



★ Valley Star Behavioral Health ★

Family Resource Center

BRIEF REPORT from the Department of Research and Program Practices

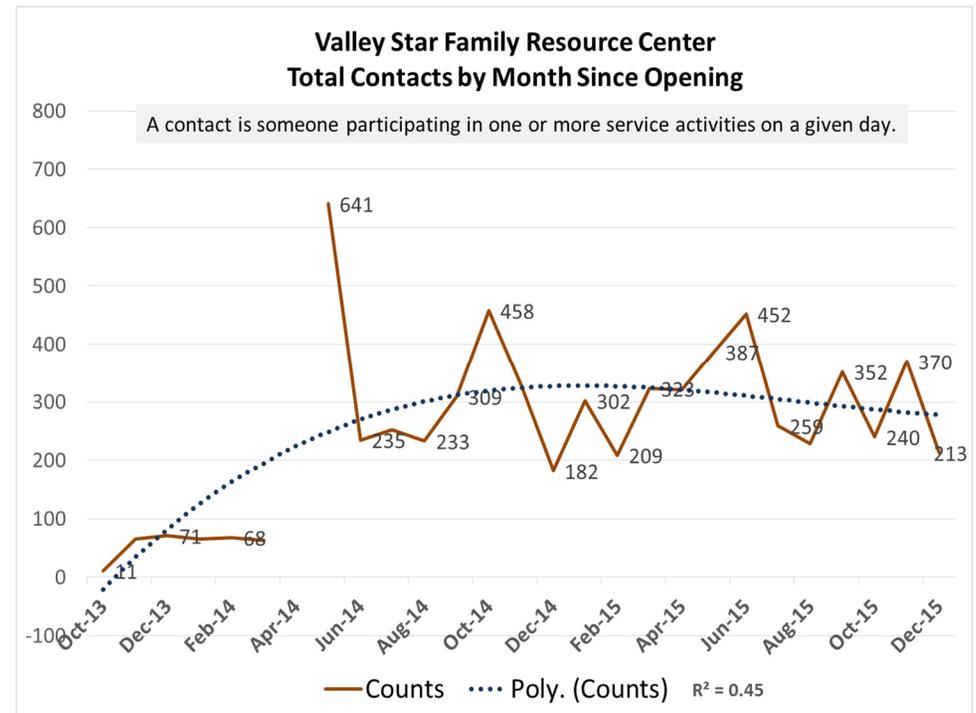
For more information contact: Karyn Dresser, Ph.D. 510-635-9705 x207 **Report Date: March 8, 2016**

Valley Star Behavioral Health's *Family Resource Center* (FRC) provides San Bernardino County's Central and East Valley regions with a beautiful, lively community resource center, and much community wellness education. To facilitate access, the center is located near multiple transportation hubs (freeway interchanges, bus lines, etc.) and the team provides outreach and education at other local sites, including schools, health care clinics, and places of worship. On site, **FRC staffs offer guidance with active linkages to many, varied local resources, serving the area as a wellness information hub. They also provide an array of services and programming themselves**, such as parenting and life skills classes; afterschool activities for children/youth; senior services; brief mental health counseling; and, tangible assistance to those needing benefits, applications and system navigation; English mastery and literacy; and, career planning/job searches, among other things. This **BRIEF REPORT** describes challenges overcome and successes from 2013 (start-up) through 2015 (27 months), and the current focus of quality improvements being worked on by the program within the context of the agency's robust Total Quality Management (TQM) program.

