

Mental Wellness Coalition Planning Notes

November 14, 2025

Meeting One: Visioning Activity Themes and Results

Summary of the **main themes** that emerged around the vision for a community where everyone can achieve their best mental health and wellness:

1. Safe, Inclusive, and Connected Communities

- **Safety:** Emphasis on crime-free neighborhoods, feeling safe at home and in public, and reducing environmental stressors like noise and pollution.
 - **Belonging & Inclusion:** Spaces where people of all backgrounds feel welcome, supported, and connected.
 - **Community Engagement:** Block parties, neighborhood groups, and volunteer opportunities to foster connection and reduce isolation.
 - **Civic Participation:** Encouraging civil discourse, empathy, and open-mindedness.
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2. Accessible and Equitable Mental Health Services

- **No Barriers to Care:** Easy access to mental health providers regardless of insurance, income, or wait times.
 - **School-Based and Community-Based Services:** Mental health support embedded in schools, rec centers, and neighborhoods.
 - **Crisis Response:** 988 integration, trained law enforcement, and emergency mental health units.
 - **Stigma Reduction:** Open conversations, public education, and language that normalizes mental wellness.
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3. Supportive Environments for All Ages

- **Youth & Families:** Early childhood mental health supports, youth advocates, and family engagement in care.
 - **Older Adults:** Safe neighborhoods, caregiver support, dementia resources, and intergenerational programs.
 - **Workplace & Schools:** Acceptance of mental health days, wellness breaks, and integrated curriculum.
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4. Healthy, Green, and Active Spaces

- **Green Spaces:** Parks, trees, trails, and nature-based wellness (e.g., “NatureRx”).
 - **Recreation & Arts:** Community events, music, yoga, and art therapy to promote joy and connection.
 - **Environmental Wellness:** Clean air, reduced pollution, and pleasant sensory experiences (e.g., flowers, quiet spaces).
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5. Holistic and Integrated Approaches

- **Co-located Services:** Mental health support alongside housing, food, and financial services.
 - **Economic Stability:** Affordable housing, living wages, and reduced cost of living.
 - **Cultural Shifts:** Valuing self-work, redefining success, and promoting purpose and hope.
 - **Technology & Innovation:** Digital access to care, social media regulation, and inclusive tech solutions.
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6. Celebration, Joy, and Hope

- **Mental Health Recovery:** Celebrating recovery journeys through events and storytelling.
- **Positive Social Norms:** Smiles, laughter, and kindness as everyday experiences.
- **Hope for the Future:** A shared vision where everyone sees themselves as part of a thriving, supportive community.

Full Results

These responses were submitted by small groups during a visioning activity that asked meeting attendees how they envision a community where everyone can achieve their best mental wellness

Group	Response
Group 2	being safe
Group 2	individuals seeking assistance when needed without fear
Group 2	crime-free neighborhoods
Group 2	feel safe
Group 2	human connection
Group 2	neighborhood groups (block party)
Group 2	community engagement
Group 2	community-based care
Group 2	there is a sense of care for our community and youth
Group 2	activities for families of all ages
Group 2	interactive, easy access to resources
Group 2	early childhood supports for mental health in all child care centers
Group 2	wellness hubs and centers in schools and community with accessible mental health resources
Group 2	more awareness and education about mental health, less stigma
Group 2	funding that prioritize the needs of people with their overall wellness
Group 2	neighborhood parks
Group 2	clean parks and playgrounds
Group 2	partnerships

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Group 2	school based services for behavioral health
Group 2	data collection
Group 3	access to mental health provider (counselor/social worker) in school settings for all youth
Group 3	school-based resources for parents by time of pre-k
Group 3	school settings, employers, etc. are accepting of mental health breaks and days off
Group 3	access to mental health provider in community for adults and youth w/o barriers, insurance, or long wait time
Group 3	less pollution - easier to breathe due to better environmental measures
Group 3	public transportation with good access
Group 3	not smelling marijuana around the neighborhood
Group 3	24-hour city help for urgent mental health care
Group 3	effective emergency care for those with serious mental illness
Group 3	safe, appropriate housing for those with serious mental illness
Group 3	well-trained law enforcement about mental health interventions
Group 3	behavioral health specialist on all 988 response calls
Group 3	no jails for people with serious mental illness
Group 3	mentally ill homeless people receiving court-monitored treatment
Group 3	support groups to assist disenfranchised populations to gain greater access to community activities
Group 3	anxiety lessening workshops are available online and in person at no cost to residents
Group 3	community residents are trained and prepared to notice when someone may self-harm or hurt others and prevent it
Group 3	family engagement in serious mental illness treatment

