcom County Master Gardeners Certified in QPR (an evidence-based technique for extreme emotional distress identification and de-escalation)

> \$170,000 of Funding:

For Broadband Access Team BATs (Bellingham PUD, Nooksack Tribe, Lumi Nation, and the WSU-Whatcom Extension)

10-Scholarly Products:

Intended to inform rural health promotion practices and policy. Scholarly products include 4-research briefs for the 2023 WA legislative session; 5-peer review publications in national/international journals; and a conference proceeding.

As shared with our 2023-2024 work plan, the two top priorities for the Rural Health Promotion program were a.) Whatcom behavioral health and b.) broadband access and equity. Our 2023-2024 priority projects echoed concerns identified by our Whatcom County Executive, Satpal S. Sidhu. Details of key 2023-2024 projects are found in this annual report!

As we move into our third year, we are thrilled to preview the work we have planned for the second half of 2024 and beyond. One of our focuses in the coming years will be establishing implementation subcommittees in partnership with existing prevention coalitions. We are also partnering with a team from WSU College of Nursing and WSU Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine to study effective pain management. As part of this research team, I will contribute to developing and delivering virtual pain management resources to WA residents. Last, I am most excited about a development. My research partner and I have been developing a rural-specific neighborhood development instrument to guide and measure neighborhood development activities in rural settings. Although decades of research have been devoted to tools of this nature for urban use, this will be the first of its kind for rural use!

In community,



Shawna Beese, Whatcom County Extension Director and Assistant Professor of Rural Health Promotion



Addressing Behavioral Health in the Garden

Shawna Beese, PhD RN
College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences (CAHNRS)

INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH

COVID exposed the scope and scale of behavioral health needs across the nation. Consequently, behavioral health was identified as one of Whatcom County's top priorities. The theoretical premise of this pilot is that by leveraging the protective strength within our neighborhood communities and providing concrete resources, we will increase health outcomes.

 neighborhood protective factors

 environmental risk factors

 health outcomes

PILOT DESIGN

Every member of the 2023 cohort of the Whatcom Master Gardener program was offered the opportunity to be trained, mentored, and certified in the use of QPR (an evidenced based suicide prevention method).

- We trained 23 volunteers.
- Pre-training, post-training, and sustained effects (planned for Sept.) evaluations were administered.
- Independent T-tests were used to measure group differences of the responses.



Suicide prevention attitudes	<i>Implementing QPR will have more benefits than drawbacks (0-5)</i>
	<i>People will expect me to use me to use QPR (0-5)</i>
Suicide prevention skills and knowledge	<i>How prepared do you feel to identify suicide indicators based on history/behaviors (0-5)</i>
	<i>We learned the warning signs of of suicide (0-5)</i>
	<i>We learned the common myths and misconceptions about suicide (0-5)</i>
	<i>People will expect me to use me to use QPR (0-5)</i>
Overall willingness and comfort to address symptoms of emotional strain	<i>I am willing to address suicide indicators based on history/behaviors (0-5)</i>
	<i>I anticipate feeling comfortable to address suicide indicators based on history/behaviors (0-5)</i>
Qualitative free-text questions about necessary support	<i>What were your expectations of this training?</i>
	<i>Were those expectations met? If no, what could have been included?</i>

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

There was not statistically significant pre/post changes across any of the pre/post measurements.

- Attitudes towards benefits of learning QPR scored highest mean, 4.81 of a highest potential of 5.00.
- Predictably comfort with QPR skills scored the lowest.
- Post QPR training willingness to address signs of suicide risk in other increases ($p>0.05$); while anticipated comfort level decreased ($p>0.05$).

