

# The Wellness Partnership | 2025-2028 Theory of Change

## Purpose/Vision Statement

Building on the hyper-local partnership model established and nurtured during its initial phase (2018-2024), the Wellness Partnership initiative seeks to **create highly effective, seamless, and coordinated systems of mental health care** and resources for young people by **strengthening** the effectiveness of existing partnerships, **advocating for collaboration** amongst regional partners, and **sustaining** the initiative's impact by embedding collaborative efforts within San Mateo County's systems by the end of 2028.

## Key Cross-Sector Partners

- **Current Wellness Partnership Collaboratives**
- **Youth-serving nonprofit organizations**
- **San Mateo County health + education system partners**

## Ultimate Beneficiaries

- **Young people ages 12-24**, particularly those facing systemic barriers to care
- **Families** of those seeking care and resources
- **Professionals** who work with and support youth
- **Communities** whose input shapes services + supports

## What makes a system "effective"?

- **Professionally trained, well-supported workforce**
- **Culturally responsive**
- **Coordinated + accessible**
- **Shaped by community needs + input**

## Sand Hill Foundation Strategies

**Long-Term, Flexible Grant Funding**

**Capacity Building & Learning**

**Strategic Convening & Connecting**

## Intended Outcomes

### For Community-Based Collaboratives (by end of 2028)

- Increased **ability to collaborate effectively** within and across organizations
- Sustained capacity to deliver preventive mental health supports in more **upstream and community-based** settings
- Increased collaborative capacity to **gather and use data** to improve, measure, communicate and disseminate the impacts of their work
- Increased collaborative partner **alignment with San Mateo County's United for Youth 2030** vision and strategy

### For Regional System of Care (by end of 2028)

- **Robust, qualified, and diverse youth-serving workforce** trained to respond to the mental health needs of the youth they serve
- Increased **coordination and integration of mental health services and supports** among key cross-sector partners
- Increased **alignment of regional resources and strategies** that reinforce and sustain the Wellness Partnership's vision

## Ultimate Initiative Impact

All young people and their families can access high-quality prevention and early intervention supports through a seamless, well-coordinated regional system of care, promoting well-being and resilience as they pursue their dreams and aspirations



Learn more: [sandhillfoundation.org](https://sandhillfoundation.org)

## 2018-2024 Lessons To Build On

*Key elements for successful partnerships that expand access to high quality youth mental health support*



### Embedded infrastructure for partnership, collaboration, and connections.

- The value of working in collaboration is built through relational connection and concerted effort around a collective vision over time
- A stable lead agency with the capacity to allocate resources and coordinate partnerships, paired with consistent engagement of partner organizations' leadership, are fundamental to successful collaborations
- Establishing MOUs, data sharing agreements, and shared communications and data tools early in the collaborative engagement helps to more sustainably cement structures and functions



### Understanding, fluency, and normalization of mental health among community members and adults who interact with youth.

- Collaboratives' engagement of caregivers, as well as community and parent education about mental health, addresses stigma and other barriers to care
- Programs should be poised to adjust and adapt to parent/caregiver needs as they engage deeper with the content
- A mental health workforce that reflects the community it serves is key for carrying out responsive outreach that successfully engages caregivers
- Given that mental health workers outside conventional clinical settings may not be able to bill their time to standard funding streams, it will be important to support organizations in resourcing these positions through other means



### Quality youth services and programs informed by and tailored to the needs of those they are intended to serve.

- A diverse workforce that represents and understands the community served is key to improving the quality of care
- Creating workforce pipelines helps inspire youth from the community to learn about and become involved with mental health professions
- Youth voice and input is a valuable tool for designing welcoming, high quality mental health services and spaces

## Context for 2025-2028

- The Wellness Partnership is **committed to increasing access to high quality mental health services for youth and families that have been historically and continue to be excluded from systems of care**, including young people of color, immigrant communities, queer communities, and other groups that experience systematic barriers to support
- **Strong partnerships and collaborations are powerful antidotes** to San Mateo County's fragmented systems of mental health care and **essential ingredients in creating sustainable systems change**



