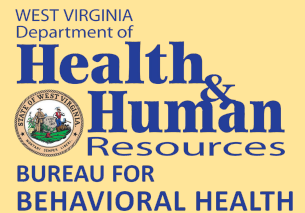


September 2023/ISSUE XII

FAMILY CONNECTIONS

News for families from the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources,
Bureau for Behavioral Health's Office of Children, Youth and Families

We hope you and your students have success this school year. If you need assistance with individualized education programs (IEPs) or other educational support, check out [FAST](#) (Family Advocacy, Support, and Training).



Program Spotlight: Family Coordinators

The Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR), Bureau for Behavioral Health (BBH) created the Family Coordinator Program in 2019 to engage and provide support to families of children with serious mental health needs or those affected by substance use. Funded through Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grants, 12 Family Coordinators work throughout the state with two in each of BBH's six regions. The Family Coordinators promote coordination and integration of family-centered care; facilitate participation and involvement in a child, youth, or young adult's treatment and recovery; and connect families affected by mental health and/or co-occurring disorders with support and services. They are knowledgeable about regional and state resources and can assist families in system navigation if needed.

Family voice is paramount to the Family Coordinators, who build a rapport with families and listen to their needs and informed preferences regarding services. The Family Coordinators offer support and follow up with the families.

You may see a Family Coordinator at an event near you. Their outreach activities include back-to-school events, trunk-or-treat, school visits, treatment court attendance, and presence at other places families frequent.

The Family Coordinators offer evidence-based parenting classes including Nurturing Parenting and Strengthening Families. For an example, see the Region 2 Strengthening Families flyer on page 3.

The Lead Family Coordinator is an important role to me because I have a daughter with an intellectual disability and mental health diagnosis. I know how imperative it is to receive understanding and support. Below is a map of each region the Family Coordinators serve. For more information about this program, please [click here](#) or get connected through the WV Children's Crisis and Referral Line at 844-HELP4WV.

Submitted by Roxanne Chaney, Lead Family Coordinator

Regional Family Coordinator Agencies

Region 1 - Youth Services System

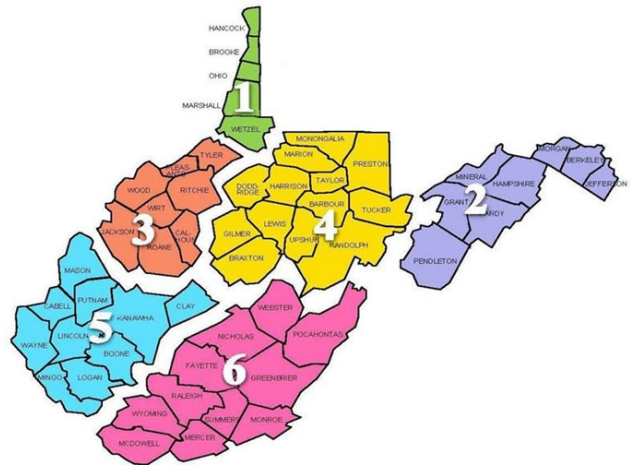
Region 2 - Potomac Highlands Guild

Region 3 - Westbrook Health Services

Region 4 - United Summit Center

Region 5 - Pretera Center

Region 6 - FMRS



September is Suicide Prevention Month

September is [Suicide Prevention Month](#), including [World Suicide Prevention Day](#) (September 10, 2023) and [National Suicide Prevention Week](#) (September 10-16, 2023). Anyone experiencing thoughts of suicide or emotional distress can call, chat, or text the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#) 24/7. The SAMHSA [988 Partner Toolkit](#) and the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention's [Framework for Successful Messaging](#) offer resources and the key components to consider when messaging to the public about 988 and suicide, including identifying a strategy, ensuring safety, conveying a positive narrative, and following applicable guidelines.

Suicide Warning Signs for Youth

Be a Lifeline

It's time to take action if you notice these signs in family or friends:

1. Talking about or making plans for suicide.
2. Expressing hopelessness about the future.
3. Displaying severe/overwhelming emotional pain or distress.
4. Showing worrisome changes in behavior, particularly in combination with the warning signs above, including significant:
 - Withdrawal from or changing social connections/situations.
 - Changes in sleep (increased or decreased).
 - Anger or hostility that seems out of character or out of context.
 - Recent increased agitation or irritability.

If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available.

Call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org, or reach out to a mental health professional.

Strengthening Families Program



BENEFITS

For families:

- Increases family unity
- Improves family management and organization
- Decreases family conflict

For Parents:

- Increases parenting skills
- Increases marital communication
- Decreases stress, depression, and substance abuse.

