

MCF
maryland coalition of families

Family Focus

National Family Caregivers Month

This month, we celebrate National Family Caregivers Month and want to recognize the parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and all other caregivers who support children and youth with behavioral health challenges.

We know that caregiving is more than appointments and advocacy, **it's love in action**. It's showing up every day, even when it's hard, and finding strength you didn't know you had.



Caregivers of children with behavioral health needs walk a unique path. There are moments of pride and progress, and there are moments of frustration and fatigue. But through it all, your dedication shines.

This November, we celebrate YOU:

- Take a moment to recognize your resilience and all you do.
- Connect with another caregiver or one of our Family Peer Support Specialists, someone who truly gets it.
- Share your story and inspire another family on a similar journey.
- Offer a kind word to a caregiver in your life, you never know how much it might mean.

To every caregiver: we see you, we honor you, and we thank you!

Save the Date! Family Day in Annapolis



Each year, during the Maryland General Assembly session, MCF brings families from across the state to Annapolis to advocate for children's behavioral health. Participants have the opportunity to meet with their elected representatives and their staff to share stories and perspectives on legislation that impacts their lives.

The experience is empowering for families, and legislators often note that these personal stories help them better understand the real-world effects of the bills they consider. MCF provides transportation, lunch, and hosts a program with guest speakers, making it easy for families to show up, get involved, and be heard. Turn lived experience into legislative action!

This year's event will take place on **February 12**. Stay tuned for registration details!

Survey Finds Rise in Disordered Gambling in Maryland

A recent study conducted by the Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling at the University of Maryland School of Medicine shows that since the legalization of mobile sports betting in Maryland nearly three years ago, **rates of disordered gambling among adults have risen from 4% to 5.7%**.

Key findings include:



- 17% of Marylanders reported betting on sports in the past year, with 12% betting on online or mobile platforms, almost quadrupling from 3% in 2022 when it was first legalized.
- 15% of Maryland adults who had gambled on sports in the past year met criteria for disordered gambling.
- Men are affected at nearly triple the rate of women (8.2% vs 3.6%). More than half (66%) of Marylanders with disordered gambling are male.
- On the positive side, help-seeking behaviors are increasing: 13% of adults with known gambling problems reported ever using a helpline or outpatient services in 2024, a 73% increase from 2022.

Sports betting apps are often advertised to young people, putting them at particular risk. According to the Pew Research Center, **17% of adults under 30** report having placed an online sports wager in the past year, compared with only **7% three years ago**. Read more at the links below.

MD Center of Excellence

Pew Research Center

If you are caring for a youth or young adult who is displaying gambling challenges, we're here to provide support and guidance for your family.

Join Us on Giving Tuesday: Give Hope and Amplify Family Voice

On Tuesday, December 2nd, we're joining millions around the world for Giving Tuesday, a global day of generosity dedicated to making a difference where it matters most. We invite you to be part of it by helping us bring hope, understanding, and connection to families across the state.

At MCF, Family Peer Support means families helping families. People with lived experience walking beside others who are facing similar challenges.

But our work goes beyond family peer support. We advocate for systems that truly work for families, lifting their voices, advancing meaningful change, and ensuring that policymakers understand the realities they face every day.

Your support makes it possible for us to reach more families, provide one-on-one peer connections, and strengthen our advocacy efforts so that all families can thrive.

Join us in giving hope, connection, and a stronger voice to families, because every family deserves support from someone who truly understands and someone who will stand up for them.

Here's how you can make a difference:

- Donate on December 2nd to support family peer support and advocacy across the state.
- Share our message and help others learn about the power of family-to-family support.
- Spread the word to connect more families with someone who cares.

Together, we can strengthen families, build community, and ensure every parent and caregiver knows they are not alone, and that their voices matter.



Give
Today

Congratulations to our November Family

Leadership Program graduates!



These dedicated parents and caregivers completed an intensive two-day training designed to strengthen their advocacy and parenting skills. Through workshops on understanding behavioral health needs, navigating special education and other systems of care, building practical strategies to support their children, and practicing self-care, participants gained tools they can put into action right away.

Each graduate left with a personalized action plan and new connections to a supportive community of peers. They now join our Family Leadership Program alumni network, where they continue learning, growing, and using their voices to influence policy, support other families, and strengthen their communities.

Excellent work, and thank you for your commitment to supporting your families and communities!

These programs are offered in counties where funding is available - stay tuned for updates on where we'll be next!

**Our Fiscal Year 2025
Impact Report Is Almost Here!
More details coming soon!**

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!

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!

[Find a Support Group](#)

[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.

- **Youth Engagement Specialist (Must live in Prince George's County)**
- **Youth Peer Support - Problem Gambling**
- **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 - Substance Use (Must live in Baltimore County)**

[Employment Opportunities](#)



www.mdcoalition.org



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