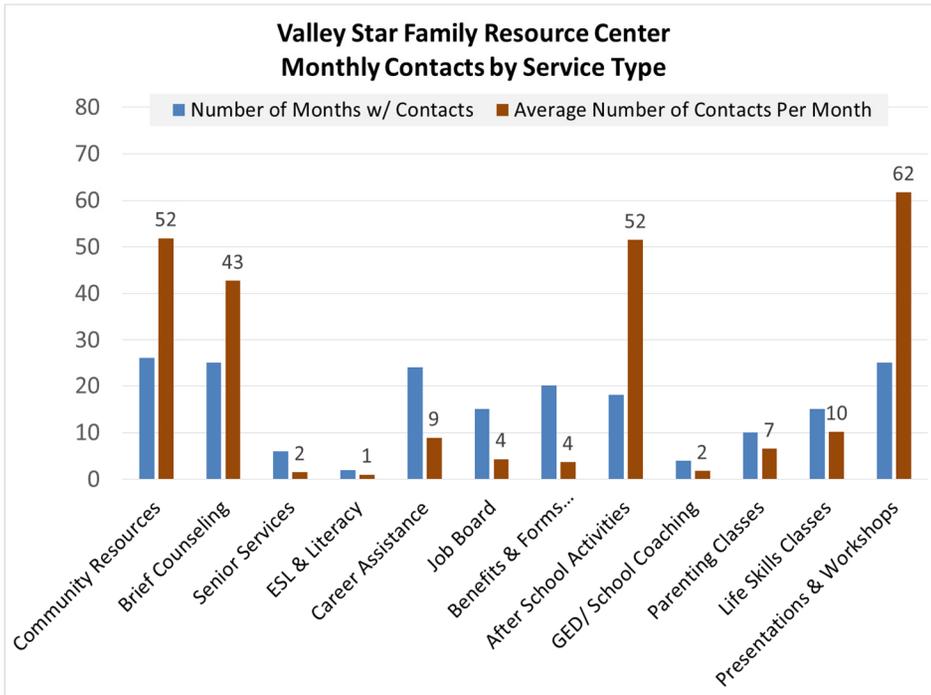
Getting Started

The first challenge was to create recognition in the community, while simultaneously and incrementally building program capacity to deliver outreach and education (O&E), referrals and linkages, and on-site services and programming. The team benefitted from a few months lead time to work on all the above and discovered that initial utilization (late 2013 into 2014) was slow. At that juncture they put on a **full court press to step up community O&E, enhance communications, and expand referral networks**. As can be seen in the graph at right, these efforts resulted in a burst of activity May 2014, both in the community and on-site, followed by many months of much improved utilization with some variability month to month: overall, to date, average total contacts per month are 246. A contact is an individual participating in an FRC activity on a given day (unduplicated participants are covered next section).

Types of center activities are shown on the next page. There is a **wide range of service types and variation in usage by type, driven primarily by local interests and needs**. Information and guidance to access community resources is popular, as is brief mental health counseling with assessments and forward referrals, after school programming, and presentations, workshops and classes.



There were 6,639 total contacts over 27 months.



Often sought community resources include banking, bus passes/transportation, health care including mental health and substance abuse treatment referrals, housing/homeless and shelter services, food/clothing banks (including those provided on site), legal and immigration services. FRC staff have strong knowledge about local resources; they also guide participants to use on-line and print sources for their searches which are amply available at the center. A book lending library is well used.

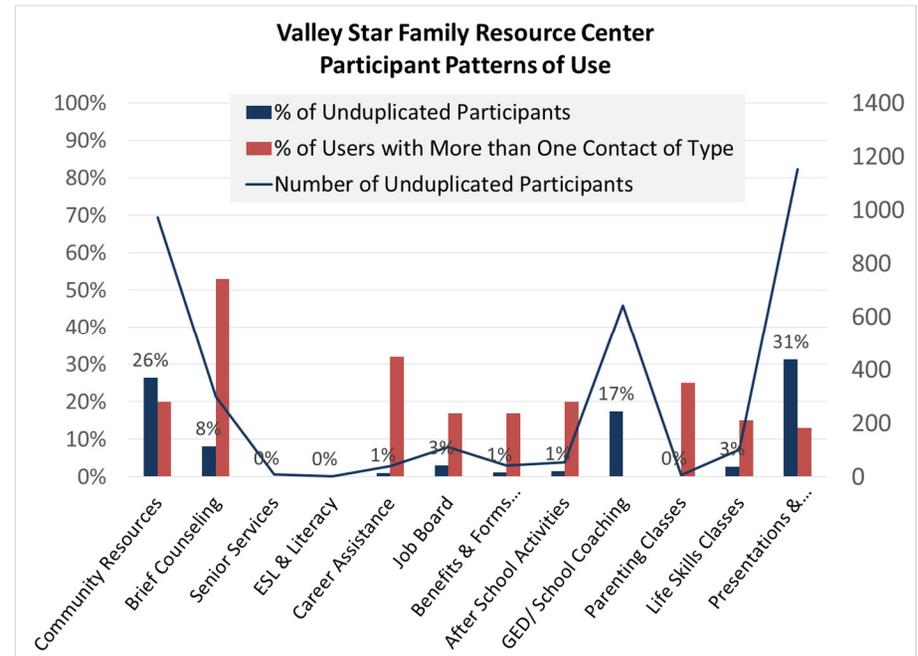
Common presentation and workshop topics include anger management, bullying reduction, coping with chronic illness, domestic violence, human trafficking (rights, protections, trauma healing), LGTBQ mental health, family nights (creatively organized around different themes), kid's social learning, general health and wellness topics and stress management. There are also presentations attractive to those involved with other activities shown on the graph (e.g., career/job, parenting skills, and life skills like computing, safe use of social media, and public speaking).