For Children:

- Increases social skills and cooperation
- Improves school performance
- Reduces misconduct and aggression
- Reduces depression and anxiety
- Reduces tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use

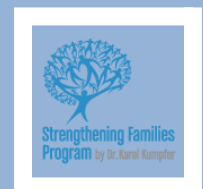
**Potomac
Highlands Guild**

**held online or
in-person**

**free & open to all
families**

For more information, contact:
Serena Redman
serena.redman@phgmail.net
Phone: 304-538-2302 ext.233

Raymond Franklin
Raymond.franklin@phgmail.net
Phone: 681-231-1480



The Unrecognized Heroes

While talking to a friend, I learned something today.
There are some unrecognized heroes, and they are here to stay.

It really doesn't matter what they face and who are their foes.
Nothing will stop these unrecognized heroes.

They work endlessly and they do become tired.
However, that doesn't stop them. That's why they are so admired.

Sometimes they face a lot of obstacles and sometimes strife,
But they never give up working to help their children have a good life.

They endeavor to work for their child and sometimes at great cost,
But they don't even seem to count it a loss.

Who are these unrecognized heroes from time to time I see?
They are parents of a child with a disability.

By Roxanne Chaney





September is [National Recovery Month](#), a national observance to promote and support new evidence-based treatment and recovery practices, the nation’s recovery community, and the dedication of service providers and communities who make recovery possible. Families and caregivers play crucial roles in supporting youth and young people in recovery or who are starting their recovery journeys. The recovery journey isn’t just for the person with a substance use or mental health issue—it includes everyone who cares about them.

September is also [National Preparedness Month](#), which raises awareness of the importance of preparing for disasters and emergencies that could happen at any time. Learn how to prepare [here](#) by assessing your family’s needs, making a plan, and engage your support network to stay safe when disaster strikes.



OCTOBER IS PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS AWARENESS MONTH

November is [National Adopt Month](#) with the theme “Small Steps Open Doors.”

Every teenager in foster care has a story to tell.
Make Every Conversation Matter.

QUICK TIPS FOR ENGAGING YOUTH:

- Be honest and real about what is happening.
- Focus on strengths, but share honest feedback.
- Be trauma informed and recognize when trauma is a barrier.
- Ask meaningful questions and listen with empathy.
- Share tasks and set goals together.

Children's Bureau
 Child Welfare Information Gateway
 childwelfare.gov/adoptionmonth

Happy Thanksgiving



November 23, 2023, is Thanksgiving. The holiday goes back as far as George Washington's days. It is a day when families come together and eat a feast. The purpose is to be thankful for the summer crops and other blessings. What are you thankful for? What is your favorite dish?

THANKSGIVING SCAVENGER HUNT

- Find a turkey.
- Find some leaves.
- Find a pumpkin pie.
- Find 3 family members.
- Find some rolls.
- Find someone in the kitchen.
- Find an oven mitt.
- Find someone sleeping.
- Find a recipe or cookbook.
- Find a placemat or place card.
- Find some gravy.
- Find some dirty dishes.
- Find some cars parked out front.
- Find a football or football game on tv.



SELF CARE CORNER

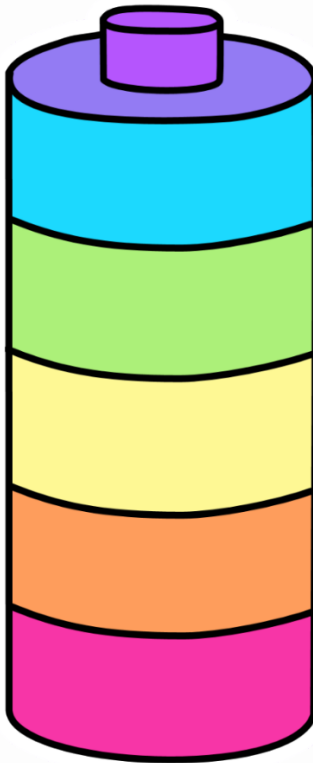
♥ Ways to Recharge

How can you recharge your battery today?

Create a happy sensory space. (ex: Low lighting, quiet, soothing colors)

Do something that's fun for you. Spend time on a hobby or interest.

♥
Make a list of things that you find relaxing. Pick one to do.



Spend quality time with your favorite person. Or just have alone time! ♥

Go outside. Take a walk. Sit silently for a minute. Take a deep breath.

Start winding down at least an hour before it's time for you to go to sleep.

SelfLoveRainbow



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Choose the resource you are interested in and use ctrl and click.

- [24/7 Children’s Crisis and Referral Line, 844-HELP4WV](#)
- [WV Kids Thrive Collaborative, including weekly Resource Rundowns](#)
- [West Virginia Statewide Family Advisory Board](#)
- [Bureau for Behavioral Health, Office of Children, Youth and Families](#)
- [West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#)
- [West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources Local Offices](#)
- [West Virginia Positive Behavior Support \(PBS\)](#)
- [West Virginia Family and Community Support Program](#)
- [West Virginia Birth to Three Program](#)
- [West Virginia Developmental Disabilities Council](#)
- [National 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#)
- [West Virginia ABLE](#)
- [Family, Advocacy, Support, and Training \(FAST\)](#)
- [West Virginia Wraparound](#)
- [Healthy Grandfamilies](#)