



Family Focus

Raising Awareness and Reducing Stigma: September Awareness Campaigns



National Recovery Month

National Recovery Month is an incredibly important and empowering time for all of us. It's a month dedicated to celebrating the resilience, strength, and determination of individuals and families who have faced substance use disorders and mental health challenges.

At MCF, we understand that recovery is not just a destination but a journey, and we're here to support and empower families every step of the way. National Recovery Month reminds us all that recovery is possible, and it's something worth celebrating.

During this month, we encourage everyone to spread awareness, reduce stigma, and offer support to those in recovery. It's a time to come together as a community and show that recovery is not only achievable but a cause for celebration. Let's honor the individuals and families who have made important strides in their recovery and inspire hope for those who are just beginning their journey.

We're here to provide family peer support, resources, and a caring community for families going through the recovery process. Together, we can make a difference and support one another on our paths to recovery and wellness.

Suicide Prevention Month

During this month, we also aim to educate, engage, and empower our community to recognize the signs of emotional distress, reach out to those in need, and promote open conversations about mental health. We firmly believe that through increased awareness, early intervention, and a network of caring individuals, we can make a difference and save lives.



Remember, you are never alone in your journey. MCF is here to provide family peer support, resources, and a listening ear for families and individuals navigating the complex terrain of mental health challenges. Together, we can create

a world where everyone knows that help is available, hope is possible, and that every life is worth saving. Let's work together to make Suicide Prevention Awareness Month a time of healing, understanding, and support.

Don't forget, you can call or text **988** for 24/7 access to trained crisis counselors who can help with challenges such as thoughts of suicide, mental health or substance use crises, and emotional distress. This lifeline will soon be expanding to include American Sign Language services.

Learn more about
988

With Gratitude and Appreciation, MCF Bids Farewell to Our Director of Public Policy.

This week, MCF will say goodbye to one of the strongest champions for behavioral health services in the state of Maryland. Ann Geddes has been with MCF for 17 years, with most of that time spent as our Director of Public Policy. She has been the conduit between families we serve and policymakers and legislators by conducting focus groups, providing family voice on statewide committees, work groups and coalitions and contributing to the passage of over 50 pieces of legislation that have had a positive impact on people with behavioral health challenges and their families. Ann was integral to preparing families for MCF's annual Family Day in Annapolis and helped families develop and deliver written and oral testimony before the Maryland General Assembly which significantly contributed to the passage of many bills.



Ann helped establish Maryland's Targeted Case Management Plus program and advocated successfully for the inclusion of family peer support and customized goods and services as program benefits. Her efforts also contributed to changes in the use of Voluntary Placement Agreements and helped expand the Good Samaritan Law. Ann has been interviewed for important news articles and television programs that brought much needed attention to the struggles families face when they are trying to access services. She has also written many reports to elevate family voice among policymakers and legislators and most notably authored MCF's **Navigating the Transition Years** Handbook, a guide for families with young adults who have mental health challenges.

There simply aren't enough words to convey how much Ann has contributed to improving the behavioral health systems that impact Maryland families during her tenure at MCF. The words of one of her MCF colleagues summarize it best. "Ann helped make the world a better place for my child and my family with everything she's done to impact policy. She leaves behind a powerful legacy."

We hope you will join us in thanking Ann for her incredible efforts, unwavering belief in the importance of family voice, and steadfast dedication to MCF, our staff and Maryland families. We wish her every success as she moves onto her next big adventure!

Meet Our Staff

Ashley Tauler, Family Peer Support Specialist

During Recovery Month, MCF's Substance Use Disorder Family



Peer Support Specialists honor and celebrate the lives of those living in recovery and those lost to overdose. Ashley Tauler is a Family Peer Support Specialist on our Western Maryland team and exemplifies all the reasons family peer support is critical to the people who love or care for someone with a substance use disorder.

"As someone who has cared for loved ones with mental health and substance use disorder, I know on a personal level some of the struggles families face day to day. Also, my experience as a youth in the foster care system and survivor of domestic violence helps drive my passion to help and support families experiencing similar challenges. I know firsthand the positive impact of support. Through shared experience, I enjoy meeting families where they are and supporting them through challenging times while encouraging them

in their journey and reminding them that they are not alone. Highlights of my job are when I hear about the self-care technique they tried, the resource they connected with and when they just reach out for support in the moment, as well as seeing them grow in their confidence and abilities. Collaborating and connecting with community partners to provide wrap around services to better support the families we serve is another highlight I enjoy as an FPSS.

Working alongside these families to advocate on mental health and substance use bills on Family Day in Annapolis was amazing and brought a sense of empowerment and unity while family voice was being heard. The families I work with encourage me too in my journey as I witness their perseverance, resilience and strength. Being a Substance Use Disorder Family Peer Support Specialist has been humbling and rewarding."

Ashley Tauler

Family Peer Support Specialist - Substance Use Disorders

Western Maryland Team

"When you create a difference in someone's life, you not only impact their life, you impact everyone influenced by them throughout their entire lifetime. No act is ever too small. One by one, this is how to make an ocean rise." -Danielle Doby

**MCF's Substance Use Disorder
Services**

Save the Date: Family Day in Annapolis

We are thrilled to invite all families, partners and other interested community members to mark their calendars for our annual advocacy event, Family Day in Annapolis. This a day dedicated to unity, empowerment, and positive change. Join us on **January 25, 2024** as we come together to make our voices heard, advocate for the issues that matter most to our families, and strengthen our community bonds. This is an opportunity to connect, share experiences, and be part of something bigger than ourselves. Stay tuned for more details, and let's make a lasting impact together. We can't wait to see you there!



**Learn More about 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!

[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.

- **Referral Specialist - Bilingual (Statewide)**
- **Family Peer Support Specialist - Bilingual (Statewide)**
- **Policy and Advocate Associate (Central Office)**
- **Training and Development Manager (Home Based Position; Must Live in Maryland)**

[Employment Opportunities](#)

Your Support Strengthens Our Impact!

Generous support from people like you help MCF continue our work connecting, supporting and empowering families and advocacy for changes to systems that impact people with behavioral health challenges. Your contribution helps MCF reach more families, provide one-to-one emotional support, and bring families together to build a community that fosters hope and healing. Please consider making a gift to MCF today.



[Donate Today!](#)

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



Maryland Coalition of Families | 8950 State Route 108, Suite 223, Columbia, MD 21045
www.mdcoalition.org

[Unsubscribe kduffy@mdcoalition.org](mailto:kduffy@mdcoalition.org)

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

Sent by info@mdcoalition.org powered by



Try email marketing for free today!