Some presentation topics (for adults) are also featured in the after school program, such as kid's social learning and social skills (for kids), along with a homework club, fun activities, and school problem-solving with the child/youth and/or caregiver.

Participants

Over the time of the FRC's operation through 2015, an estimated total of 3,686 unduplicated individualsⁱ made use of the center and/or attended a presentation/workshop in other community locations provided by FRC staffs. Participants were mostly females (61%). Ages ranged from infancy to elderly (age 92), with an average age of 28 yrs and median (50%tile) of 26 yrs. **The Family Resource Center appears to be especially well used by adult females under age 65 (40%) and (their) minor children (37%).** Ethnically, the population is 50% Latino heritage, with 18% African American; 18% Caucasian; 7% Asian; 1% Pacific Islander; 1% Native American; and, (5%) mixed or unknown. About 20% are Spanish-speaking only; thus, many staff are bilingual, fluent in Spanish.

Patterns of participant use of the FRC are shown below.ⁱⁱ



Roughly 20% of participants made use of the FRC more than once (average number of contacts per participant is 1.8). The graph above shows higher percentages of individuals with repeat contacts for a given type of service among those seeking benefits, career assistance and/or using the job board; attending parenting or life skills classes; participating in the afterschool program; or making use of brief mental health counseling (average of 4 sessions).

