

MCF
maryland coalition of families

Family Focus

Celebrating Mental Health & Family Peer Support in May

Caregivers play an invaluable role in fostering family wellness. At Maryland Coalition of Families, we're proud to be part of a community that recognizes the importance of caregiver mental health by...

Prioritizing Caregivers: Caregivers tirelessly provide support, love, and guidance. Yet, their own mental well-being is often overlooked. In May, we emphasize the necessity of self-care and support for caregivers.

Empowering Resilience: Just as caregivers support their loved ones, they too deserve support. Through family peer support programs, we provide a nurturing space for caregivers to share experiences, seek guidance, and prioritize their mental health journey.

Fostering Family Wellness: When caregivers prioritize their mental well-being, families thrive. By acknowledging the challenges and triumphs of caregiving, we create a culture of compassion, understanding, and resilience within our communities.

We stand together in solidarity with caregivers. Join us as we celebrate the resilience, strength, and dedication of caregivers everywhere. Together, we can nurture caregiver well-being and cultivate thriving families.



[Learn More About Mental Health Awareness Month](#)

Children's Mental Health Matters!

Every year, during the first week of May, the Children's Mental Health Matters! Campaign unites non-profits, schools, and various agencies to commemorate children's mental health. Our collective goals include raising public acceptance about the significance of children's mental health and substance use, combating stigma surrounding mental health issues, and facilitating connections between children and families and the resources available for prevention and support of mental health conditions.



Stay tuned to our social media channels for a recap of the engaging activities from this impactful week.

[More About CMHM Here!](#)

We're Here Because We've Been There Too

Board Spotlight: Shelley Stokes

Shelley's path alongside her son was a profoundly challenging one, marked by the love and dedication of a devoted mother. From the challenges of childhood illnesses to the onset of mental health struggles during his adolescence, Shelley stood by him with resolve.

Despite the frustrations of failed treatments and countless hospital visits, she remained a steadfast advocate, tirelessly seeking the best care and support. Alongside her own commitment, Shelley found solace and strength in connecting with other parents facing similar struggles. Family peer support became a crucial lifeline, offering understanding, empathy, and practical advice in navigating the complexities of her son's condition. These connections reinforced Shelley's determination and provided invaluable emotional support as she continued to fight for her son's well-being. She is also a graduate of MCF's Family Leadership Institute, a program that enhances parent and caregiver skills so they can better navigate systems of care and become stronger advocates for their children, themselves, their families, and their communities.



However, a wrongful arrest led to her son's institutionalization, exposing systemic flaws in the mental health and legal systems. Despite the heartbreak, Shelley's determination only grew stronger as she fought for his rights and dignity, working to effect change within the system. Even as her son remains in the state hospital, Shelley's commitment to his well-being remains unshakeable, embodying the true essence of caregiving and resilience in the face of adversity.

Donate the Gift of Hope

This month, we seek to raise awareness and decrease the stigma experienced by people who live with mental health challenges.

But let's not forget the people who love them.

Parents and caregivers who love someone with a mental health disorder experience a range of emotions - sadness, grief, anger, frustration, fear, shame, guilt.

But when they work with a family peer support specialist, they also feel **hope, courage, and optimism** because they are seen and heard by someone who has been where they are.

Your financial contribution to MCF ensures that those who love someone with a mental health disorder get the care and support they need.

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



[Donate Here](#)

Fostering Mental Wellness Year-Round: MCF's Commitment to Staff Wellbeing



Recently, MCF proudly announced that we were awarded the prestigious Platinum Bell Seal for Workplace Mental Health from Mental Health America, reflecting our commitment to fostering mentally healthy workplaces. This recognition

underscores the significance of our policies and practices designed to support employee wellbeing.

As one staff member aptly states, "Our company's dedication to mental health is evident in every aspect of our work culture, from robust benefits packages to self-care initiatives like summer Fridays and weekly yoga sessions facilitated by a staff member. Their insight highlights the genuine care and support fostered within our workplace community, where shared experiences enable deeper connections. Our inclusive approach recognizes the value of staff's lived experiences in connecting with each other and the families we serve. This recognition reaffirms our

commitment to creating an environment where every individual feels valued, supported, and empowered to thrive."

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!

[Upcoming Events](#)

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.

- **Program Manager (Remote Worker - Must Live in St. Mary's, Charles, or Calvert County)**
- **Bilingual Family Peer Support Specialist**
- **Bilingual Team Supervisor**
- **Family Peer Support Specialist (Remote Worker - Must Live in St. Mary's County)**
- **Family Peer Support Specialist - Substance Use (Remote Worker - Must Live in Montgomery or Prince Georges County)**

[Employment Opportunities](#)



www.mdcoalition.org



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