



March 2026 Newsletter

Greetings from Executive Director **Dr. Barb Brady**

As we welcome **March**, I want to thank you for the dedication and care you bring to our Inspiring Dreams Network community. Your commitment continues to strengthen the supports we offer young people and the adults who walk alongside them.



We're excited to share new additions to our [Youth Development Portal](#), our free, trauma-informed hub for youth, families, educators, and professionals. These evidence-based tools help young people navigate identity, and transition moments of challenge with confidence. In recognition of **Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month**, we're also uplifting new resources that celebrate the contributions of people with developmental disabilities and offer practical guidance for building more inclusive, accessible communities. Together, these materials encourage visibility, belonging, and advocacy throughout the year.

Thank you for your partnership and for the compassion you bring to this work. Together, we're expanding what's possible for young people—now and always.

With gratitude,
Dr. Barb Brady

Upcoming IDN Trainings

These **FREE** training opportunities are provided through funding from The Claude Worthington Benedum, Milan Puskar, and Greater Kanawha Valley Foundations. We appreciate our partnerships with these organizations.



Mandated Reporting

Date: March 17, 2026 | 1:00pm-4:00pm
Trainer: Sara Robinson & Leslie Slaughter
Location: Zoom

Description: Unfortunately, those of us who work with children run into situations where we observe or hear from children about varying forms of neglect and abuse. As a child-serving adult, we are mandated reporters and must determine if what a child is sharing merits a report to DHHR or requires support and intervention with the family. Prevent Child Abuse West Virginia has updated their "Making a Difference: Mandate to Report, Responsibility to Prevent Child Abuse & Neglect" Curriculum. The updated curriculum incorporates additional information regarding distinguishing between poverty and neglect, addressing bias for mandated reporters, and ways to offer support to families in addition to how to make a report to the CPS hotline. The "Making a Difference" curriculum helps mandated reporters and those who work with children and families:

- Understand when you are legally required to call CPS, including when it is more appropriate to refer for community-based services
- Reduce bias in the decision-making process
- Foster a greater understanding of the impact of trauma, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs)
- Foster a greater understanding of protective factors and supports you can refer families to in lieu of making a report to CPS.

This training is open to anyone who is a mandated reporter.

***STARS credit, Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), and Addictions CEUs offered! If you wish to receive STARS credit, please register on the STARS Portal www.wvstars.org**

IDN is partnering with **Marshall University School Health Technical Assistance Center (MUSHTAC)** to offer continuing education units (CEUs) for **Alcohol and Drug Counselor (ADC)** and **Advanced Alcohol and Drug Counselor (AADC)**.



Marshall University School Health
Technical Assistance Center



Register Here!

Suicide Prevention: Recognize, Respond, React Trainer: Michelle Toman | Facilitator: Sarah Barton

April 17, 2026 10:00 - 1:30

Where: Boys & Girls Club of Parkersburg

GREAT FUTURES START [HERE.](#)



1200 Mary St, Parkersburg, WV 26101

While this training was requested by the Boys & Girls Club of Parkersburg (BGCP) as a staff training, they invite others in the Parkersburg area to attend. Michelle Toman is a nationally renowned trainer, one you won't want to miss and the BGCP leadership invites you to join them.

Description: Recognize, Respond, REACT Pathfinder Training is a foundational suicide prevention training designed for anyone and everyone, regardless of role or background. The signs of suicide crises are around us and it is our responsibility to know how to recognize, respond and react accordingly in our efforts to help save lives. This training equips participants with the knowledge and tools vital to identify someone showing signs of suicide risk, determine if suicide is present and take supportive, potentially life-saving actions to apply to help mitigate the risk of fatality. Recognize Respond REACT also builds a greater understanding of the complexity and contributing circumstances of suicide, while breaking stigma and fostering a community of informed, prepared individuals who can serve as a first line of support for someone in crisis and in connecting them to help for an intervention.

This training helps individuals recognize the warning signs and risk factors of suicide, respond by asking clearly and directly about suicide in a compassionate and informed way, and react utilizing an actionable acronym to increase immediate safety, promote help-seeking, and ensure access to supportive resources. Regardless of previous knowledge or background, this training meets participants where they are and empowers them to be a pathfinder for hope, safety and connection when it comes to suicide.

This training is rooted in research-based practices and is based on national best practices methods.

Objectives: Participants will...

