



**19 Years! Proud Sponsor of Children's Mental Health Acceptance Week and the Green Ribbon Campaign!**

## **"Lighting the Path to Social Justice for Children and Youth"**

Each year gives us the opportunity to shine the light on children and youth - to focus on equity and inclusion for our young people who are impacted by mental health challenges. Only through **acceptance, advocacy, and action** can we move toward social justice for families and impact social change - beginning with our children and youth. **This Children's Mental Health Acceptance Week, May 5th - 11th, we invite you to join us in lighting the path to social justice for children and youth.**



The foundation of social justice is living the "golden rule," treating others the way we would like to be treated - at every level. As individuals, social justice means **accepting** each person for who they are - celebrating and embracing the diversity of our fellow man. It means **accepting** every member of our communities - welcoming their participation and contributions in all groups. At the system level, it means **accepting** that each person has unique strengths and goals - shaping supports and resources to be responsive to each person's dreams.

### **In essence social justice means:**

- Equity at every level of society
- Ensuring that all members of our society are physically and psychologically safe and secure
- Giving every person the opportunity to live up to their full potential
- Supporting one another to live meaningful, purposeful lives.

**You are NOT Alone!** If you are a parent wanting support, or are a parent/caregiver of a child with behavioral, emotional, or developmental health needs, please consider joining us with other parents who truly understand the journey you are on. Parenting 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 either in person when specified address is listed and/or virtually from the comfort of your home and chat with other parents who share similar life experiences. **Register here** <https://gearparentnetwork.org/events/>

## **Events held April through June 2024**

**April 8, 2024 from 6-8 p.m.** at RSU 25 Adult & Community Education, Bucksport High School, 102 Broadway # 1 and virtually

### **"Impulsivity & Disruptive Behaviors in Children & Youth"**

Presented by Shannan King, CFPS, Regional Parent Support Coordinator

All children and youth have outbursts from time to time, however some do have much difficulty in their ability to regulate their emotions and behaviors even when adverse consequences may occur. This lack of self-control can cause significant distress or impairment in a child's or youth's life. A number of different diagnoses are unified by impulsive and disruptive behaviors including oppositional defiant disorder (ODD), conduct disorder (CD), and impulse control disorder (ICD). In this workshop you will learn more about the disorders defined in the chapter on disruptive, impulse-control, and conduct disorders by the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5)*, what treatments are available, and what parents/caregivers can do to better respond to impulsive and disruptive behavior.

**April 9, 2024 from 10 a.m.- 12p.m.**

### **"Basic Advocacy! How to Advocate for What Your Kids Need!"**

Presented by Heather Williams, CFPS, Regional Parent Support Coordinator

What does it mean being a good advocate? Many parents and caregivers have faced challenges in getting their child's or youth's behavioral health and educational needs met. Having your heart in the right place is very important, but is only the beginning. It is also important to know that the advocacy process doesn't need to be confrontational. Learning to communicate and advocate effectively with service providers, doctors and teachers is one of the best ways to ensure that your child's needs are being met. You can have ongoing, collaborative and constructive relationships with others. Developing your advocacy skills is the next step to forming your own strategies about how to solve problems, resolve conflicts and become a more effective advocate.

**April 10, 2024 12:30-2:30 p.m.** at Capehart Boys & Girls Clubhouse, 28 Downeast Circle, Bangor and virtually

### **"Toxic Chemicals and Our Children's Developing Brains"** Presented by Cindy Seekins, CFPS, Director and Sue Gagne, CFPS Family Peer Specialist

Why is environmental health so important? Consider the following information: At least 1 in every 59 children has one or several learning disabilities. In the 1970s, autism was estimated to have affected about 1 in 2,500 to 5,000 children. In 2022, the rate was 1 in 44 and today it is **1 in 36**. Boys are 4x more likely to be autistic. In January 2020, there were **31,991** Maine students with identified disabilities. Two years later, there were **32,641** students with an identified disability and an individualized education plan, or 19.5% of all students. This was 650 more than the previous 2 years. Join us and learn why it is important to protect your family from toxic chemical exposures.

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**April 11, 2024 from 1-3 p.m.**

**"What is Considered Child Abuse & Neglect in Maine?"** Presented by Diane Bouffard, CFPS, Team Leader and Regional Parent Support Coordinator

**April is Child Abuse Prevention Month!** Our children and youth 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.

**April 22, 2024 from 6-8 p.m.**

**"Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Oh, My!"** Presented by Shannan King, CFPS, Regional Parent Support Coordinator

Are you raising a second set of children or youth at a time you thought you would be planning your retirement? This discussion will focus on specific issues that may be challenging for grandparents today and uncover ideas and solutions for greater success and less stress.

