



# Family Focus

## Problem Gambling Awareness Month



March is Problem Gambling Awareness Month, a time to raise awareness and highlight the growing impact of gambling harms, especially among youth and young adults.

With the rise of online gaming and gambling-like features, more young people are experiencing challenges that can affect their mental health, relationships, and daily lives. What may start as entertainment can quickly become something more difficult to manage.

We understand these challenges through lived experience. Our team includes peer support specialists who have been there, either as young people or as parents and caregivers, and can offer understanding, guidance, and a listening ear without judgment.

If you or your family are navigating concerns around gaming or gambling, you are not alone. This month is a reminder that support is available, and starting the conversation can make all the difference.

Follow our social media campaign **#DontBetYetMD** for updates, and use the hashtag to help spread education and awareness.

## Resource Spotlight

### Problem Gambling Resources for Youth and Parents!

We recently updated the Problem Gambling page on our website to better outline the full range of services we offer for both young people and parents/caregivers. This includes access to dedicated peer support specialists for each group, as well as a continually expanding catalog of helpful resources.

If you haven't explored the page yet, we encourage you to take a look! Among the available tools are a self-screening resource for young people who may be concerned about their gambling or gaming habits, along with conversation guides

designed to help parents start meaningful discussions with their children about these topics.



[Explore This Resource](#)

## Supporting Military Families: A Recommended Read



“When one person joins the military, the whole family serves.”

This powerful opening line from a recent article captures the reality many military families live every day, especially children and young people navigating frequent moves, separation, and added emotional stress.

We encourage you to read this article, which highlights both the challenges military-connected youth face and the barriers that can make it harder to access support.

We are proud to support military families. Through lived experience, we understand these challenges and are here to help families talk through them and find support together.

[Read the Article](#)

## Spring is Coming: How Changing Seasons Can Affect Children’s Mental Health

As the days grow longer and flowers begin to bloom, the arrival of spring brings a sense of renewal and possibility. For children, this seasonal shift can have a real impact on their mental health, both positive and challenging.

The change in weather, light, and routines can influence mood, energy levels, and overall well-being. Longer days and more sunlight often boost vitamin D levels and can lift spirits, encouraging children to spend more time outdoors, engage in physical activity,



and connect with peers. These activities are vital for supporting healthy emotional development and reducing stress.

At the same time, transitions can be stressful. Shifting schedules, the end of familiar routines, or pressure to “get back on track” after winter can trigger anxiety or irritability in some children. Parents and caregivers can help by maintaining consistent routines, checking in regularly about feelings, and encouraging open conversations about changes, big or small. Supporting their mental health through these seasonal transitions helps build resilience and creates opportunities for learning, play, and positive connection.

And with the warmer months ahead, we have lots of family-friendly events planned!

Stay tuned for opportunities to get outdoors, connect with your community, and enjoy activities that support both fun and well-being for children and families alike.

### MCF Events

## Session in Progress: Updates, Highlights, and Next Steps



We are at a pivotal point in the Maryland General Assembly session, with all bills now introduced and moving through their respective committees. As we await next steps, we want to thank everyone who shared their stories! Your input has been instrumental in shaping testimony and informing legislators.

Several key bills we’re tracking are advancing. These include proposals to improve transparency and accountability in schools, such as tracking emergency evaluation petitions (HB 1060) and requiring notification when IEP services are missed (HB 1368). Other legislation focuses on strengthening supports for students, including recognizing external autism diagnoses during school evaluations (HB 901), allowing advance enrollment for children of active service members (HB 102), and enhancing educational and developmental support for youth in residential care (HB 396).

Some bills have already passed the House and moved to the Senate, while others await committee recommendations ahead of the March 23 crossover deadline. We’ll continue to share updates as the session moves toward its conclusion on April 13.

## 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

### 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

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!

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](#)

## 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 Manager - Remote (Must live in Maryland)
- Family Peer Support Specialist (Bilingual) - Substance Use (Must live in Baltimore)
- Family Peer Support Specialist - Substance Use (Must live in Baltimore)

[Employment Opportunities](#)

*We're here because we've been there too*



[www.mdcoalition.org](http://www.mdcoalition.org)



[Donate Today!](#)

Maryland Coalition of Families | 8950 State Route 108 Suite 223 | Columbia, MD 21045 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email & social marketing for free!