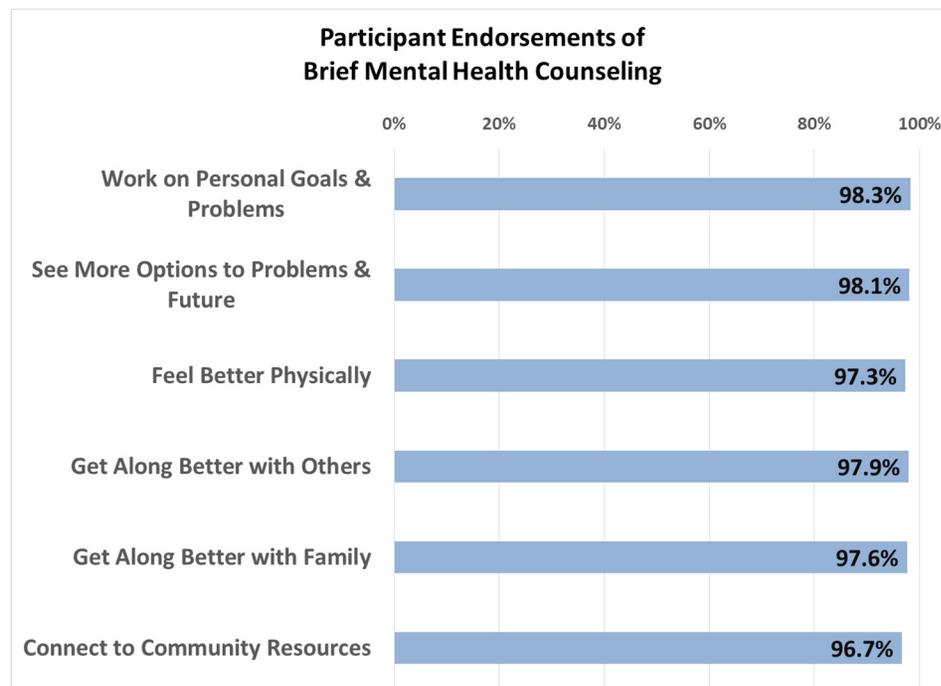
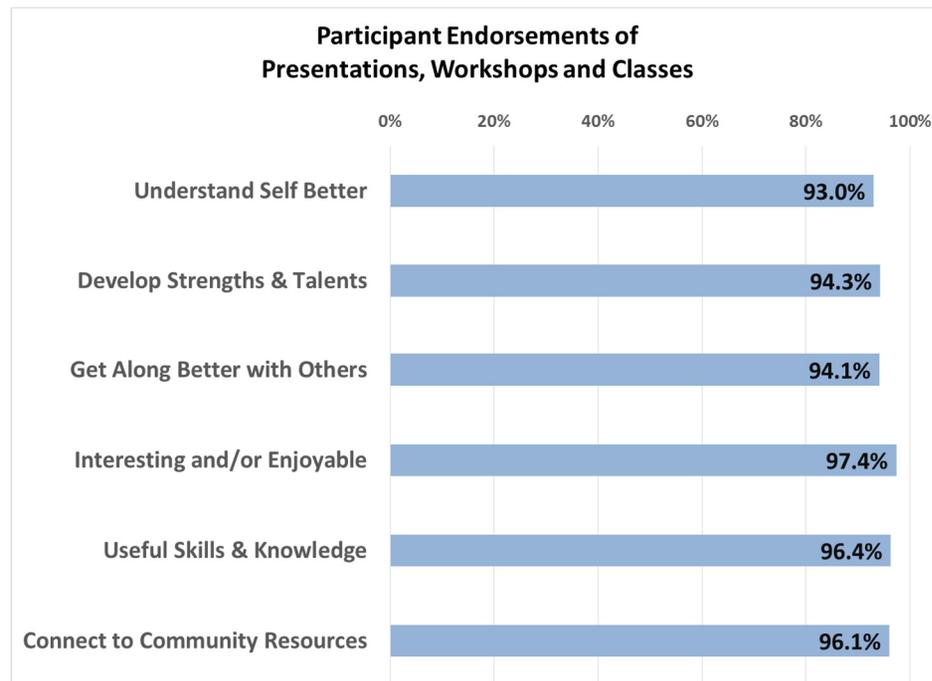
Proximity to the FRC (zip code 92408) is undoubtedly a contributing factor to participation: out of 63 resident zip codes in the contact log, 7 zip codes account for 82% of participants, the others have only one or a few each. Dominant zip codes are Colton (92324), Loma Linda (92354) and San Bernardino (92404, 92408, 92410, 92411 and 92415).

What's Helpful, What's Improvable?

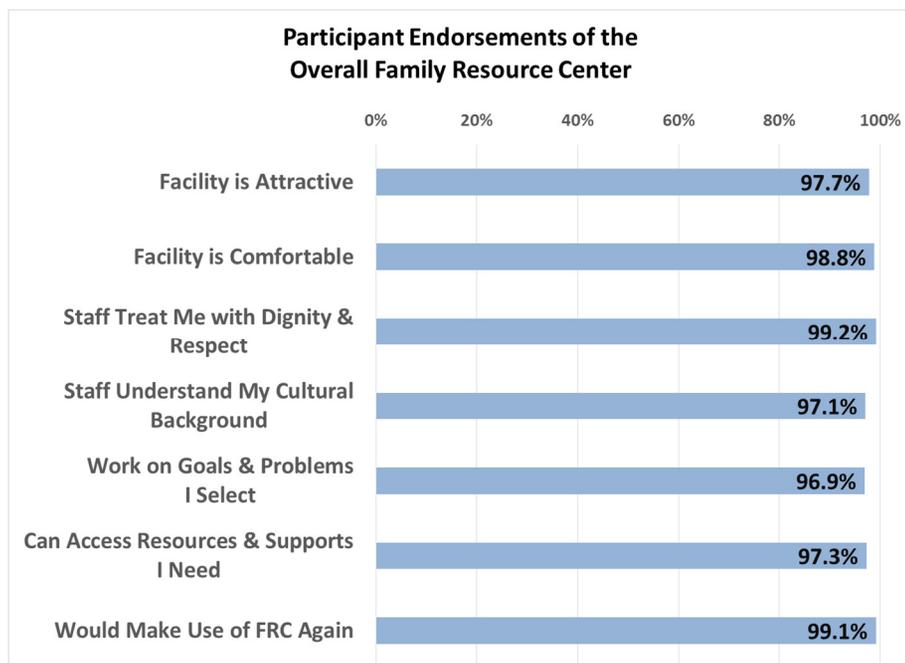
Participant surveys are gathered continuously, at an average rate of 40 per month, with variation (up to 100). Respondents are primarily adults (average age of 38), more male (47%) and more Latino (70%) than the overall service population. Most based their feedback on one contact with the setting; however 25% had used FRC services more than once at the time they completed the survey. With these caveats in mind, **respondents make up roughly one third of all of those having contact with the FRC (1,186 respondents) and offer valuable feedback and insight on how well the center is benefitting the community.**