**Parents, Youth, Caregivers, and Children's Services Providers –**

**Join us at our 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Children's Mental Health Acceptance Tailgate Kickoff Event!**

**Monday, May 6, 2024, 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. outside at Crisis and Counseling Centers, 10 Caldwell Road, Augusta!**

**Join us** again this year for our Children's Mental Health Acceptance Week Tailgate Kick-Off event which is organized by parents to **bring acceptance** about the importance of social justice and to show that positive mental health is essential our kids healthy development throughout their lifespan.

**Hear** parents and youth share their lived experience of their paths to social justice & resilience! (no rain date will be held)

We are also **distributing Advocacy Toolkits** to children's mental health providers and educators statewide. The kits will contain acceptance materials to display and distribute so you may **join us in lighting the path to social justice for children and youth!** If you cannot attend you may print resources here <https://gearparentnetwork.org/cmhm/> or call 1-800-264-9224 to order your CMHA toolkit.

**May 8, 2024 from 10 a.m. -12 p.m.**

**"Diversity & Inclusion: Gaining Awareness of Individualization"**

Presented by Krystalore Crews, Certified Diversity Coach, Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Consultant

Join us for this special Children's Mental Health Acceptance presentation that you will find informative and enlightening about the person-centered approach to living! All individuals have a unique potential to live meaningful, purposeful lives. Let's learn how to become more aware of accepting individuals for who they are, what their vision & goals are and honor them where they're at in their individualized process of enhancing their lives.

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**May 10, 2024 from 10 a.m.-12 p.m.**

**"Reactive Attachment Disorder/RAD"** Presented by Robert (Bob) Walker, Ph.D., LMHC, of Robert A. Walker and Associates, Counseling and Consulting Center, Warwick, RI.

Robert is an adoptive parent of two special needs children (now adults). Dr. Walker has almost forty years of experience training and supporting parents and professionals in the areas of adoption, foster care, and attachment related trauma. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology, and a Master's Degree in Mental Health Counseling. His Ph.D. work focused on communication, attachment, and emotion in biological and non-biological family systems. His dissertation research examined the effects of dysregulated children on their biological and non-biological families and their family environments.

Join us for this special Children's Mental Health Acceptance event, where Dr. Walker will discuss the implications of making a home for an Attachment Disordered child. He will discuss the effects of such a placement on the environment of the family and the implications of RAD on the parenting methods that must be employed in an effort to help the child overcome the effects of their early life trauma. Dr. Walker believes that by increasing your understanding of the true nature of the deficits caused by early life trauma, parents can more easily address those needs and by doing so, fairly rapidly improve the climate within their families.

**May 13, 2024 from 1-3 p.m.**

**"Building Stronger Families Through Effective Communication"**

Presented by Diane Bouffard, CFPS, Team Leader and Regional Parent Support Coordinator

Effective communication skills are vitally important for thriving family relationships. Using tools such as non-violent and non-verbal communication can improve our ability to resolve conflicts that arise and strengthen bonds within families. As parents, we can master these skills and model them for our children. Join us in learning the various strategies that are at the heart of good communication.

**May 13, 2024 from 6-8 p.m.** at RSU 25 Adult & Community Education, Bucksport High School 102 Broadway # 1 and virtually

**"Positive Behavioral Supports & Tantrum Management: Self-Preservation & Success in Parenting Children with Behavioral Health Needs"** Presented by Shannan King, 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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**May 15, 2024 from 10 a.m.-12 p.m.**

**"Youth Substance Use Disorder"** Presented by Heather Williams, CFPS, Regional Parent Support Coordinator

KNOW the facts! Substance use with overdose among our 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.

**May 16, 2024 from 6-7:30 p.m.**

**Discovering Tomorrow's Leaders! Youth Leadership: 101** Presented by: Kate Turpen, Youth Self-Advocacy Project Director, DRME

Join Disability Rights Maine's Youth Self-Advocacy Team in an activity-based Leadership Training! We will explore what makes influential leaders successful, practice strategies become leaders in our everyday life, and set goals to start thinking about the future! Young Mainers aged 14-25 encouraged to attend! Our training provides several opportunities for discussion to build connection between participants and will offer several opportunities to connect after our training ends. Check out our growing community of self-advocates on Instagram @ysap\_drm or on [facebook.com/DRM-YouthSelfAdvocacy](https://facebook.com/DRM-YouthSelfAdvocacy)

**May 20, 2024 from 6-8 p.m.**

**"Surviving Parenting: Self-Care is NEVER Selfish"** Presented by Shannan King, CFPS Regional Parent Support Coordinator

Self-care often becomes an afterthought for parents and caregivers. The ability to treat and understand oneself with respect and kindness can be especially elusive when raising a family. In this workshop, you will learn how stress and anxiety affect all of us and what you can do about it. You will do a self-care checkup and tools will be shared to create positive thinking. Join us to discover how to cope when your life is full but your energy tank is running on empty.

