

Wellness Connect Program Model

According to a recent [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) report, **“1 in 4 respondents ages 18 to 24 had considered suicide within the past month”**. An unprecedented ratio of young adults are in the middle of a mental health crisis. In addition to suicidal ideation, over **75% of young adults reported having “mental or behavioral health symptoms”**.

A recent [Columbia University study](#) reported staggering rates of suicide for young adults experiencing schizophrenia, **with men ages 18 – 34 having an 8.2 times higher suicide rate than the general public.**

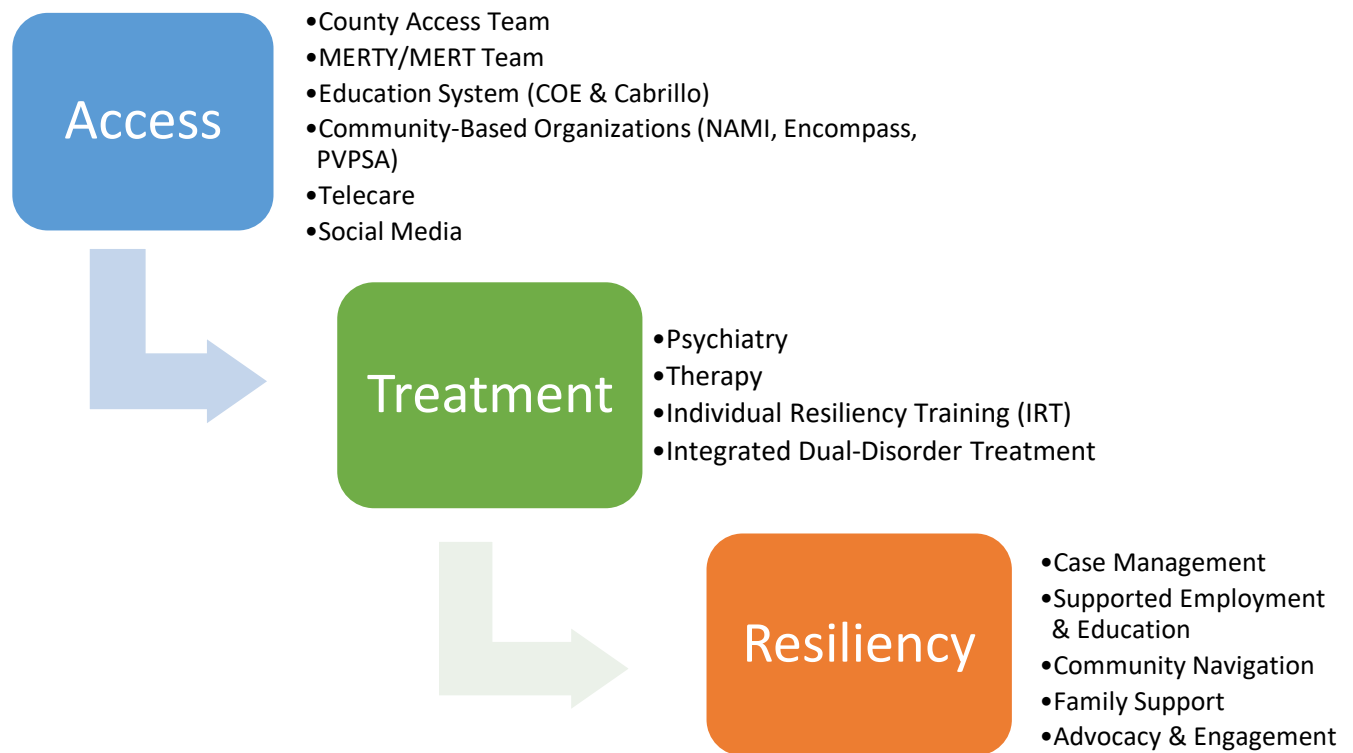


Purpose

Wellness Connect is a mental health program providing prevention, early intervention, treatment and recovery services for young adults experiencing significant emotional and/or mental health challenges. Wellness Connect partners with Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health as a Coordinated Specialty Care (CSC) program based on the [NAVIGATE](#) treatment approach. The CSC team provides an effective and whole-person treatment approach to individuals experiencing a first episode of psychosis, including comprehensive case management, psychiatry, supported employment and education, co-occurring substance use, peer navigation and family support services to young adults.

