



MCF
maryland coalition of families

Family Focus

Navigating the Transition Years

A Handbook for Families of Young Adults with Mental Health Needs



2023

NAVIGATING THE TRANSITION YEARS

A Handbook for Families of Young Adults with
Mental Health Needs

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Maryland Coalition of Families

The transition from high school to young adulthood is challenging for most young people, but even more difficult for those with mental health disabilities. For these youth and their families, there is often a great deal of anxiety, uncertainty and confusion about what comes next.

Maryland Coalition of Families is pleased to announce the publication of *Navigating the Transition Years*, a handbook for parents and caregivers who have children with mental health challenges.

Originally published in 2010, this updated publication helps families take proactive steps to identify the right pathway for their child as they transition from high school to young adulthood. It includes vital information for families about transition planning, vocational and post-secondary education options, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), health care, housing and legal matters.

[Download the
Handbook](#)

Parent CRAFT

A Tool to Guide Conversations About Substance Use

Parent CRAFT is a self-paced online video course that teaches parents the skills they need to meet the risks of substance abuse.

Parent CRAFT is based on the proven CRAFT method and is for parents who know their youth is using substances or who need support to help their child accept treatment.



The course is designed to empower parents to build effective communication skills and teaches participants how to use positive reinforcement and natural consequences to help their child break the cycle of using substances. Parent CRAFT has a 71% success rate at getting adolescents to accept professional help and is shown to decrease episodes of anger, anxiety, depression and negative physical symptoms that impact the entire family.

MCF is proud to host a webinar for behavioral health providers to learn more about the program and its use in a clinical setting. Up to 1.5 Category I/A continuing education credits will be awarded to eligible participants. Please use the link below to register.

September 21, 2023
12 pm - 1:00 pm
Virtual Meeting

**Learn More about Parent
CRAFT**

**Register for the
Webinar**

Parent CRAFT is made freely available to parents in Maryland by the National Center for School Mental Health at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, with funding from the Maryland Behavioral Health Administration and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.



MCF Board Member Spotlight: Yojinde Paxton

We are excited to welcome Paxton (as she prefers to be called) to the MCF Board of Directors. She is a native Baltimorean, retired “Sneakerhead” turned Educator/Special Education Advocate and Consultant. Paxton has a Bachelor of Science degree in Public Relations, Master’s Degree in Special Education, and a post graduate certificate in Applied Behavioral Analysis. For nearly 8 years, she has been a Baltimore City Schools Education Specialist II in the Parent Response Unit and a Special Education consultant.

When asked why joining the MCF board was important to her, Paxton said, ***“As a change agent in my local neighborhood, I wanted to make an impact on a larger scale with MCF. I want to ensure that everyone in the State has equitable access to support, and being a part of MCF helps me to do that. I want to advocate for behavioral health through the justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion lens, particularly for those who have been disparaged in the***

past from these critical services.”

Paxton was instrumental to bringing the First Lady of Maryland and children’s mental health advocate Dawn Moore to MCF’s annual statewide all-staff meeting this past June. It was a great surprise to our staff!

Welcome Paxton! Thank you for your dedication. We are very grateful and honored to work with you.

Back-to-School Tips for Supporting Your Child's Mental Health and Wellness



As we gear up for the new school year, it's important to prioritize your child's mental health and overall well-being. Here are some valuable tips to help you create a positive and supportive back-to-school experience:

1. **Open Communication:** Encourage open and honest conversations with your child about their feelings regarding the upcoming school year. Address any concerns or anxieties they may have, and let them know that their emotions are valid and understood.
2. **Active Listening:** Be an attentive listener when your child wants to share their thoughts. Create a safe space where they can express themselves without judgment.
3. **Mindfulness Practices:** Teach your child mindfulness techniques, such as deep breathing and meditation. These practices can help them manage stress and stay focused.
4. **Encourage Social Connections:** Support your child in building and maintaining positive friendships. Social interactions play a crucial role in their emotional development.
5. **Seek Help When Needed:** If you notice persistent signs of distress or significant changes in behavior, don't hesitate to seek guidance from a mental health professional. Early intervention can make a difference.
6. **Lead by Example:** Demonstrate healthy coping strategies and self-care practices in your own life. Your actions serve as a powerful model for your child's behavior.
7. **Celebrate Achievements:** Recognize and celebrate your child's accomplishments, both big and small. Positive reinforcement can boost their self-confidence and motivation.

Remember, your child's mental health and well-being are just as important as their academic success. By incorporating these tips into your back-to-school routine, you're taking proactive steps to ensure a positive and fulfilling school year ahead.

MCF is here to support you along the way!

International Overdose Awareness Day

On August 31st, we observe International Overdose



Awareness Day. This day holds immense significance as a global initiative aimed at raising awareness, reducing stigma, and commemorating those who have lost their lives to drug overdose. It serves as a poignant reminder of the devastating impact of substance abuse on individuals, families, and communities worldwide. By shining a spotlight on overdose prevention, education, and support, it underscores the urgent need for accessible treatment options, harm reduction strategies, and compassionate understanding for those struggling with addiction. International Overdose Awareness Day fosters empathy, promotes dialogue, and encourages collaborative efforts to address the opioid crisis and substance misuse, ultimately working towards a healthier and safer future for all.

[Learn More or Get Involved](#)

Get Connected With Our 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. Current groups are available for:

- Parents and caregivers of children with behavioral health challenges
- Young adults ages 18-26 with behavioral health challenges
- Anyone who cares for a person with a substance use issue (alcohol or drugs)
- Parents who have lost a child to overdose
- Anyone who cares for a person struggling with problem gambling

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](#)

Upcoming Trainings & 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!

[Upcoming Events](#)



Based on the June 2023
Employee Engagement Survey

MCF Employment Opportunities

MCF is growing, and 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.

- **Team Supervisor - Baltimore City**
- **Human Resources Coordinator**
- **Family Peer Support Specialist - Substance Use (Baltimore City residency requirement)**
- **Family Peer Support Specialist (Montgomery County residency requirement)**
- **Family Peer Support Specialist (Worcester County residency requirement)**

[Employment Opportunities](#)

For more information about MCF's programs and services, please follow us on social media!



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