

2020 - 2021 REPORT



KITSAP *strong*

Helping all people flourish



Scaffolding in a moment of crisis

Covid-19 upended the landscape in 2020 and 2021.

As we swung from lockdowns to variants, chaos to vaccines, our partner organizations—the 115 nonprofits that make up Kitsap Strong—struggled to provide real, effective services to our community. And Kitsap Strong, as the backbone to that group, strove to support that work in any way we could.

With strong relationships with organizations and a desire to center on leadership within our community, we were able to adapt in this moment of crisis. Kitsap Strong administered Unity In The Community Relationship Needs COVID response funding in partnership with the Kitsap Community Foundation and the United Way of Kitsap County. We facilitated conversations to help partner organizations, from early learning to elder services, analyze the challenges they observed and explore creative solutions together. Under the direction of community leaders, we provided initial grant administrative support to help form the Kitsap Racial Equity and Empowerment Fund.

Relationships made all of this possible.

2021 also marked a time in which relationships shifted. Kody Russell, our longtime Executive Director, took a new position that will allow him to continue to focus on ending childhood trauma from a different angle. We were sad to see Kody go, but we rest assured, knowing that the backbone organization we shaped together is strong and thriving.

Kitsap Strong is a collective movement. The leaders, organizations, and community members who make up Kitsap Strong have determined its direction and are working daily on its mission: ending childhood trauma and increasing resilience in our county. Much has been accomplished, but there is more yet to do. We are here to support these efforts, no matter what crises come our way.

Alyson Rotter, Cristina Roark,
and Marlaina Simmons

Five Networks, One Goal



Kitsap Strong

is a coalition of more than 115 organizations that are collectively working together, grounded in the latest research, to transform systems so that we can improve the quality of life in Kitsap County for all people.

Our shared agenda:

Kitsap Strong is a movement, a group of community leaders working to prevent and overcome childhood trauma by building a culture of empathy, equity, and connection.

Our funders help make the difference

Kitsap Community Foundation
The Suquamish Tribe
United Way of Kitsap County
Ballmer Group
Kaiser Permanente
Kitsap Public Health District
Olympic College

Kitsap Strong Leadership Committee

City Chapel | Harrison Health Partners
| Kitsap Community Foundation | Kitsap Community Resources | Kitsap County | Kitsap County Dept. of Human Services | Kitsap County Prosecutor's Office | Kitsap Mental Health Services | Kitsap Public Health District | Kitsap Rescue Mission | Marvin Williams Center | Navy Fleet & Family Support Program | OESD 114 | Olympic College | Peninsula Com. Health Services | Port Gamble S'Klallam Re-Entry Program | Suquamish Foundation | The Suquamish Tribe | United Way of Kitsap County | WSU Extension | XParenting | YMCA

Backbone Staff

Alyson Rotter, Graduate Strong Network
Cristina Roark, Innovation (TIC) Network
Marlaina Simmons, NEAR Education Network
H.E.A.L. Network: Administered by WSU
Kitsap Extension and Kitsap Public Health District
Kody Russell, Executive Director 2015-2021

Contact Us

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271,473
people
impacted*

115
organizations
involved

What is Kitsap Strong?

A movement of more than 115 organizations that have come together to work on preventing childhood trauma and helping people – children and adults – who’ve experienced it. Through a collective effort called Kitsap Strong, these groups are working together to find creative ways to shift community dynamics in order to foster hope and self-healing.

Kitsap Strong also works to share new brain science with our community. Over the past seven years, we’ve shared this information with over **7,600 people directly, and we estimate that well over 370,000 others** have interacted with organizations and community groups that are studying this science with Kitsap Strong and making changes to their services. Dozens of organizations have made dramatic changes in the way they interact with their clients because of a new understanding of how trauma impacts the brain and what we all need to feel safe, connected, seen, and heard.

Kitsap Strong helps people prevent and overcome childhood trauma by:



Creating school and life success



Sharing new science about our brains and our bodies



Working with organizations to create a culture of empathy and connection



Neighbors supporting one another



Promoting nutrition and physical health

* We serve everyone in Kitsap County.

Our approach

We believe that if we can...