Program Hours: Monday – Friday, 8am – 8pm; Sat 11am – 7pm

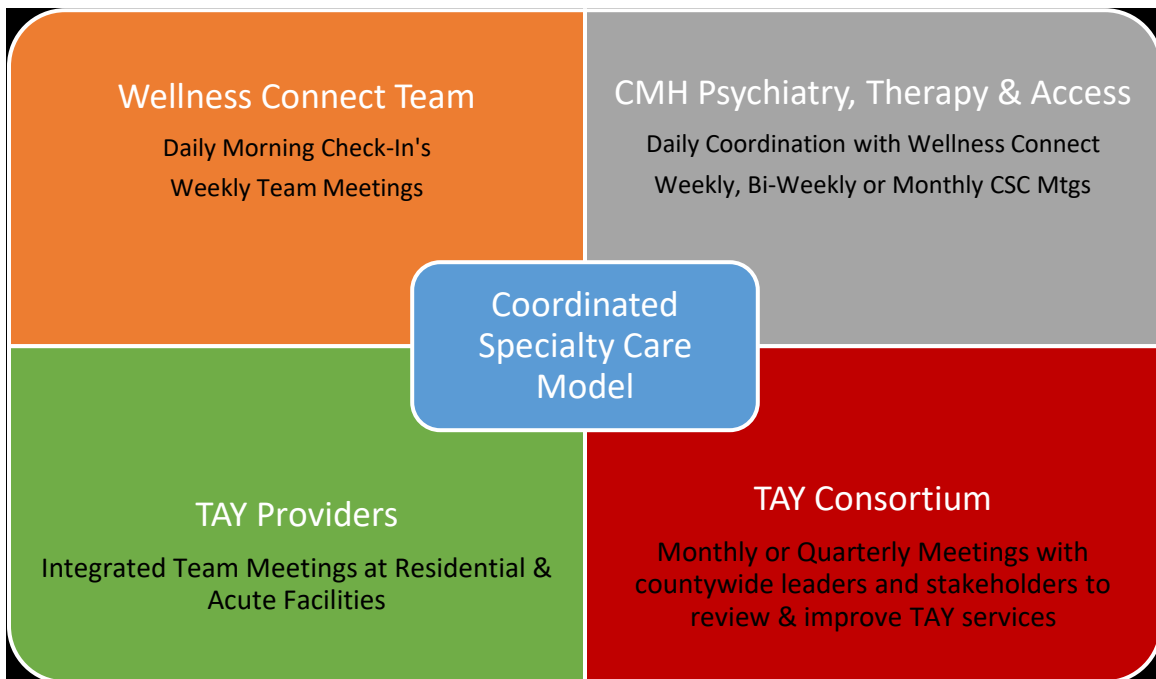
Service Model



Eligibility

Wellness Connect provides intensive services to a target population of young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 who experienced a first episode psychosis in the last three years. Additionally, prevention and early intervention services are provided to any young adult experiencing onset of mental health challenges regardless of age range. Wellness Connect Participants are not required to be enrolled in County Specialty Mental Health Services.

Coordinated Specialty Care Model



Wellness Connect Team

Role	Services Provided
Program Director Kayla Olinger	<p>Kayla oversees and manages the Wellness Connect program and serves as the Community Connection liaison for the Coordinated Specialty Care (CSC) Transition Age Youth (TAY) team with Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health.</p> <p>In addition to leading the Wellness Connect team, Kayla provides education and resources to community providers, families and young adults to enhance mental health wellness and reduce stigma.</p>
Clinical Director & Individual Resiliency Trainer Dagny Blaskovich, LCSW	<p>Dagny is the Clinical Director & Individual Resiliency Trainer (IRT) of the Wellness Connect Team. Dagny facilitates the IRT curriculum for young adults experiencing a first episode psychosis.</p> <p>Dagny specializes in helping individuals identify and work towards their goals. She teaches each individual strategies and skills to build their resiliency in coping with psychosis while staying on track with their lives.</p>

<p>Case Managers</p> <p>Genesis Cantu- <i>(North County)</i> Rose Ruiz- <i>(South County)</i> Tamar Wexler</p>	<p>Our case managers provide coordinated care to young adults in the Wellness Connect program. Each case manager is trained in a variety of evidence-based mental health treatment services and provide a range of rehabilitation services, linkage to ancillary community services, crisis intervention, system navigation, community integration and outreach, engagement & prevention services to young adults.</p> <p>Additionally, case managers help the whole family learn about psychosis, how to manage it, and how to support each other in building family resiliency.</p>
<p>Supported Employment and Education Specialist (SEE)</p> <p>Autym Helzer</p>	<p>Autym utilizes the evidence-based practices of Supported Employment and Supported Education to provide integration of employment and mental health services, rapid job search, employment support, benefits counseling, post-placement services and skill building.</p> <p>Autym provides education support including identification and development of education goals, linkage to Cabrillo College and other academic institutions, enrollment support and development of coping skills to overcome barriers to academic success.</p>
<p>Advocacy and Engagement Coordinator</p> <p>Rose Ruiz</p>	<p>Our Advocacy & Engagement Coordinator uses innovative approaches to enhance access, engagement and prevention services with targeted e-marketing, technology utilization, web-based resources, training and outreach to targeted community settings including schools, community-based & faith-based organizations, and households. The coordinator develops and manages Wellness Connects social media channels aimed at providing education, prevention and advocacy for TAY.</p>
<p>Mental Health & Co-Occurring Specialist</p> <p>MH: Sandra Shamma Co-Occurring: Danika Brunelli</p>	<p>Our Mental Health and Substance Use Specialists utilize a variety of evidence-based behavioral health treatment approaches to support young adults in managing mental health and substance use challenges.</p> <p>Danika specializes in co-occurring mental health & substance use services, utilizing the Integrated Dual-Disorder Treatment (IDDT) model to provide recovery services aimed at stabilization, behavioral change management, relapse prevention, and integrated substance</p>

	<p>use and mental health symptom management and coping skill building.</p> <p>Sandra utilizes the Motivational Interviewing, Supported Employment and Recovery Model approaches to support young adults in building skills and achieving mental health wellness goals.</p>
Wellness Coach Tamar Wexler	<p>Tamar provides young adults with a variety of wellness services including community navigation, social integration, advocacy, support, skill building and education while participants are in acute treatment settings including Telecare, El Dorado Center, Telos, Casa Pacific, Second Story, Board & Care, Janus, Jail and other acute treatment settings. Tamar helps young adults achieve wellness by removing barriers and gaps in services, and providing “warm-hand offs” to other providers.</p>
Peer Navigator	<p>The Peer Navigator provides peer mentorship, system navigation, symptom identification, coping skill building, linkage to social supports and recovery services.</p>