### Codified commitment to youth mental health among organizational, philanthropic, and health system leaders.

- Launched in the Fall of 2024, the United for Youth plan rolling out in San Mateo County is backed by a diverse coalition and aligns with the Wellness Partnership vision for systems change
- There is potential for Wellness Partnership collaboratives to deepen and sustain their impact by becoming leaders of this community effort



### Robust, qualified, and diverse youth-serving workforce trained to respond to the mental health needs of the youth they serve.

- Cross-sector partnerships allow organizations to create innovative strategies for diversifying the provider pipeline, including rotational fellowships and professional training programs
- Explicitly resourcing the well-being of youth-serving professionals is a tool mental health funders can leverage to strengthen the workforce and prevent burnout
- Nonprofits cannot transform workforce systems alone—policy advocacy and broad systems change will be needed to make required shifts, and community advocates and funders must play a role in this process



### Seamless and equitable pathways and opportunities for youth to access mental health and wellness supports.

- Effective collaboratives provide early intervention and prevention supports in a range of clinical and community settings
- Bringing more/improved clinical services to places young people go removes barriers to access
- Culturally-responsive warm hand-offs are more likely to result in a young person's successful connection to a new and potentially unfamiliar provider



### Funders can play a pivotal role in creating impact by embracing new ways of engaging and supporting grantees.

Sand Hill Foundation recommends funder strategies that enable collaboratives and their partners to do their best work:

- Early guidance about collaboration best practices
- Tolerance for risk and experimentation
- Fostering choice in “beyond the check” supports
- Long-term funder commitment



## Vision and Impact Statement

If the resources to support prevention and early interventions that reduce risk factors and build protective factors were more coordinated, healing-centered, accessible, and integrated into a variety of youth development engagements, more young people in San Mateo and Northern Santa Clara counties would receive the appropriate level of mental health support when they need it, promoting their resilience as they pursue their dreams and aspirations.

## Target Community Partners

Key partners who drive and benefit from the efforts of the collaborative include:



- Primary care providers and pediatricians
- Faith-based organizations
- Grantmakers
- County agencies including public health, behavioral health, child welfare, law enforcement, juvenile justice, and other human services
- Private health systems and payors
- School and after school leaders
- Community health centers and other clinical settings
- Youth-serving organizations and staff providing direct services to youth
- Youth and family leaders and advisory council members
- Youth ages 12 – 24 years old
- Parents, caregivers, and other family members

## Guiding Principles

**Sand Hill Foundation intends to:**

Commit to learning from and responding to grantee and community experience to inform equity focused, community-driven response.

Address the gap in prevention and early intervention for mild to moderate mental health concerns among early adolescents and young adults.

Serve as a connector, influencer, and partner to advance mental health beyond grantmaking.

Promote healing and health equity by addressing disparities that impact youth wellbeing.

## Funding Strategies

Provide grants to support cross-sector partnerships and/or innovations to improve **access** to high-quality prevention and early interventions through healing-centered youth engagement.

Support program delivery and/or planning focused on improving the **dissemination** and **quality** of mental health and wellness services in partnership with and for disproportionately impacted populations.

Leverage public and private resources to improve the system of mental health supports through increased **funding, awareness, and coordination**.

## Short Term Outcomes (by end of 2024):



Embedded infrastructure for **partnership, collaboration, and connections**.



**Understanding, fluency, and normalization** of mental health among community members and adults who interact with youth.



**Codified commitment** to youth mental health among organizational, philanthropic, and health system leaders.



Robust, qualified, and diverse youth-serving **workforce** trained to respond to the mental health needs of the youth they serve.



Seamless and equitable pathways and opportunities for youth to **access** mental health and wellness supports.



**Quality** youth services and programs informed by and tailored to the needs of those they are intended to serve.