

CAFES CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2024

COORDINATED ACCESS FOR EMPOWERING SUCCESS

BSCC Prop 47 Cohort III

https://www.bscc.ca.gov/s_bsccprop47/

CAFES Cohort III Partners

Santa Cruz County Probation
Janus of Santa Cruz
Goodwill Central Coast
Conflict Resolution Center
Santa Cruz County Office of the Public Defender
Santa Cruz Superior Court
Santa Cruz District Attorney's Office
Neighborhood Courts
Applied Survey Research

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Santa Cruz County District Attorney's Office Spotlight Story

Neighborhood Courts is a community driven, pre-filing diversion program designed to divert cases and participants from entering the criminal justice system. First time offenders sit with members of the community trained in restorative justice to discuss the incident and take responsibility and repair the harm through restorative accountability goals. They discuss the participant's background, the root of the crime, and how it impacted the victim, community and the participant. So long as the Participant completes the goals they set with community members within 2 months, their case is dismissed and successfully diverted.

Since the program's inception, we have supported 228 participants, and had a 95% success rate. We offer each participant the opportunity to provide feedback on the program and their experience. Participants have expressed their gratitude for our volunteer's kindness, empathy and acceptance.

One participant stated, "I really felt heard and I had not expressed all the layers of what happened and I liked the way the panelist opened questions in a nonjudgmental fashion. I had wanted to share my story because there were so many layers to unpack, and I really appreciated the feelings I had when it was over. I think the program and the conference space is such an asset to the community and I'm thankful for the program." Volunteers are also given the opportunity to share feedback and contribute to our program's growth direction. They have also expressed gratitude and appreciation for the program. One stated, "I was surprised by the participants' avoidance, but I'm thankful for the experience. It really helps me be open to listen, reflect, and act in the moment over to much advanced assumption making".

- Anna Chau

Assistant Program Coordinator
County of Santa Cruz District Attorney's Office



CAFES Cohort III Goals

Increase opportunities to reduce criminal justice involvement.

Improve individual and community health and well-being.

Improve existing systems and collaboration efforts for those in criminal legal system.

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Building Resilience Training Insight, Monica Carillo

In my role as a Program Coordinator for the Neighborhood Courts program, taking the Building Resilience Training was very beneficial. It served as both a valuable refresher and a great reminder that regardless of our position, those of us that work directly with people will inevitably encounter challenges. This training has provided me with invaluable insights into navigating diverse life experiences and adapting communication styles accordingly.

By understanding and empathizing with an individual's circumstances, we can establish a foundation of trust, communication, and cooperation.

This in turn will facilitate a more effective process and enable more meaningful conversations, allowing us to delve deeper into the underlying issues. This approach will help me understand more individuals underlying problems and concerns, as well as effectively convey empathy towards them.

By promoting empathy our participants will be more empowered to share their experiences with the ultimate goal of reducing future involvement with the legal system. By building trust, boosting their confidence, individuals will feel heard and understood. Which in turn will have a positive outcome for our program. I am grateful for the opportunity to have participated.

- Monica Carillo

Program Coordinator

Neighborhood Courts Program

County of Santa Cruz District Attorney's Office

Building Resilience Training Insight, Danitza Torres

The training was very instructive. It provided valuable tools to navigate challenges whenever feeling burned out. During the session with Tenzin, we explored strategies for improving our resilience, managing hard situations, and fostering well-being with shared experiences and discussions.

One takeaway from the training was the importance of self-awareness in reaching a balanced empathy towards our clients and others. By understanding the need of compassion towards ourselves and others, we can better cope with adversity and do well in demanding situations (which we all have). The training also help as a reminder about the importance of cultivating a supportive network and seeking help when needed, fostering a culture of collaboration and mutual support within our team.

In our roles, working with community, having these tools are essential. The insights gained from the training are very valuable to me.

I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in this training and would like to extend my thanks to everyone behind this, specially to Tenzin for her very humane way to share this knowledge with us. Sharing our experiences can inspire others to prioritize their mental health and well-being.

-Danitza Torres

Program Coordinator

Neighborhood Courts Program

County of Santa Cruz District Attorney's Office

2024 CAFES Connection Newsletter

Spotlight Story Schedule

Santa Cruz County Probation- **January 2024**

Santa Cruz County of the Public Defender, Partners for Justice- **February 2024**

Santa Cruz District Attorney's Office, Neighborhood Courts- **March 2024**

Santa Cruz Superior Court **April 2024**

Janus of Santa Cruz, CAFES Connector Team- **May 2024**

Goodwill Central Coast- **June 2024**

Conflict Resolution Center- **July 2024**

Applied Survey Research- **August 2024**

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Here's how to submit news you would like to include in the CAFES Connection Newsletter...

We want to hear from you!

If you have news, stories, client testimonials, or resources you would like to include for any month of the CAFES Connection Newsletter, please email arianna.lomeli@santacruzcountyca.gov
The deadline to send submissions is the third Thursday of each month.