- gain knowledge and understanding of the nature of recognizing suicide warning signs, possible circumstances, contributors and risk factors.
- be able to respond to an individual with suicide risk by intervening with actionable steps in increasing safety through their personal connection.
- be able to react to suicide risk by increasing safety, promoting help-seeking and ensuring access to supportive responsible resources.

Register Here



Dispelling Myths About Autism

Date: April 30, 2026 | 12:00-1:00pm

Trainer: John Barton

Location: Zoom

Description: Autism is the fastest growing neurological disorder in the world. In the US, 1 in every 44 children is diagnosed with Autism. This workshop will focus on explaining autism in everyday language and dispelling common myths about autism including causes,

characteristics and impact. Participants will also learn about treatment options, resources, and best practices in behavior management and positive learning supports.

Objectives: Participants will...

- Be able to identify common myths about autism
- Review effective teaching strategies to support children with autism
- Be able to discuss specific caregiver / provider concerns related to autism and seek input from the presenter.

***STARS credit & Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) offered! If you wish to receive STARS credit, please register on the STARS Portal www.wvstars.org**

Addictions CEUs Pending

Register Here!

Youth Mental Health First Aid



Date: May 1st OR 2nd, 2026 | 8:30am-4:30pm (Breaks and lunch provided)

Trainers: Paula Kerner & Dr. Barb Brady, Assisted by Laren Iezzi, IDN VISTA

Location: St. John's Episcopal Hunter Hall, 1105 Quarrier St, Charleston, WV

Description: Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) is an interactive, skills-based training course that teaches participants about common adolescent mental health issues and teaches a five-step process on how to identify, understand and respond to these youth issues. Participants are able to practice using the skills to build confidence in supporting youth. Those who successfully complete the course earn a Mental Health First Aider Certificate. Nursing CE Us and Graduate credit can be offered as an option.

Objectives:

- Describe the PURPOSE of Youth Mental Health First Aid and the ROLE of the Youth Mental Health First Aider.
- Recognize the SIGNS and SYMPTOMS of mental health challenges that may impact youth.
- Explain the role of RESILIENCE and the impact of traumatic experiences on adolescent development.
- Apply the appropriate steps of the MHFA Action Plan (ALGEE) in CRISIS and NON-CRISIS scenarios.
- Practice appropriate methods for SELF-CARE following the application of Youth Mental Health First Aid in a crisis or non-crisis situation.

Graduate Credit offered through Concord University. 6 Hours available.
\$99 Course 1 = 3 hours graduate credit and \$99 Course 2 = 3 hours graduate credit

***STARS credit & Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) offered! If you wish to receive STARS credit, please register on the STARS Portal www.wvstars.org**

Addictions, Nursing, & Social Work CEUs Pending

All participants who successfully complete the course will become Certified Youth Mental Health First Aiders.

Please register for only one of the two days of training.

Register Here!



Preparing Students for a Successful Summer

Date: May 6, 2026 | 11:00am-12:30pm

Trainer: Dr. Barb Brady

Location: Zoom

Description: Summer can be a difficult and challenging time for youth, or it can be filled with fun, inspiration, and growth. Counselors can play a key role in identifying strategies and resources for utilization over the summer, as well as, in educating and supporting parents and community members to support student success during the summer.

Objectives: Participants will...

- review best practice summer activities for youth (Grades PK - 23)
- learn about resources that are fun, safe, and engaging for summer learning and growth
- discuss and share online safety resources
- Sharing additional best practices and resources to support student safety and success.

***STARS credit & Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) offered! If you wish to receive STARS credit, please register on the STARS Portal www.wvstars.org**

Addictions CEUs Pending

Register Here!

Keep Them Safe: Suicide Safety Planning & Lethal Means Accessibility Conversations

Date: May 12, 2026 | 9:00am-12:00pm

Trainer: Michelle Toman, Brother Up
Location: Zoom

Description: Safe, honest and meaningful conversations about suicide are crucial when helping individuals keep themselves safe from the risk of an attempt to potentially end their own life. Safety plans add a protective layer and are utilized as a guide when suicidal ideation may be present and the threat to life exists. What is doable for one individual isn't necessarily achievable for all and safety plans are meant to be personalized and actionable strategies designed to reduce the risk of suicide while helping someone with thoughts, feelings, urges and behaviors.



