

Register here!
<https://gearparentnetwork.org/events/>



*Affiliate of the National Federation of Families
And Proud Sponsor of
Children's Mental Health Awareness/Acceptance Week
"Accept. Advocate. Act."*

May 7-13, 2023 is Children's Mental Health Awareness/Acceptance (CMHA) Week. Join us at our special activities listed in this flyer in GREEN and do wear green or a green ribbon as it brings awareness and acceptance about the importance of children's mental health and to show that positive mental health is essential to a child's healthy development throughout their lifespan.



Last year, the National Federation of Families took an important step to advance social justice for families: launching the first national Children's Mental Health Acceptance Week. As an organization focused on families with children who experience mental health and/or substance use across the lifespan, we believe acceptance more directly combats discrimination, prejudice, and subconscious bias. Awareness isn't enough – **but Acceptance demands we advocate and act** to change attitudes, behaviors, and systems. **Acceptance is social justice.**

That's why our 2023 campaign theme for this year is **"Accept. Advocate. Act."** We want our children across the lifespan accepted – and that means systemic change in how children's mental health is viewed. This year, Children's Mental Health Acceptance Week returns for the second year May 7th – 13th, 2023. Join us to **Accept, Advocate, and Act** for children's mental health.

Join GEAR Parent Network Parent Staff and Maine Families at our CMHA Tailgate Kickoff Event!

Monday, May 8, 2023, 10a-12p outside at Crisis and Counseling Centers, 10 Caldwell Road, Augusta!

This year's Children's Mental Health Awareness/Acceptance Tailgate Kick Off event is organized by parents as a token of our appreciation and to thank Children's Behavioral Health Providers and the Office of Child and Family Services for all the hard work you do on behalf of families and youth in Maine. Providers and families please do join us for coffee and refreshments, parents will share their child's/youth success stories, and receive green ribbons and children's mental health awareness/acceptance informational resource materials. (no rain date will be held)



Call 1.800.264.9224 to register for one or more of our free workshops or special events today!

Join us remotely from your computer or mobile device by Go ToMeeting, a live and interactive web-based interface and also by location when listed. You must pre-register to utilize Go ToMeeting. Regional Parent Support Coordinators are available after workshops for parents or caregivers who would like additional support!

Parent Education & Support

*Our workshops are not recorded in order to safeguard the personal information shared by participants related to the topics during these interactive trainings.

April 6, 2023 from 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

“What is Considered Child Abuse & Neglect in Maine?” Presented by Heather Williams, CFPS, Regional Parent Support Coordinator

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month! Our children are our future and child abuse and neglect is everybody's business! In this workshop learn what is considered child abuse; state and national statistics; what Maine law is and how to report child abuse or neglect; the difference between “punishment” vs. “discipline”; child behavior management examples and what are family and child protective factors; in addition to sharing stories of parenting lessons learned.

April 10, 2023 from 6-8 p.m.at RSU 25 Adult & Community Education, Bucksport High School 102 Broadway # 1

“The Motivation Breakthrough: Six Secrets to Turning on the Tuned Out Child” Video Presentation by Author Rick Lavoie, M.A., M.Ed. Facilitated by Shannan Boyorak, CFPS, Regional Parent Support Coordinator

This workshop explores proven techniques, strategies, and scripts - based on six possible motivational styles - that will revolutionize the way teachers and parents inspire children to succeed and achieve. Rick Lavoie explodes common myths and gives specific advice for motivating children. With empathy and understanding, he offers parents and teachers the key to unlocking enthusiasm and responsiveness, proving any child can be motivated to learn.

April 13, 2023 from 10-11:30 a.m.

“Autism and Strategies” Presented by Alina Gagne, Information Specialist, Autism Society of Maine

Participants will gain a basic understanding of autism along with some general strategies to use while interacting with individuals on the spectrum. These strategies relate to sensory, communication, behavioral and social deficits that often interfere with an individual's ability to process information.

April 13, 2023 from 1-3 p.m.

“Youth Substance Use Disorder” Presented by Heather Williams, CFPS, Regional Parent Support Coordinator

Substance use with overdose among youth and young adults in Maine is at its highest level. Knowledge is power so please join us for this presentation on why does it happen in youth and how does it affect our youth, the risk factors; what to look for, what to do about it along with treatment and supports. This information can be used to inform yourself and to begin these important conversations with your children and youth.

April 24, 2023 from 3-5 p.m.at RSU 25 Adult & Community Education, Bucksport High School 102 Broadway # 1

“Understanding Child Birth Order” Presented by Shannan Boyorak, CFPS, Regional Parent Support Coordinator

Birth order is a fun and interesting topic you may have not have considered. Research shows that a person's birth order has a direct link with his or her personality. These stereotypes on **birth order** may sound silly, but there is an interesting degree of scientific accuracy in their foundation. But does **birth order** influence personality, or is personality shaped based on the ages of siblings around them? Understanding **birth order** positions allows parents, guardians and teachers to guide and support children and strengthen positive qualities.