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Group 3	promote greater workforce development
Group 3	lots of local services, groceries, mechanics, ot reduce stress
Group 3	community mental wellness buddies
Group 3	being good neighbors promoting the common good of all for all
Group 3	honestly look at and address our own biases, prejudices, etc., regarding mental wellness
Group 3	giving a voice o people with serious mental illness - events, newsletter, blog
Group 3	mental health clubhouse for young adults
Group 3	mental health recovery journey is to be celebrated
Group 3	range of parent/family support groups for serious mental illness
Group 3	neighborhood community support groups
Group 3	better follow up support after call to 911/988, ER visit, to minimize relapse
Group 3	events, movies, musical events celebrating people in mental health recovery journey
Group 3	people with serious mental illness included in civic life
Group 3	drivers respectfully driving, obeying laws, and respecting bikes and pedestrians
Group 3	less anger!
Group 3	healthy children interacting with one another, not phones
Group 3	childcare good developmental practices to inincrease self knowledge, emotional, and social health
Group 3	intergenerational mental wellness - youth, seniors, middle age, etc.
Group 3	stop asking young adults "so what are you doing for college or school"; cultural shift to working on self needs to be valued
Group 3	no wrong door for hose needing drug or mental health care
Group 3	serious mental illness needs parity wih physical illness

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Group 3	local hospitals have units in emergency department specific to mental health or behavioral health
Group 3	recreation and sunshine
Group 3	emphasis on encouraging spending time outside 'natureRX'
Group 4	smell less marijuana while driving around
Group 4	fresh air
Group 4	clean air free of excess pollutants to encourage outdoor activities
Group 4	community art promoting diversity and inclusivity
Group 4	more 'this is a safe space' signs in business windows
Group 4	empathy and open mindedness
Group 4	civil discourse about complicated issues
Group 4	place where people, regardless of their background or identity, feel they have support systems or resources to turn to when in need
Group 4	no fear
Group 4	I would like to volunteer more. I wish it were easier to find opportunities - a central volunteering database would be great
Group 4	open, relaxed attitude as strangers pass each other on the street
Group 4	more public music events
Group 4	laughing and music
Group 4	less noise pollution and more community discussion
Group 4	legislation regulating content shared online or social media
Group 4	technology adoption for scal and health equity
Group 4	more streetlamps
Group 4	increased public transit use

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Group 4	community yoga
Group 4	walk in to Mark Center for easy access to services
Group 4	community center with coffee and juice bar that encourages conversation with neighbors
Group 4	better ability of first responders to recognize and respond to mental health crisis
Group 4	systems in community are there to support wellbeing
Group 4	non-judgmental group discussions about mental health
Group 4	see more community assistance, like Alex ALIVE and other nonprofits and community give back
Group 4	mental health services reaching whole community
Group 4	neighborhood resource group
Group 4	free and paid monthly wellness programming (music, art, food, physical, etc.
Group 4	outside co-working spaces
Group 4	accessibility for all community members to enjoy community spaces
Group 4	green spaces are being kept well in all neighborhoods
Group 4	green spaces
Group 4	more trees along street
Group 4	accessible, quiet, safe, green spaces for relaxing and contemplation
Group 4	quiet space to reflect
Group 4	essential oils
Group 4	beach and more pools (heated free year round)
Group 6	trash and recycle bins on every city block
Group 6	de-stigmatizing mental health concerns

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Group 6	employment benefits with mental health support
Group 6	awareness of mental health services offered by urgent care clinics
Group 6	well-managed access to drug and behavioral treatment
Group 6	fewer guns and illicit drugs
Group 6	promote more messaging to address the stigma sometimes attached to mental illness; strive for mental wellness
Group 6	careful use of language
Group 6	language around mental wellness
Group 6	access to community health and mental health services. Costs reduced to reduce stress
Group 6	de-program how we communicate on mental illness - language we use
Group 6	"community" definition of mental wellness
Group 6	people have purpose
Group 7	"citizens association" - a chance to meet and interact with neighbors
Group 7	events that foster connections between neighbors
Group 7	access to walking paths in all neighborhoods
Group 7	people talk about mental health
Group 7	no stigma to mental health
Group 7	freedom from the sound of gunshots nearby, frequent sirens or car alarms, Nextdoor posts about criminal activity nearby, trash and pollution
Group 7	feeling safe enough to leave doors and windows unlocked
Group 7	food costs decreased
Group 7	cost of living goes down
Group 7	access to safety net services (SNAP, WIC, etc.)

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Group 7	employment opportunities for youth and young adults
Group 7	youth mental wellness advisors at each school and rec center
Group 7	peer support center in Alexandria
Group 7	people can access supports when they need them
Group 7	immediate and long term mental health services at free or affordable rates
Group 7	youth mental health advocates in every school
Group 7	mental wellness hubs in each community at rec center or large apartment complexes
Group 7	easy access to therapy
Group 7	mental wellness is a top 4 budget priority for city council
Group 7	more insurance providers cover mental health services
Group 7	cohort of providers that offer free or low cost therapy
Group 7	youth and adults are coping with stress in healthy ways
Group 7	school attendance increase, absenteeism decrease
Group 7	substance use decrease
Group 7	youth engaged in positive activities
Group 7	fun activities take place outside in all neighborhoods
Group 7	healthy activities are offered for free throughout Alexandria
Group 7	free activities for families
Group 8	affordable activities for all ages
Group 8	clean parks and outdoor spaces
Group 8	3rd spaces where people feel a sense of connection and belonging
Group 8	I see more families coming together and being at outside events (bonfires, movies under the stars, etc.)