Change how organizations and people **think**



Then we can
Change how organizations and people **feel**



Then we can
Change how organizations and people **act**



Then we can
Help all individuals in our community thrive

Preventing childhood trauma

The path to preventing childhood trauma begins with education. As stated by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, “ACEs and their associated harms are preventable,” and that prevention begins with education.

7,762 People Educated

4

Resiliency Summits

223

Community Outreach Meetings

334

Community Trainings

129

Technical Assistance to Partner Organizations

Since 2015, Kitsap Strong has been conducting Collaborative Learning Academies, year-long, in-depth work groups for organizations and school teams that want to help their work places become trauma-informed.

To date, 127 organization teams and 35 school teams have taken part, meeting monthly for a deep dive into the science of trauma and hope.

Why is Kitsap Strong's work important?

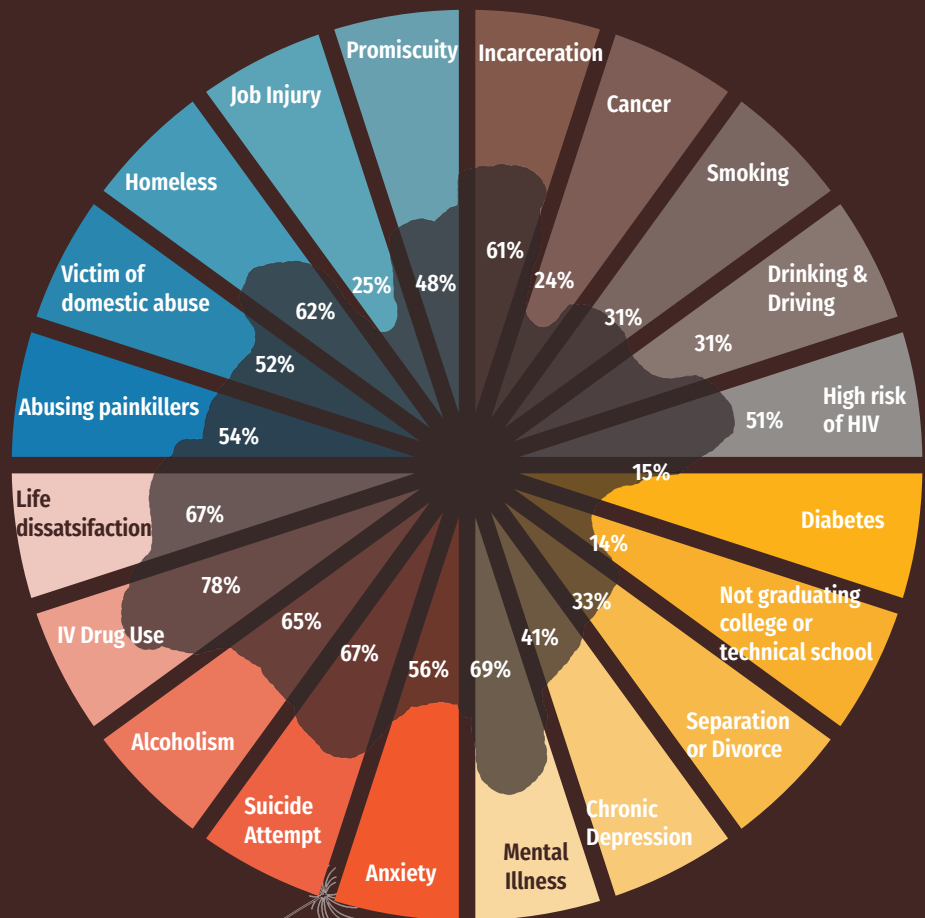
Childhood trauma is the root cause of most of the serious problems that people in our area face.

Everything from chronic disease to high divorce rates, drug abuse, depression, and homelessness have been linked to traumas in childhood.

The more traumas a person has had, the higher his or her risk for major challenges in adulthood.

37%
of Kitsap
residents report
having 3 or
more childhood
traumas (ACEs).

Based on 2011 BRFSS data.



Community Resilience: building hope

By building relationships, cultivating well being, and developing adaptive coping skills, we can transform a potentially toxic event into a tolerable one.

The latest brain science shares that social support and connectedness are key determinants to how well people thrive. When a group works together toward a common goal—whether it's raising children or improving neighborhood safety—the collective efficacy has a beneficial ripple effect.