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April 26, 2023 from 10-11:30 a.m.

“ADHD 101 - What We Want to Know but Forgot to Ask!” Presented by Diane Bouffard, CFPS, Team Leader and Regional Parent Support Coordinator

This workshop will offer the framework to help us understand what Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder is, what causes it, how to diagnose and who can diagnose it; the symptoms, what helps, supports; and treatment and management. Come and join in the conversation as we journey together toward greater success.



May 8th and May 10th from 6-8:30 p.m. (a two part Special Event Presentation)

“Understanding Substance Use Disorder and Stigma Effects!” Presented by Heather Williams, CFPS, and Shannan Boyorak, CFSP, Regional Parent Support Coordinators.

Know the Facts! Substance use among youth and young adults is at its highest level. This disease can cause or increase mental and physical health related issues and can lead to problems at school, home, and work. It can put our youth at risk for involvement with the correctional system or worst of all, lead to loss of life. Substance Use Disorder (SUD) impacts the entire family. This special extended workshop will explore local and national statistics, risk factors, and the effects of SUD on the brain and polysubstance use. A video will be shared, “Pleasure Unwoven” a personal journey about addiction by Kevin McCauley. He turns complex neuroscientific concepts into easy, understandable virtual images that helps explain why SUD is a disease. Also discussed are protective factors, the social and mental impact of stigma and how we can help. This information can be used to start these important conversations with our children and youth. Our kids/young adults are our future, so it is critically important that we parents, family and community members truly understand this disease and learn that recovery is possible! Do not wait to get started!

May 15, 2023 from 3-5 p.m. at RSU 25 Adult & Community Education, Bucksport High School 102 Broadway # 1

“What’s Your Parenting Style? Identifying Your Style and How it Affects Your Interaction with Your Children. Presented by Shannan Boyorak, CFPS, Regional Parent Support Coordinator

This workshop is intended to help you learn and identify your current parenting style and recognize the large impact that it has on your child’s development. We will review each of the four parenting styles. Through sharing of information and discussion you will be given the tools to use to evaluate both positive and negative influences in your lives and how it relates to your parenting style. Parents and caregivers can improve their skills by having and understanding of parenting styles, discipline, cultural influences and environmental issues.

May 17, 2023 from 10a-12 p.m.

“ACEs, Being a Trauma-Informed Parent: Linking Childhood Trauma to Long-Term Health & Social Consequence”
Presented by Heather Williams, CFPS, Regional Parent Support Coordinator

Traumatic childhood experiences such as abuse, neglect, domestic violence, or substance abuse in the home can have long-term physical, psychological, behavioral and economic consequences. The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study demonstrates the connection between childhood trauma and a wide array of physical & mental health problems. Despite the trauma in their lives, children can survive and even thrive. Protective factors, including healthy relationships with parents and caregivers, foster resilience in children and help them to overcome early adversity.

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May 22, 2023 from 6-8 p.m.at RSU 25 Adult & Community Education, Bucksport High School 102 Broadway # 1

“What is Considered Child Abuse & Neglect in Maine?” Presented by Shannan Boyorak, CFPS, Regional Parent Support Coordinator

Our children are our future and child abuse and neglect is everybody's business! In this workshop learn what is considered child abuse; state and national statistics; what Maine law is and how to report child abuse or neglect; the difference between “punishment” vs. “discipline”; child behavioral management examples and what are family and child protective factors; in addition to sharing stories of parenting lessons learned.

May 24, 2023 from 10a-12 p.m.

“Recognizing the Signs of Suicide Risk and Navigating the System of Care” Presented by: Cindy Seekins, CFPS, Director

Suicide is a significant concern in Maine and nationwide, and we can do something about it. Join us in learning how to recognize early signs of potential elevated suicide risk, suicide statistics in Maine/Nationally; what risk assessments are and common terms you may hear providers use, in addition to navigating the system of care to effectively gain access to treatment and/or support that is needed. Also, we will discuss how to advocate for a person in your care when you are not satisfied with the process or outcome.

June 5, 2023 from 6-8 p.m.at RSU 25 Adult & Community Education, Bucksport High School 102 Broadway # 1

“Summer Safety: Keeping it Cool, Preventing Heat Related Illness and Sun Safety for Children” Presented by Shannan Boyorak, CFPS, Regional Parent Support Coordinator

Sunburn, heat cramps, heat stroke and skin cancer often are not thought of when you are enjoying the outdoors. Learn about the importance of keeping your children and yourself safe while having fun in the sun! Parents are welcomed in sharing their challenges and ideas how they deal with the sun protection and other summertime problems.