Understanding the conditions of which suicide attempts occur, comprehension of each of the components of a safety plan and being able to help guide the individual through creating one that is achievable for them requires patience, skill and much intentionality. Essential to increasing safety from suicide requires us as a helper to create the opportunity of a safe and supportive space for this specific conversation to occur; listening to understand and responding with empathy through our words, tones, and signals can often challenge our own assumptions and personal biases while helping someone create a plan for safety. Also critical to safety planning is the ability and willingness to be able to discuss any/all lethal means, as removal and restriction of access can be the difference between life and death.

This Keep Them Safe training provides parameters for having this life and death conversation, while utilizing language that fosters psychological safety, trust and connection to reduce isolation and increase a person's willingness to stay safe. This interactive session equips participants to assist someone in developing a plan of safety, while helping them recognize the contributing circumstances and in identifying measures to increase their personal safety through coping mechanisms, limiting access to lethal means and with connection to others.

Safety planning and discussions on access to lethal means is an evidence-based and practice-based skill vital to saving lives and preventing death. This training is rooted in research and personal experiences and based on best practices methods.

Objectives: Participants will...

- learn to collaboratively develop an individualized safety plan for individuals at-risk for suicide.
- be introduced to effective communication techniques for initiating and navigating conversations about access to lethal means.
- learn techniques of applying best practices for safety planning and reducing accessibility to lethal means when suicide risk is present.

***STARS credit & Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) offered! If you wish to receive STARS credit, please register on the STARS Portal www.wvstars.org**

Addictions CEUs Pending

Register Here!



May ACEs Training Series

ACEs 101: Understanding ACEs

Date: May 13th, 2026 | 2:00-3:30pm

ACEs 102: Preventing ACEs

Date: May 20th, 2026 | 2:00-3:30pm

ACEs 103: Overcoming ACEs

Date: May 27th, 2026 | 2:00-3:30pm

Trainers: Corey Beahm & John Barton

Location: Zoom

Description: The youth you work with may struggle with the traumatic effects of **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)**. We invite you to learn about ACEs and the impact ACEs have on brain development and behavior. ACEs often interfere with school success and can **negatively impact** participation in activities, events, school, relationships, overall wellness, and life outcomes. This ACEs training series is intended to help caregivers and adults who serve youth better understand the impact of ACEs and to learn some **best-practice strategies** to help youth and families overcome and prevent the future occurrence of ACEs, changing lives in a positive direction. This training series is brought to you through funding provided by the Milan Puskar Foundation, Benedum, and TGKVF.

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Register Here!

Interested in IDN providing a training for your organization? Check out our [Training Menu](#) and complete our [Training Request Form!](#)

What Else is Up With IDN?

EXCITING OPPORTUNITY!!

Summer Associate AmeriCorps VISTA



In partnership with Inspiring Dreams Network (IDN) is seeking a motivated **Summer Associate VISTA** to serve June 1st-July 31st, 2026. Summer Associates support youth-focused initiatives across West Virginia while gaining hands-on experience in community engagement, training development, and project coordination.

Work will include:

- Assisting with IDN training initiatives and updating training materials
- Helping conduct surveys and youth-voice forums to identify current youth needs
- Supporting preparation for an online learning forum
- Contributing to data collection, resource development, and program planning

Skills needed:

- Creativity and a strong work ethic
- Comfort with online technology and digital tools
- Skills in Excel, Microsoft Office, Canva, PowerPoint, AI-supported tools, and other design platforms

Benefits include:

- Bi-weekly living allowance: \$960 (full 14 days of service)/ total summer living allowance: \$4,320
- End-of-service options:
 - \$1,279.90 Segal AmeriCorps Education Award, or
 - \$311.00 Summer Cash Stipend
- Up to 3 days of leave during the service term

Applicants must complete the AmeriCorps online application and provide two professional references. IDN Leadership will interview candidates and recommend final selections before AmeriCorps issues official offers.

Learn more and apply through the [My AmeriCorps portal](#).

For more information, contact Dr. Barb Brady at
drbarbbrady@inspiringdreamsnetwork.org

IDN is excited to share a new collection of supports now available on our [Youth Development Portal](#), our free, trauma-informed hub for youth, families, educators, and professionals. The portal continues to grow with **practical, evidence-based tools** that help young people navigate identity, transition, and moments of challenge with confidence and care.