This contextual resilience leads to fewer ACEs for children, less abuse, less neglect, better school performance, and better mental and physical health in people of all ages. Parents feel supported, and children have caring adults to turn to. The presence of these caring adults is one of the key markers of young people who feel hope and empowerment in their lives.



“This love (Indigenous love) is what researchers now call a “protective factor,” but we call it ancestral wisdom. I was born into this love as a cherished human of the Suquamish People. It is rooted and freely gifted. This love is the foundation of my personal resilience to all types of trauma. A resilience that is woven into a celestial wool blanket twined with that of my past and future ancestors.”

– Robin Sigo, Suquamish Foundation

Excerpt from *The Vastness of Indigenous love: A Thanksgiving Reflection*

Scaffolding

During Covid-19, Kitsap Strong supported a wide variety of community efforts including:

NAACP Vital Communications: this network of leaders met weekly since March 2020 to share critical health and safety information in more accessible ways to our community.

2020 Census: Our staff acted as the 2020 Census Coordinator to manage community outreach and information sharing through community partners to promote the completion of the 2020 census to ensure our county will receive adequate future funding to support our population.

COVID-19 Vaccine Equity Community Collaborative: Our staff initially consulted with the person hired into this public-facing role and bridged community relationships to bring diverse perspectives and recommendations that remove barriers to access for COVID-19 vaccination information.

Setting Bigger Tables

We all know that Covid-19 hit communities of color, people working in the service industry, and those at risk of homelessness extraordinarily hard.

Kitsap Community Foundation and the United Way of Kitsap County administered over \$300,000 in COVID-19 response funding to shore up nonprofits that provide the social safety net for those hardest hit by the pandemic and to fund projects specifically designed to help those in greatest need. Kitsap Strong administered the grant process overseeing Relationship Needs Funding for innovative proposals to reduce toxic stress for families and youth most impacted by COVID-19.

Kitsap Strong backbone staff provided initial administrative support to **Community Leaders** forming the **Kitsap Racial Equity and Empowerment Fund** to fundraise, develop a relational grant application process for distribution of COVID-19 response funds.

Kitsap Strong backbone staff expanded our advocacy approach to include Community Leaders at the annual **Elected Officials Community Luncheon**.



It's a
Shifting



Training-the-Trainer

Kitsap Strong has long been committed to the TTT model: Train-the-Trainer. By building skills in a trainer, who can then go forward and reach scores of people, information on brain science and resilience is shared in an efficient and powerful way.

In 2021, **Olympic Community of Health** paid for 20 participants from Kitsap Strong partner organization to take part in a Train-the-Trainer course that focused on the **NEAR** (Neuroscience, Epigenetics, ACEs and Resilience) sciences.

These 20 people, representing **nonprofits from all different sectors**, took part in an initial, immersive training, followed up by a year-long community of practice. These community of practice meetings allows the trainees to develop relationships within their learning cohort. Trainees shared real world experiences, challenges, and successes, allowing the whole group to learn from their stories.

RISE Training

In partnership with X Parenting, 39 youth mentors took part in a nine-month-long **Relational Integrated Supportive Experience (RISE)** training focused on preventing and intervening in behavioral health needs.

This free, intensive program helped mentors develop the concrete skills needed to help young people build self regulation. The **RISE Training** curriculum is an innovative approach, utilizing the best available research on neuroscience, trauma-informed care, resiliency, the science of hope, adult-learning, capacity/skill-building, and behavioral interventions.

Through the RISE Training, more than 10,100 Kitsap young people gained coaches, leaders, and mentors who have the skills needed to prevent a behavioral crisis. These mentors are now better equipped to offer trauma-informed programs that provide critical support to every young person in the group. Trainees report that they were also able to use these skills for themselves, with their families, and in their workplaces.

about
g Power



Empowering school & life success through equitable opportunities

30%

Percentage of our communities' students who earn a post-secondary credential

70%

Our goal by 2030.

*Data Source: Washington State Education and Research Data Center (ERDC).

Many of the experiences and learning opportunities that shape a child's life occur outside of the classroom in our communities. Science tells us that children develop the individual capabilities they need to overcome challenges through growth-promoting experiences and connections with caring and competent adults. Graduate Strong is a community response designed to help students develop the capabilities, connections, and credentials they need to flourish.

As a community, we are focused on three major impact opportunities: capabilities, connections, and credentials.