**May 23, 2024 from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.**

**"Impulsivity & Disruptive Behaviors in Children & Youth"** at Capehart Boys & Girls Clubhouse, 28 Downeast Circle, Bangor and virtually

Presented by Cindy Seekins, CFPS, Director & Sue Gagne, CFPS Family Peer Specialist

All children and youth have outbursts from time to time, however some do have much difficulty in their ability to regulate their emotions and behaviors even when adverse consequences may occur. This lack of self-control can cause significant distress or impairment in a child's or youth's life. A number of different diagnoses are unified by impulsive and disruptive behaviors including oppositional defiant disorder (ODD), conduct disorder (CD), and impulse control disorder (ICD). In this workshop you will learn more about the disorders defined in the chapter on disruptive, impulse-control, and conduct disorders by the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5)*, what treatments are available, and what parents/caregivers can do to better respond to impulsive and disruptive behavior.

**June 3, 2024 from 1-3 p.m.** at RSU 25 Adult & Community Education, Bucksport High School, 102 Broadway # 1 and virtually

**"Summer Safety: Keeping it Cool! Preventing Heat Related Illness and Sun Safety for Children"**

Presented by Shannan King, CFPS, Regional Parent Support Coordinator

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Sunburn, heat cramps, heat stroke and skin cancer often are not thought of when you are enjoying the outdoors. Come learn about the importance of keeping your children and yourself safe while having fun in the sun! Parents may share their challenges and some ideas how they deal with the sun protection and summertime issues.

**June 6, 2024 from 12:30-2:30 p.m.** at Capehart Boys & Girls Clubhouse, 28 Downeast Circle, Bangor and virtually

**"Non-Toxic Housekeeping Class"** Presented by Cindy Seekins, CFPS, Director and Sue Gagne, CFPS Family Peer Specialist

From air fresheners to window and floor cleaners and beyond, many everyday cleaning supplies can be hazardous to the health of you and your family. Save money and reduce your family's exposure from toxic household cleaners! Join us and learn how to avoid using toxic cleaning chemicals and still provide a clean, healthy and comfortable home; how to save money and time with simple cleaning techniques; easy and inexpensive recipes to make safe and effective homemade household cleaners.

**June 13, 2024 from 1-3 p.m.**

**"Helping Your Child Manage Their Meltdowns"** Presented by Heather Williams, CFPS, Regional Parent Support Coordinator

Are you feeling like you are always walking on eggshells when dealing with your young child's meltdowns? (Professionals sometimes call these behaviors "dysregulation") Are you at a loss about how to help your child to be successful? You're not alone! Join in the discussion about what meltdowns are and strategies that can be used to help your child better manage these meltdowns.

## **Ongoing Weekly Events -**

**"Nurturing Parenting for Families in Recovery"** Held virtually every Tuesday afternoon from 3:30-5 p.m.

Facilitated by Diane Bouffard, CFPS, Team Leader/Regional Parent Support Coordinator

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 12 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/youth 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! Register online at: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScpgJNGN2rk5Jn9mEZ4PIBDEKqv9IBGf\\_Pjks6ToNqjQJLIow/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScpgJNGN2rk5Jn9mEZ4PIBDEKqv9IBGf_Pjks6ToNqjQJLIow/viewform) or call Megan Dickinson at 207-859-1580.

**SUPPORT GROUPS -** <https://gearparentnetwork.org/events/> to register

**"Parent Support Group"** held virtually every Wednesday from 1-2:30 p.m.

**"Evening Monthly Parent Support Group"** held virtually once a month on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday from 7:30-8:30 p.m.

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### Reach Us Directly:

**Heather Williams, CFPS, Regional Parent Support Coordinator**, Ph: 207-705-1353 or Email: [hwilliams@crisisandcounseling.org](mailto: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](mailto:dbouffard@crisisandcounseling.org) covering Kennebec, Somerset & Franklin Counties

**Shannan King, CFPS, Regional Parent Support Coordinator**, Ph. 944-4295 or Email: [sking@crisisandcounseling.org](mailto:sking@crisisandcounseling.org) covering Hancock, Waldo, Knox, Lincoln & Sagadahoc Counties

**Cindy Seekins, CFPS, Director**, Ph: 207-441-7216 or Email: [cseekins@crisisandcounseling.org](mailto:cseekins@crisisandcounseling.org) contact for open position **Regional Parent Support Coordinator**, 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**

Call 1.800.264.9224 or go to [www.gearparentnetwork.org](http://www.gearparentnetwork.org) to register for any of these free workshops today! You must pre-register to attend virtually via GoToMeeting. **Special Events** are listed in Red print! Any changes or cancellations are posted on the GEAR Parent Network Facebook page. Regional Parent Support Coordinators are available after workshops for parents/caregivers who indicate they would like additional support!