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Group 8	safe streets and low crime rate
Group 8	lots of green rees and prety plants and shrubs you can smell the flowers
Group 8	more people walking by choice, not due to lack of transportation
Group 8	school programs focused on suicide prevention
Group 8	hear kids laughing
Group 8	less staring at phones and more looking at each other (open to conversations)
Group 8	dig into root causes of high depression rates
Group 8	accessible and reliable transportation
Group 8	less noise pollution and more sounds of laughter and joy
Group 8	creation of trusted adults/mentorships for tweens and teens
Group 8	access to food and housing for everyone
Group 8	co-location of services that address mental health with support of economic stressors (housing, food, financial)
Group 8	plenty of caregivers for older adults and disabled persons
Group 8	intergenerational groups and intersectional communities
Group 8	diverse foods and music
Group 8	substance use education and access to harm reduction treatment
Group 8	ability to freely talk about mental health issues without fear of judgment (stigma reduction)
Group 9	partnership between health department, arts commission, and parks department - nature as part of mental wellness
Group 9	art and eco-therapy programs in parks
Group 9	celebrated intergenerational art engagement program at Torpedo Factory

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Group 9	arts commission funds creative aging and lifelong learning in the arts programs for older adults to improve social connection, health outcomes
Group 9	schools incorporate time for physical activities for teachers outside classroom
Group 9	dementia awareness
Group 9	dementia resources
Group 9	2nd and 3rd phases of dementia - can't live alone but they do
Group 9	caregiver resources
Group 9	seniors living alone - what are their health needs
Group 9	loneliness for those with dementia
Group 9	non-mental health public facilities have drop-in counseling with private space (libraries, grocery stores)
Group 9	safe spaces for the LGBTQ community - gender inclusive bathrooms
Group 9	spaces that are friendly to people of every size, language, culture, etc.
Group 9	spaces or events cater to those on 2nd or 3rd shifts as well as 9-5
Group 9	city funded training and programs to practice civil dialogues, civic engagement
Group 9	restore PHN home visiting or outreach program for pre/post natal care (depression)
Group 10	families together after hours on the weekends - quality time is possible
Group 10	more open conversations about mental health
Group 10	increasing access to mental health and therapy services (languages, different demographics, older adults)
Group 10	more safe gathering spaces for community members
Group 10	feels safe, welcoming, and inclusive
Group 10	all feel and are welcomed
Group 10	safe home and neighborhood

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Group 10	good jobs
Group 10	affordable housing
Group 10	a stable home
Group 10	affordable, quality housing
Group 10	arts
Group 10	community events
Group 10	having a community
Group 10	older adults exercising safely in public spaces
Group 10	older adults truly safe in neighborhoods
Group 10	hear children laughing and playing
Group 10	children playing and laughing outdoors
Group 10	see people enjoying outdoor activities in their neighborhoods and throughout the city
Group 10	clean streets and nice landscaping in major public areas
Group 10	accessible trails and nature walks
Group 10	trees and greenery
Group 10	I would like to smell pleasant odors
Group 10	smells clean
Group 10	recreation opportunities
Group 10	people stay healthy with safe places to walk and exercise
Group 10	healthy foods to eat
Group 10	happy adults
Group 10	feeling of calmness
Group 10	hear happiness in people's lives

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Group 11	feel a deep sense of security and serenity
Group 11	employable are employed at a living wage level
Group 11	volunteers for keeping city clean
Group 11	no need for opioids - no need to mentally escape
Group 11	calmness
Group 11	I feel safe and happy inside
Group 11	I see people smile. Hear laughter
Group 11	people walking with friends, family members, neighbors
Group 11	mental health offices located at convenience, like 7/11's
Group 11	mental health counselor with law enforcement
Group 11	no food insecurity
Group 11	once a week free, nutritious meals for hungry - coalition of all restaurants
Group 11	everyone can afford to live and play
Group 11	everyone sees themselves as a part of the community, hope for the future
Group 11	more integrated school curriculum
Group 11	community center with resources, programs, and events
Group 11	share of community spaces for recreation
Group 11	signs and other material affirming or celebrating the neighborhood
Group 11	free health care
Group 11	more opportunities for small business to fund health services
Group 11	open spaces and fresh air
Group 11	Hulu's "Paradise"
Group 11	physical health and wellness

Group 11	I see people meditating in the local park
Group 11	more parks and relaxation options
Group 11	lots more landscaping and flowers
Group 11	green spaces
Group 11	safer streets and neighborhood
Group 11	no ridiculously loud vehicles