Capabilities

Building Individual Capabilities through Powerful Connections

Students can't learn — teachers can't teach — when they don't feel safe, seen, and heard. Our emphasis is on helping school leaders understand the science of trauma and resilience and how we can build the individual capabilities that help each student and staff flourish. Leadership teams have taken part in our year-long Collaborative Learning Academy (CLA) focused on trauma-sensitive, resilient school environments and social & emotional learning.

35 teams

Over 250 educators

All 6 school districts, early learning and higher education

Credentials

Credential Oriented Community

For many students, the cost of post-secondary education is a significant barrier. Yet, in Washington State, 46% of students don't even complete the FAFSA or WASFA, the first step in receiving federal and/or state financial aid, effectively leaving \$50 million in educational aid on the table.

Financial Aid Navigators: caring adults in the community who are ready to help any student who wants assistance with applying for financial aid. With this robust community support, we hope that every student who qualifies for state and federal aid will apply for it.

67 Navigators speaking 4 languages

2019-2020
1200 students applied (46%)

2020-2021
1100 students applied (43%)



Focus Areas

Building school and community capacity in the Kitsap region by focusing on strengths-based approaches:

Discipline Policies
and Restorative
Practices

Trauma Sensitive
Schools

Mentorship:
Building Hope &
Resilience

Credentials:
Technical, 2-year, and
4-year Enrollment

College Persistence

Attendance

Future Bound Action:

College Bound Sign-Ups, Internships, Dual Credit Enrollment, and Financial Aid Completion

Connections Nurturing the gifts that make each child exceptional

Children and youth need a community of caring adults to help them recognize their potential, identify their excellence, and envision their future. Through the CLA and Mentoring workgroup, we work with formal and informal mentors, teachers, and other caring adults to build their skills and capacity so they can help children recognize their potential and identify their excellence.

We connect educators and other caring adults to regulation-building skills and materials and provide equipment to schools that want to build resiliency skills in their students.

The “Welcome to Your Future” program for middle and high school students lets students participate in a simulation event that empowers them to choose a career, manage their own “money,” and interact with community volunteers, building financial and life skills.

**RISE Relational
Mentor Training
brought to 60
caring adults**



**62
volunteers**

**2019-2020
825 students**



Building a culture of empathy, equity and connection during COVID-19

Our goal for this network has been to create “brave spaces” for leaders of organizations to put their knowledge of the science of trauma, hope, and resilience into practice and tailor their own responses on “what to do next” with their shift in perspective. In less than a year after implementing a train-the-trainer strategy using a common curriculum to build capacity for organizations/coalitions/agencies, we were hit by a global pandemic and innovative supportive partnerships adapting their services to reach the most impacted was the highest priority response for collectively navigating through the uncertainty of working physically distanced when we know social connection is key to growth and learning

FUNDING LEARNING & INNOVATION

Since 2015, we have been funding community orgs to participate in the Collaborative Learning Academy (CLA) with the goals of 1) increasing their knowledge of the science of trauma & resiliency, 2) building uncommon partnerships between orgs in our community. Through the CLA, we develop strong relationships and take a year-long deep dive into the latest science, concluding with our Innovation Award Grants to inspire science-informed collaborative action. To conclude the last CLA cohort, funds and resources were dedicated to one grant award for innovative collaborative partnership.



TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

FOLLOWING THE ENERGY

We believe that the wisdom is in our community. Our approach is to lead with listening, follow the energy, and connect leaders with shared values and goals. The Innovation Network creates spaces for powerful conversations about trauma, inequity, implicit bias, cultural humility, etc. These conversations lead to brilliant solutions and we empower organizations to learn together and share solutions throughout our network.

During the pandemic, the focus prioritized shifting power and bridging relationships so that resources reach the most impacted.

In 2019, 26 participants, representing 18 organizations, participate in a 4-day train-the-trainer event to develop capacity towards becoming a trauma-informed community. 12 organizations remain active in community of practice and support. 6 organizations maintained certification and other TIC curricula are pursued to deepen the trainer toolset. Trainers continue to educate their staff team as organizational priorities permit.