The survey requests feedback about: a) presentations, workshops and classes; b) brief mental health counseling; c) overall setting; and, d) prompted, open-ended comments.

In the first two graphs the feedback reflects 50% to 55% of survey respondents -- those who made use of the particular service type depicted; and, they are 15% to 20% of the total FRC service population. The average ratings were all 3.7 or more, on a scale of: 1= Not at All; 2= A Little; 3= Some; and, 4= A Lot, as to whether the service helped to.....



In the next graph the feedback reflects 90% to 95% of survey respondents -- those coming into contact with the center, staff and general offerings; and, they are 30% of the total FRC service population. The average ratings on these items were 3.8 or more, same scale, as to whether.....



There were **over 700 responses to an open-ended prompt, about what participants “like best” about the FRC.** High count mentions included overall **setting** (beautiful, calm, clean, organized, etc.), **staff** (attentive, caring, compassionate, friendly, helpful, informative, professional, etc.) and **services and processes** (many types of services, easy to get into counseling, interesting groups, homework and computer assistance, no/low pressure staff, etc.). Some examples:

- ★ *“The ambiance, I like that there is space and room for my child to go to.”*
- ★ *“The employees are very nice & helpful with everything I needed today.”*
- ★ *“Speakers were great, informative and involved the class, slides and movie were infomative. Pamphlets were also good to follow along and write notes.”*
- ★ *“My daughter is finally getting the counseling, I tried several places to get help but they required Medi-cal so I was turned away. Here, they helped her get Medi-Cal!”*

There were fewer entries (under 200) to prompts for “like least” or “new ideas or suggestions” and most responses were “NA”, “nothing” or “liked everything” kinds of answers. **A few participants mentioned specific needs and desires** – e.g., address autism spectrum, more anger management and parenting classes, and a wish for fitness and martial arts classes.

Summary

In just a few short years, the FRC has reached a stride! The team provides well used and well regarded outreach, education and service offerings of impressive scope and quality that address important needs for community wellness and prevention. Areas for potential quality improvement include: a) stabilizing utilization at less monthly variation for enhanced planning capacity; b) acting upon a selection of participant ideas about service offerings; and, c) expanding evaluation capacity to include additional metrics, such as whether workshop participants retain key training messages and whether referrals and linkages to other providers result in service use from those settings.

Valley Star Behavioral Health is an affiliate of Stars Behavioral Health Group (SBHG), a statewide provider of behavioral health care and related educational and social services to children, adolescents, young adult and adults and their family members. Valley Star’s Family Resource Center is funded through San Bernardino County’s Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) program.

ⁱ The figure is estimated conservatively from the FRC’s daily contact log. In order to facilitate access and comfort with the service process, staff sometimes avoid asking many questions (such as insisting on accurate name spellings, or gathering dates of birth), and they do not require social security numbers or other unique personal identifiers. The dataset is examined and corrected for likely name misspellings in order to reduce errors in counts (overestimating) of what most likely are discrete individuals being served on different dates. We also attempt to match on age, gender and/or zip code when these fields are available. This process will underestimate counts of discrete individuals whom may have the same first and last names. 650 records without both a first and last name for matching were excluded. Overall, roughly 15% of records required attention and adjusting of these types.

ⁱⁱ These reflect central tendencies per participant. The line on the graph corresponds to the right axis raw numbers, which are participant counts; the bars are proportions anchored to left axis percentages: dark blue bars are percentages of unduplicated participants making use of the service type; red bar is the proportion of those using the service type who used it more than once.