



Thankful for Another Year Supporting Maryland Families

As the year comes to a close, we want to pause and reflect on what this year has meant to us. We are deeply grateful for another year spent supporting Maryland families and for the trust you place in us as we walk alongside you in supporting your loved ones.

Every connection, conversation, and shared moment reminds us why family peer support matters. We are thankful for the families who reach out, the partners who collaborate with us, and the community that continues to show up with compassion and care.

As we look ahead to the new year, we carry this gratitude with us. It fuels our commitment to continue showing up, listening, and advocating for families across Maryland. Thank you for being part of our community, we look forward to continuing this work together in the year ahead.

If you're in a position to give, please click the link below to help MCF support even more families in the coming year.

Thank
you

[Give Today](#)

Navigating the Holidays with Care and Connection



The holiday season can bring joy, but it can also bring stress and big emotions, especially for families supporting children with mental health needs. Changes in routine, added expectations, and busy schedules can make this time of year feel especially heavy. To support you during this time, we invite you to check out our recent blog post, which shares gentle self-care tips to help you navigate the holidays with a little more ease.

Please remember: **you are not alone**. Reaching out for support is an important act of strength. Family peer support offers connection, guidance, and understanding when things feel difficult.

Our office will be closed between Christmas and the New Year to allow our staff time to rest and spend time with their own families, so they can return refreshed and better able to support you in the year ahead. During this time, if you or a loved one need immediate emotional support, you can call or text 988, the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Support is free, confidential, and available 24/7.

We look forward to reconnecting and continuing to support you and your family in the new year.

[Read the Blog](#)

Early Exposure Matters: Gambling Risks

As holiday shopping gets underway, it may be helpful to keep in mind that scratch-off lottery tickets aren't recommended as gifts for children. Research suggests that early exposure to gambling, even in lighthearted or playful ways, can shape how young people think about risk and chance as they grow.

Our work in problem gambling prevention centers on supporting youth and young adults, particularly those who may be beginning to show signs of risky gaming or gambling behaviors. These patterns are often linked to features found in video games, sports betting apps, and other digital platforms that resemble gambling.

By staying informed and thoughtful, we can all make choices that encourage healthy development and positive experiences for the young people in our lives.

For more helpful information, check out the Problem Gambling FAQ below:

[National Council on Problem Gambling](#)



Family Day in Annapolis: A New Approach This Year



Since 2000, MCF has ensured that family voices are heard in Annapolis, helping elected representatives understand how legislation affects individuals with behavioral health challenges and their families. During the annual General Assembly session, MCF brings families to Annapolis from across Maryland to advocate for children, youth, and adults with behavioral health needs, including mental health, substance use, and problem gambling challenges. Participants meet with legislators, share their stories, and help lawmakers

understand the real-life impact of the bills under consideration. Transportation and lunch are provided at no cost, along with a program featuring guest speakers.

This year, based on your feedback, we're trying something new. Instead of pre-scheduled appointments, participants can visit the House and Senate buildings after the program and speak with legislators at their own pace, either individually or with others from their district. MCF staff will be on-site to guide you and provide everything you need for meaningful and impactful conversations.

To help you feel prepared, information sessions and materials will be available before the event. **Registration opens on January 1**, so mark your calendars and plan to join us for this empowering opportunity to make your voice heard.

Family Day in Annapolis

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.

- **Youth Engagement Specialist (Must live in Prince George's County)**
- **Family Peer Support Specialist - Military Families (Must live in Anne Arundel or PG County)**
- **Family Peer Support Specialist - Substance Use - Bilingual (Must live in Baltimore City)**

[Employment Opportunities](#)



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