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

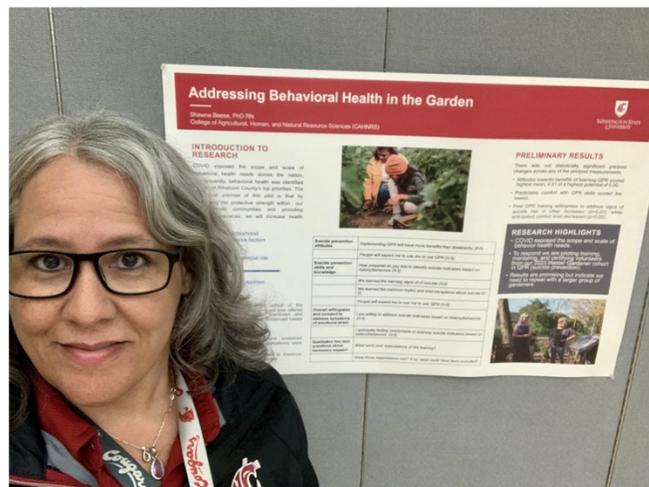
- COVID exposed the scope and scale of behavior health needs.
- To respond we are piloting training, mentoring, and certifying volunteers from our 2023 Master Gardener cohort in QPR (suicide prevention).
- Results are promising but indicate we need to repeat with a larger group of gardeners.



In the wake of COVID-19, the scope and scale of underlying community behavioral health issues were exposed. This is especially true for our rural residents with limited access to behavioral health resources. To address the issue, our Rural Health Promotion (RHP) program offered an opportunity to the 2023 Master Gardener cohort to become QPR certified. Community gardens are often a hub and community touchstone for the population at large. Just like CPR is an evidence-based response method for those who are experiencing cardiac arrest until a higher level of care services are available. QPR [that stands for question/persuade/refer] provides an evidence-based method to lay people who encounter others who are experiencing extreme emotional distress and suicidal thoughts. It is not counseling but rather a first response until a higher level of behavioral health care can be secured.

Our pilot was promising, although statistically inconclusive. We presented the findings at the WA Department of Health OneHealth conference.

As a certified trainer, Shawna is offering other stakeholder groups free training. Additionally, we plan to offer training and certification to all interested Master Gardeners, new and seasoned!



Rural Health Knowledge that Guides Practice and Policy

Our team has been honored to be part of interdisciplinary teams that are conducting valuable research. Highlights include partnering with the University of Washington (UW) as part of their ongoing WAFOOD survey throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The WAFOOD team conducted the fourth wave of the survey that assessed county level food environments in WA.

Another key project Shawna Beese lead was the comprehensive literature syntheses on Neighborhood Resilience. This work was sponsored by the Lukins Scott & Betty Graduate Fellowship through the Thomas S. Foley Institute for Public Policy & Public Service at Washington State University, which Shawna was awarded.

Last, we remained focused on research evaluating rural access and representation in research.

Selected works:

2024

Beese S, Graves JM, Postma J, & Oneal G (2024). The Four Stages of Neighborhood Trust: Classic grounded theory. *Public Health Nursing*, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phn.13326>

Graves JM, Beese S, Abshire D, Bennett K, (2024). How Rural is All of Us? Comparing characteristics of rural participants in the National Institute of Health's All of Us Research Program to other national data sources. *The Journal of Rural Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jrh.12840>

Walton, A., Beese, S., Chesak, S., Gingerich, S. D., & Wilson, R. (2024). A Partnership Perspective on Ecosocial Reciprocity for Cultural Transformation. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Partnership Studies*, 11(1), Article 5. <https://doi.org/10.24926/ijps.v11i1.6121>

Graves, J.M.*, Beese, S.R.*, & DeJong, T.L. (2024). Mental health services utilization by rurality: Evidence from the National Institutes of Health All of Us Research Program.. *Journal of Rural Mental Health*. Advance online publication. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/rmh0000267> *Both Graves and Beese are first authors

2023

Beese S, Drumm K, Wells-Yoakum K, Postma J, Graves JM (2023). Flexible Resources Key to Neighborhood Resilience for Children: A Scoping Review. *Children*, 10, 1791. <https://doi.org/10.3390/children10111791>

Otten JJ, Spiker ML, Dai J, Tseng AS, Buszkiewicz JH, Beese S, Collier SM, Ismach A. (2023). Washington State Food Security Surveys: Longitudinal findings across survey waves 1-4, 2020-2023. *Washington State Food Security Survey*. <https://nutr.uw.edu/cphn/wafood/brief-15>

Otten JJ, Spiker ML, Dai J, Tseng AS, Buszkiewicz JH, Beese S, Collier SM, Ismach A. (2023). Washington State Food Security Surveys: Cross-sectional findings from survey waves 1-4, 2020-2023. *Washington State Food Security Survey*. <https://nutr.uw.edu/cphn/wafood/brief-14>

