



MCF
maryland coalition of families

Family Focus

ADHD Awareness Month: Promoting Understanding, Reducing Stigma

October is ADHD Awareness Month: a time to reflect, learn, and grow in our understanding of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, especially as it affects our children and loved ones.

For many families, ADHD is more than just a diagnosis, it's part of the daily rhythm of life. It can mean mornings that start with forgotten shoes, homework battles that test everyone's patience, and emotions that sometimes feel too big for the room. But it can also mean creativity, passionate curiosity, and a unique way of seeing the world.

We know that behind every child or teen with ADHD is a caregiver doing their best to understand, support, and advocate, often while navigating their own feelings of frustration, guilt, or uncertainty. This month is a powerful reminder that ADHD is not a result of bad parenting or a lack of discipline. It's a neurodevelopmental condition that deserves compassion, informed support, and above all, hope.

Let's use this month to challenge the stigma, share our stories, and uplift one another. You are not alone, and neither are your children.

Check out this toolkit for parents created by Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD). It offers tips, articles, and resources to help families better understand and manage ADHD at home and in school.

Toolkit for
Parents



Navigating Halloween with Sensory or

Emotional Challenges

Halloween can be a tricky time for children with sensory processing or emotional challenges. The costumes, crowds, noises, and unexpected interactions can quickly become overwhelming. But with a little preparation, parents can help their child feel more comfortable and confident during the holiday.



Start by talking through what to expect, whether it's a party, a school parade, or trick-or-treating. These traditions can be confusing for children with autism or other sensory sensitivities, so offering clear explanations ahead of time can help reduce anxiety. Reading books about Halloween or drawing pictures together can be a great way to start conversations and answer any questions your child may have.

Another helpful tip is to role-play the trick-or-treating experience. Have a sibling or friend play the part of the candy-giver behind a closed door, so your child can practice what to say and do in a low-pressure environment. This kind of playful preparation helps build confidence and comfort with the routine.

If traditional Halloween activities feel overwhelming, that's okay too. Look for sensory-friendly alternatives in your community! Many local event calendars, community centers, and neighborhood groups promote inclusive Halloween events tailored to children who may need a quieter, more predictable environment.

Check out this article by Acorn Health for more tips and tricks!

Halloween Tips

National Bullying Prevention Month



Learning that your child is being bullied can bring up a range of intense emotions: anger, fear, sadness, and even helplessness. These reactions are completely natural. As a parent, your instinct is to protect, support, and ensure your child feels safe, valued, and loved.

To be an effective advocate for your child, it's important to first acknowledge and process your own emotions. Then, shift your focus toward building a clear and supportive action plan.

The National Bullying Prevention Center is a valuable resource for families. Their tools and guidance cover a wide range of topics, including:

- [How to talk to your child about bullying](#)
- [What to do if your child with disabilities is being bullied](#)
- [How to respond if your child is engaging in bullying behavior](#)
- [What to do if your child witnesses bullying](#)

- Steps for creating a personalized action plan

No family is alone in facing bullying. The right support and information can make a meaningful difference for your child and for others. Learn more at the link below:

What Parents Should Know About Bullying

Program Spotlight: Maryland's Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports

There's something exciting happening in Maryland, and it's all about supporting students and families!

The Maryland Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports is working to bring more mental health and family support services into schools and communities across the state. That means more counseling, crisis support, family resources, and easier access to care, all designed to help kids thrive and give families the support they need.



And guess what? We're part of it!

We're proud to be involved in this important work in Anne Arundel, St. Mary's, and Washington counties.

We're excited to bring evidence-based practices including the Family Check-Up program and Botvin Lifeskills Training Parent Program to families in these counties and want to extend our sincere thanks to the school personnel we partner with on this important initiative. Together, we can ensure every child receives the support they need both in school and in life.

CHRC Impact Statement

A Successful Family Leadership Program in Frederick County!

We're thrilled to share that our Family Leadership Program in Frederick County was a great success last month!

This two-day training is designed for parents and caregivers of school-aged children with mental health challenges. Participants attend workshops focused on:

- Understanding their child's behavioral health needs

- Navigating special education and other critical systems
- Becoming effective advocates for their child, themselves, and their communities
- Recognizing the importance of self-care and its impact on caregiving



We're incredibly proud of our September graduates in Frederick and wish them continued success on their journeys.

We aim to bring this empowering program to as many families as possible, wherever funding allows. Be sure to watch for upcoming events in your area!



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 are 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](#)

MCF 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.

- Program Coordinator (Columbia, Maryland)
- Youth Engagement Specialist (Must live in Prince George's County)
- Family Peer Support Specialist - Substance Use - Bilingual (Must live in Baltimore City)
- Family Peer Support Specialist - Substance Use (Must live in Worcester County)
- Family Peer Support Specialist - Mental Health (Must live in Wicomico or Somerset County)
- Family Peer Support Specialist - Substance Use (Must live in Baltimore County)

Employment Opportunities



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