



Family Focus

Pride Month & The Power of Family Support

June is Pride Month, a time to celebrate and support LGBTQIA+ individuals and communities. It is also an opportunity to recognize the important role families play in promoting positive behavioral health outcomes for LGBTQIA+ youth.

Research shows that LGBTQIA+ young people are more likely to experience mental health challenges, including anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts, often due to stigma, discrimination, and lack of support. Family acceptance can be a powerful protective factor. Youth who feel supported by their families experience better mental health, stronger self-esteem, and greater overall well-being. Even small acts of affirmation, open communication, and unconditional love can have a lasting impact.



We understand that families may have questions as they navigate their child's journey. We provide caregivers with a safe space to learn, connect, and receive guidance from others with lived experience. By strengthening families, we help create supportive environments where LGBTQIA+ youth can feel valued, understood, and empowered to thrive.

Resources

Celebrating Community on Juneteenth

Juneteenth is a time to celebrate freedom, honor resilience, and recognize the strength that grows through family and community. It reminds us of the importance of connection, belonging, and coming together to support one another.

Across Maryland, communities will gather for festivals, music, learning opportunities, and family-friendly activities that celebrate culture, history, and hope. We encourage families to explore local events and enjoy this special opportunity to connect and celebrate together.

To find events near you, visit the Maryland events calendar at the link below!

JUNE TEENTH

Juneteenth Events

Next Month: Parent CRAFT Webinar for Families

When a young person is struggling with substance use, families often feel unsure of how to help. In July, we will be offering a Parent CRAFT webinar designed to give parents and caregivers practical tools for addressing adolescent and transitional-age youth (TAY) substance use and encouraging their loved one to engage in treatment.



Through highly engaging online video segments and guided skill-building activities, participants will learn effective communication techniques, strategies for responding to risky behaviors, and ways to support positive change while maintaining healthy family relationships.

Whether you are currently supporting a young person with substance use challenges or simply want to build your knowledge and skills, Parent CRAFT offers evidence-informed approaches that can help families navigate these difficult situations with greater confidence.

This webinar is brought to you in partnership with the University of Maryland School of Medicine and the National Center for School Mental Health.

Stay tuned for registration details!

Summer Strategies for a Happier, Healthier Break



Summer can be a welcome break from the busy school year, but for many children with behavioral health challenges, the loss of routine and structure can create new difficulties. Changes in schedules, increased downtime, and disruptions in services can sometimes lead to increased anxiety, frustration, or behavioral concerns.

One of the best ways to support children during the summer is to maintain some predictable routines. Regular wake-up and

bedtimes, meal schedules, and planned activities can help children feel more secure and reduce stress. A simple visual calendar or daily checklist can also help children know what to expect.

At the same time, summer offers opportunities for fun, learning, and family connection. Activities don't have to be expensive or complicated. Consider visiting local parks and libraries, taking nature walks, doing arts and crafts, gardening, swimming, cooking together, or enjoying family game nights. Physical activity is especially beneficial for helping children manage emotions and improve overall well-being.

Social connections are important too. Playdates, community programs, summer camps, library events, and youth groups can help children stay engaged and connected with peers throughout the summer months.

Most importantly, remember that every family is different. The goal isn't a perfect summer schedule, it's finding a balance of structure, flexibility, and fun that works for your child.

Need inspiration?
Check out these popular sites:

[PBS Parents](#)

[Understood](#)

[GoNoodle](#)

Bonus Resource for Parents

The Thriving Kids Podcast, hosted by Dr. Dave Anderson of the Child Mind Institute, tackles a common parenting challenge in each episode, from anxiety and tantrums to school struggles, and offers practical, science-backed strategies for families.

[Thriving Kids Podcast](#)

Provider Training Opportunity

The National Center for School Mental Health is offering a free training for Maryland behavioral health professionals: Family-Based Behavioral Treatments for Youth Substance Use - Best Practices. This workshop provides an overview of evidence-based approaches for addressing adolescent substance misuse in outpatient clinical settings, with a focus on engaging parents and caregivers as active partners in treatment.



Participants will learn practical tools and clinical techniques that support adolescents, strengthen parenting skills, improve family communication, and address family dynamics that may contribute to substance use. The training also emphasizes culturally responsive care and strategies for working with diverse youth and families facing multiple stressors. Continuing education credits are available for eligible professionals.

Registration information and additional details at the link!

[Register Here](#)

Get Connected & Stay Informed!

Online and In-Person Support Groups

MCF offers many support groups to provide a safe space for you to learn, share and receive compassionate help. All are facilitated by trained Family Peer Support Specialists who have dealt with similar challenges in their own families. Groups are free for all participants and held on different days of the week and different times of day. Find one or more that can work for you and join us soon!

[Find a Support Group](#)

Workshops, Trainings, & Other Events

MCF offers a wide range of events, trainings and workshops for families who have a loved one with mental health, substance use or problem gambling challenges. Events are held in communities across the state or virtually and are offered at no cost to participants. Visit our website to learn more!

[Past and Upcoming Events](#)

Employment Opportunities

We have employment opportunities that might be perfect for you or someone you know! We currently have openings in many areas of the State. Please check our website for a complete list of openings.

- Family Peer Support Specialist (Bilingual) - Substance Use (Must live in Baltimore)
- Family Peer Support Specialist - Substance Use (Must live in Baltimore)
- Family Peer Support Specialist - Mental Health (Must Live in Howard County)
- Family Peer Support Specialist - Mental Health (Must Live in Allegany County)
- Family Peer Support Specialist - Mental Health (Must Live in Somerset County)

[Employment Opportunities](#)

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