Otten JJ, Spiker ML, Dai J, Tseng AS, Buszkiewicz JH, Beese S, Collier SM, Ismach A. (2023). Washington State Food Security Surveys. Food Access and Economic Well-being: Additional findings from a 4th survey of Washington State households. *Washington State Food Security Survey*. <https://nutr.uw.edu/cphn/wafood/brief-13>

Otten JJ, Spiker ML, Dai J, Tseng AS, Buszkiewicz JH, Beese S, Collier SM, Ismach A. (2023). Food Security and Food Assistance in the Wake of COVID-19: A 4th Survey of Washington State Households. *Washington State Food Security Survey*. <https://nutr.uw.edu/cphn/wafood/brief-12>

Prevention Coalition Implementation

In the spring semester of 2024, Shawna Beese worked with a group of four of Prevention Science PhD students to:

- Conduct a comprehensive resource assessment on the five rural counties (Whatcom included)
- Develop a plan for how to best engage prevention coalitions within these communities with a focus on building the capacity to implement change

We concluded that rural capacity building can be achieved by establishing an ‘implementation subcommittee’ within the Prevention Coalition infrastructure. These sub-committees would focus less on comprehensive planning and more on rapid cycle implementation and data-driven evaluation of community-identified projects. Through the act of tackling the implementation of shorter-range projects, we would be building the capacity for resilience and project execution at the community level.

Dr. Shawna Beese has presented the potential of a WSU-Whatcom Extension partnership with the Whatcom County Health and Community Services to pilot the program plan in response to mitigating the opioid epidemic.

RESOURCE ASSESSMENT



Types of Resources

- Community Gardens
- WSU Extension Offices
- Granges
- Libraries
- Schools
- Nursing Homes
- Higher Education
- County Public Health Resources
- Community Centers & Foundation
- Recreational Activities and Orgs.
- Cultural Activities and Orgs.



Community Strengths

- Organizations align with protective factors
- Universal and targeted resources



Gap Analysis

- Urban concentration of resources
- Distance, cost, and educational barriers
- Culturally and linguistically appropriate services
- Accommodations for variety of abilities



Opportunities for Growth

- Foster connections & collaboration
- Engage community around prevention efforts
- Increase awareness of existing resources
- Expand & adapt programs to rural areas

Broadband Action Team

WSU Extension's long engagement in broadband and digital initiatives resulted in a large \$6M contract with the Washington Department of Commerce to support planning at the local (county & tribal) level and for the expansion of local "broadband action teams" across Washington. The scope of this project required the development of a large ad-hoc team to accomplish the deliverables in a timely fashion. Ultimately, this team supported the submission of plans from all 39 Washington counties and independent plans from 14 of 29 federally recognized tribes. These plans enabled Washington to not only qualify for but to increase its eligibility for Federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment funding by an additional \$400,000 – meaning more Washington households will obtain access to reliable high-speed internet service over the five-year term of BEAD funding. WSU-Whatcom County Extension Director Shawna Beese was a key member of the WSU team that executed the Washington Department of Commerce contract.

Throughout the project, team members were tasked with assisting BATs and Tribes in developing their own Broadband Local Action Plan and Digital Equity Local Action Plan. At the completion of the project, thirty-seven counties and six Tribes submitted Broadband Local Action Plans, and thirty-nine counties and fourteen Tribes submitted Digital Equity Local Action Plans, many other tribes being covered, in part, by county-level plans. This work culminated in the WSU team being awarded 1st place in the National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP).

Locally, Shawna assisted the Bellingham PUD, Nooksack Tribe, Lumi Nation, and the WSU-Whatcom County Extension secure over \$170,000 for local broadband action team development.



Extension programs and policies are consistent with federal and state laws and regulations on nondiscrimination regarding race; sex/gender; sexual orientation; gender identity and expression; religion; age; color; creed; national or ethnic origin; physical, mental, or sensory disability, including disability requiring the use of a trained service animal; marital status, genetic information, and/or status as an honorably discharged veteran or member of the military.

Report concerns to oeo.wsu.edu, 509-335-8288, or your local Extension office.



Shawna Beese, PhD RN
shawna.beese@wsu.edu
509.844.4729
labs.wsu.edu/beese

Copyright, June 2024