In recognition of **Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month** this March, we're highlighting a set of new resources that uplift disability inclusion, celebrate the contributions of people with developmental disabilities, and offer guidance for building more accessible, welcoming communities. These additions include tools that explore the history and ongoing impact of the disability rights movement, articles that break down common barriers to inclusion, and campaign materials that encourage year-round visibility, belonging, and advocacy.



Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month Resource Guide

Breaking Barriers to Inclusion

We're Here: Then, Now, Always Campaign

Partner Updates

LiFT Community Retreat - PAID Training Opportunity!

Hey mom, can I go to a party tonight?



How will you reply?

LiFT
LINKING FAMILIES & TEENS

WVSU EDC
APRIL 18th
10AM-3PM

Scan to Register

Linking Families & Teens (LiFT) is a 6-hour community retreat designed to connect youth (ages 13-24) and the supportive adults in their lives. LiFT encourages open dialogue on topics like sexual health and tough topics by modeling effective communication.

Mom, we'll both get PAID to attend! and there's free food!

Let's go!



WEST VIRGINIA
Peer Recovery
TRAINING CENTER

WV Peer Recovery Upcoming Trainings

PRSS Basic Training

Date: Weekly on Tuesdays from February

3-March 24, 2026 | 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM

Location: Zoom

[Register Here](#)



Try This WV Upcoming Opportunities for WV Youth

[2026 Try This Youth Summit](#)

This year's two-day event—June 5–6 at WV Wesleyan College—celebrates West Virginia Heritage with hands-on activities, inspiring workshops, outdoor fun, and plenty of chances to connect. Free to attend!

- Geared for **ages 13-22**, but open to anyone
- At **WV Wesleyan College** in **Buckhannon**
- **Free to attend, including all meals and overnight lodging in the dorms**
- A place to **be yourself** - all are welcome
- Learn, grow connections, and get inspired - all while celebrating the heritage of West Virginia

Learn More

Youth Advisory Board

The **Try This Youth Advisory Board** is recruiting new members!

The **Try This Youth Advisory Board (YAB)** advises on all of Try This's youth-centered work, from **scoring youth mini-grants** to **selecting the Youth Summit theme**. Members also shape their own growth—this year exploring true self-care, mutual aid, entrepreneurship, budgeting, and more.

Youth **ages 13–22** who live in West Virginia are eligible to apply. The board currently has 10 members, meets twice monthly in the evenings, and offers \$15 per meeting for members in good standing.

Applications are due March 30 at 5pm. Offers will be made in April, with new members starting in May. All new members must be available for the **free YAB orientation trip** in Buckhannon, June 1–4—scheduled ahead of the annual Try This Youth Summit.

Apply Here

Youth Leadership Mini-Grants



**FEBRUARY
2026**

MINIGRANTS

**THURS
2/26**

MINIGRANT APPLICATIONS DUE

Our applications are live on Jotform! Visit trythiswv.org/how-to-apply to get started.

UP TO \$3,000

For your healthy-community project to help folks access nutritious food and physical activity

\$\$\$

**WE'LL
HELP**

NO GRANT EXPERIENCE NEEDED

Brand new? Perfect! Set up a consultation with Brittney Barlett at director@trythiswv.com to learn more

**NOT READY YET?
THAT'S OKAY!**

Our next round will be due mid-June

**APPLY
LATER**



MORE INFO:

[TRYTHISWV.ORG/HOW-TO-APPLY](https://trythiswv.org/how-to-apply)

[Learn More](#)

State-Funded Mental Health and Wellness Coaching for Parents

Families statewide have access to **state-funded mental health and wellness coaching**, thanks to a partnership with the [West Virginia Department of Education](#) and the [Cook Center for Human Connection](#). Research show that by increasing parenting knowledge and skills, children are more likely to be resilience and thrive. Parents can sign up for **FREE PARENT COACHING**. Click [HERE](#) to learn more.



This hub provides families and youth-serving adults with tools to share, promote, and access these services.

[Access Here](#)

Complete Our Training Needs Survey!

Inspiring Dreams Network is excited to provide training and partner with you to better support the youth you serve. Help us serve you better by clicking the button above to complete our training needs survey.

[Training Needs Survey](#)

**Visit our
Website**

If you have specific resource needs not available on our website, please contact Dr. Barb Brady at drbarbbrady@inspiringdreamsnetwork.org



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