Welcome Home Program

*"In the height of a pandemic when isolation was at its highest in our community, Kitsap Strong was there to support and continue much needed services. In the wake of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the **Welcome Home Program** partnered with Kitsap Strong to put together a Trauma Informed Videos Series for Law Enforcement and Justice Involved Professionals. When most agencies shut down and did not know what to do, Kitsap Strong was our stability. They helped to redesign the original plan of our in-person training to a video series. Without the support of Kitsap Strong, the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe's Re-entry Program would not have been able to complete this project. The Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe is seen, heard, and valued by Kitsap Strong, and we value our relationship."*

– Janel McFeat, Re-Entry Program Manager, Strategic Planner
Welcome Home Program

"This training opened my eyes to so much info. It highlighted many questions over the years and helped me discover ways to help myself so I can be attentive and valuable to the population I serve. Thank you!"

– Justice Involved Professional



"The consciousness of "holding every life as sacred" is, to me, the essence of both Trauma Informed and Restorative work."

– Sue Ann Miglino, Dispute Resolution Center Restorative Justice Coordinator

Innovation Award Grantees

Dispute Resolution Center of Kitsap County and Kitsap Parent Child Assistance Program (PCAP) adapted their innovative proposal to meet the time and the needs of the mothers they were intending to support.

"I liked the Circles for staff. They were a chance to reflect. The PCAP clients, both current and graduates, also liked the Circles. They felt safe, liked seeing others, and had an opportunity to share."

– Cheryl Arbordoh, PCAP Case Manager





Promoting nutrition & physical health

HEALTHY EATING ACTIVE LIVING (HEAL) NETWORK

We know that an individual's health is deeply connected to the community in which they live, work and play. To reduce obesity and its resulting impacts, we focus on policies, systems and environmental change strategies. By working together we can create change to support a healthier lifestyle for all.



In 2017, 40.2% of Kitsap adults were at a healthy weight (BMI=18.5-24.9)

Kitsap County Core Public Health Indicators, 12/2018



In 2021, 26% of Kitsap youth (grade 8) report eating 5 or more fruits/vegetables daily.

Washington State Healthy Youth Survey 2021

HEALTHY EATING STRATEGIES



Improve access to markets that sell or provide high quality fruits and vegetables in underserved communities.



Provide opportunities to build skills and knowledge regarding healthy foods and beverages.

ACTIVE LIVING STRATEGIES



Improve access to safe and affordable places for physical activity.



Establish policies & programs that increase physical activity.

HEAL PROJECTS

- Healthy Eating Work Group
- Kitsap Moves
- Kitsap County Resource Map
- Early Childhood Resource Guide

KEY MEASURES

- ▶ Reduction in the prevalence of overweight and obesity among residents
- ▶ Increase in the percentage of residents who engage in regular physical activity.
- ▶ Increase in the percent of citizens who practice healthy eating habits

kitsapheal.org





STRATEGY FOR BUILDING RESILIENCE



Thriving Neighborhoods

NEIGHBORS SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER

Day by day, we strive to improve how we listen to each voice in our community and create pathways for those voices to have influence on community resources.

We believe every member of our community can be a leader, so Kitsap Strong works to bring NEAR sciences to as many people as possible, empowering them to take hope-filled action in their lives.

Our Thriving Neighborhoods Network is still in its infancy. We are actively working to gather “natural leaders” to develop community goals and take collective action. Neighbors need to be able to identify the issues they want to tackle and receive support as they move forward. We’re very excited to be on the brink of putting this community-based and community-driven program into action.

Kitsap Strong includes...



BAINBRIDGE
YOUTH SERVICES



Big Brothers Big Sisters



COUGS RISE



COLLEGE
SUCCESS
FOUNDATION



Discovery Alternative High School
South Kitsap School District



KITSAP COUNTY
Human Services



KITSAP COUNTY
Therapeutic Court



KITSAP REGIONAL
Library



KSAC
Kitsap Sexual Assault Center



KITSAP
SAIVS



MultiCare
BetterConnected



OUR
GEMS



OLYMPIC COLLEGE



THE Q CENTER



RAISING Resilience



WCCAN
WASHINGTON COLLEGE ACCESS NETWORK



UNIVERSITY of
WASHINGTON



WorkSource
A proud partner of the AmericanJobCenter network



eliminating racism
empowering women
YWCA
Kitsap County

teenCOUNCIL



OLYMPIC COLLEGE
Foundation