June 6, 2023 from 10-12 p.m.

“What are Family Peer Specialists and how do they Support Maine Families?” Presented by Cindy Seekins, CFPS, Director

The Family Peer Specialist (FPS) role has been in Maine to support families who have children/youth with special medical, emotional and behavioral health needs for over 25 years. During the past 10 years this role has quickly evolved to being one of not only providing emotional support and resource sharing to also reducing feelings of isolation by providing opportunities to learn from and support each other; build family protective factors, resiliency and strength; and practice vital parenting skills in an environment free from shame, blame and judgment. Join us to learn about the family organizations in Maine who offer you free parent peer support, the three levels of support, FPS role/credentialing and the benefits to the family and service delivery system when family peer specialists are utilized!

June 14, 2023 from 10a-12 p.m.

“Positive Behavioral Supports & Tantrum Management: Self-Preservation & Success in Parenting Children with Behavioral Health Needs” Presented by Heather Williams, CFPS, Regional Parent Support Coordinator

Do you sometimes feel like you don't know how to help your child? Children with behavioral health needs do not come with a manual! This workshop will offer a framework to understand the nature of your child's behavior and methods to flexibly respond to the needs your child presents. Positive behavioral supports emphasize practical ideas about how to meet your child where they are and utilize their motivation to increase success. Understanding and using Stage of Change concepts, maximizing provider involvement, and enhancing natural supports will be emphasized to provide usable tools that can be applied in a variety of real-life situations. Join us to learn more how to manage your child's tantrums by using positive behavioral supports!

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"Virtual Parent Support Group" For those of you who like to attend evenings - we are offering once a month on the 4th Tuesday of each month from 7:30-8:30 p.m. Facilitated by Robert Boulier, CFPS, Family Peer Specialist. <https://gearparentnetwork.org/events/> to register.

Weekly Ongoing Events -

"Nurturing Parenting for Families in Recovery" Held every Tuesday from 3:30-5 p.m. Facilitated by Diane Bouffard, CFPS, Team Leader and Regional Parent Support Coordinator Register online at: https://kvcap-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcqdyprDsoG9W2oUPOu4cXdqWARNTx_Zha or call Jenny at 207-859-2521

If you are a parent, caregiver or working on your recovery and want to learn more about the effects of substance use on your family, parenting style, and your relationship with your child/youth, please join us for this FREE 17 week program. You will explore hands on activities, along with guided discussions to enhance your self-awareness and increase your ability to relate to your child/children in a safe and supportive environment surrounded by parents and caregivers who share similar life experiences. Join us to explore ideas and build skills; strengthen your connection with your child or youth!

"Virtual Parent Support Group" weekly every Wednesday from 1-2:30 p.m. <https://gearparentnetwork.org/events/> to register.

You are NOT Alone! Parenting and raising a child/youth is often challenging, however even more so with a child with an emotional or behavioral health concern. Join us in this safe place with no shame, blame or judgment from comfort of your home on your tablet or smart phone and chat with other parents who share similar life experiences. If you are a parent wanting support, or a parent/caregiver of a child with behavioral, emotional, or developmental health needs, please consider joining to meet and compare notes with other parents who truly understand the journey you are on.

Reach Us Directly:

Heather Williams, CFPS Regional Parent Support Coordinator, Ph: 207-705-1353 or Email: hwilliams@crisisandcounseling.org covering Androscoggin, Cumberland, Oxford & York Counties

Diane Bouffard, CFPS, Team Leader & Regional Parent Support Coordinator, Ph: 207-612-8996 or Email: dbouffard@crisisandcounseling.org covering Kennebec, Somerset & Franklin Counties

Shannan Boyorak, CFPS, Regional Parent Support Coordinator, Ph. 944-4295 or Email: sboyorak@crisisandcounseling.org covering Hancock, Waldo, Knox, Lincoln & Sagadahoc Counties

Cindy Seekins, CFPS, Director, Ph: 207-441-7216 or Email: cseekins@crisisandcounseling.org and covering **Regional Parent Support Coordinator**, call 1-800-264-9224 covering Aroostook, Penobscot, Piscataquis & Washington Counties



G.E.A.R. Parent Network is a Parent-to-Parent Network of Information & Support for parents of children with behavioral health needs, is a program of Crisis & Counseling Centers, Inc. and is funded by the Department of Health & Human Services, the United Way, and private donations,

Administration: 10 Caldwell Rd, Augusta, Maine 04330 • 207.626.3448 (voice & TTY); Fax 207.626.3453

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