



April 2026 Newsletter

Greetings from Executive Director

Dr. Barb Brady



As we welcome **April**, I'm grateful for the continued dedication each of you brings to supporting young people across our communities. This month invites us to pause and reflect, as we observe both **National Stress Awareness** and **Autism Awareness Month**—three important reminders of the diverse experiences, strengths, struggles, and needs of the youth and families we serve. In recognition of these observances, our team has added a new collection of thoughtfully selected resources to the **Youth Development Portal**, including tools that promote stress recognition and healthy coping, as well as materials that uplift autism acceptance, inclusion, and informed advocacy.

We're also excited to share that we have many **upcoming trainings** with our partner organizations, offering opportunities to deepen skills, strengthen collaboration, and expand the network of caring adults who walk alongside young people every day. Thank you for your partnership, your compassion, and your unwavering commitment to creating environments where every youth feels supported, valued, and empowered to thrive.

With gratitude,
Dr. Barb Brady, IDN Executive Director

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.

Suicide Prevention: Recognize, Respond, React

Date: April 17, 2026 | 10:00am - 1:30pm

Trainer: Michelle Toman

Facilitator: Sarah Barton

Where: Boys & Girls Club of Parkersburg
1200 Mary St, Parkersburg, WV 26101

GREAT FUTURES START HERE.



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

Toxic Stress: Supporting Youth & Families to Overcome Trauma

Trainer: Dr. Barb Brady, Inspiring Dreams Network

April 22 | 1:00-2:30pm

Horseshoe Heaven on Smith Farm, 121 Banjo Lane, Scott Depot, WV 25560

EXCITING NEW PARTNERSHIP!!

Inspiring Dreams Network is excited to kick off a new partnership with **Horseshoe Heaven on Smith Farm** and their **Itty Bitty Horse Therapy Program**! Together, we're launching a series of engaging trainings—starting with this session and continuing with mini-workshops during their upcoming monthly Family Fun Days. Youth-serving adults and caregivers from Putnam and surrounding counties are warmly invited to join us in this peaceful, one-of-a-kind setting. Held in “The Gathering Place,” this training offers the perfect blend of fresh country air and indoor comfort as we come together to learn practical, compassionate ways to help ourselves and the young people in our lives and overcome toxic stress. It's also a wonderful chance to experience the magic of Horseshoe Heaven and learn more about the Itty Bitty Horse Therapy Program and all the farm has to offer. JOIN US!!



Training Description: If not addressed, individuals exposed to ongoing trauma and toxic stress suffer negative outcomes, including poor mental and physical health and even early death. Since WV has the lowest life expectancy in the nation, it is likely that our children and families are experiencing high levels of trauma and toxic stress. Best practices for helping children and families overcome and prevent generational recurrence of trauma will be discussed. Caregivers and others who work with youth will understand supportive or trauma informed practices and be able to examine their own practices in creating a safe environment to prevent secondary trauma and instead promote healing.

[Register Here!](#)

Family Fun Days “Helping Families Thrive” Series - Educational Sessions (30 minutes) Provided by IDN

Horseshoe Heaven on Smith Farm—home of the Itty Bitty Therapy Horses—is honored to partner with Inspiring Dreams Network to bring you a one-of-a-kind **Family Fun Day** experience!

After a brief presentation, your family will spend 1.5 hours immersed in the beauty and calm of our *160-acre farm*. You'll enjoy guided, hands-on interactions with our miniature therapy horses and friendly farm animals, peaceful nature walks along our trails, and engaging activities designed to promote connection, confidence, and **fun for all ages**.

Our Certified Equine Specialists in Mental Health and Learning (ESMHLs), Educators, and Recreational Therapists will lead simple, meaningful experiences that encourage teamwork, relaxation, and joy—no horse experience needed! Whether you're grooming a mini horse, taking a quiet moment in nature, or sharing laughs together as a family, this experience is all about slowing down, connecting, and creating lasting memories.

\$25/pp | \$50/family- includes parents and one child. Additional children \$5.

May 16 | Family Fun Day 2:00–4:00pm

ACEs and PCEs: *Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences and The Importance of Positive Childhood Experiences* | 2:00-3:00pm

June 5 | Family Fun Day 5:30–7:30pm

Building Relationships and Resilience: *Supporting Youth to Thrive* | 5:30-6:00pm

July 24 | Family Fun Day 5:30–7:30pm
Peaceful Conflict Resolution | 5:30-6:00pm

August 14 | Family Fun Day 5:30–7:30pm
Supporting Youth and Families with Neurodiversity Struggles | 5:30-6:00pm

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), 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)**.



Register Here!

Upcoming Youth Mental Health First Aid Trainings



May 1, 2026

8:30am-4:30pm (with breaks and lunch provided)

St. John's Episcopal Hunter Hall, 1105 Quarrier St, Charleston, WV 25301

See Flyer for More Info. & Register

May 2, 2026

8:30am-4:30pm (with breaks and lunch provided)
St. John's Episcopal Hunter Hall, 1105 Quarrier St, Charleston, WV 25301

[See Flyer for More Info. & Register](#)

May 6, 2026

8:30am-4:30pm (with breaks and lunch provided)
WVU Center for Excellence in Disabilities, 959 Hartman Run Road, Morgantown,
WV 26505

[See Flyer for More Info. & Register](#)

May 8, 2026

8:30am-4:30pm (with breaks and lunch provided)
Horseshoe Heaven on Smith Farm, 121 Banjo Lane, Scott Depot, WV 25560

[See Flyer for More Info. & Register](#)

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

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 CEUs 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**

Nursing & Social Work CEUs Pending



Preparing Students for a Successful Summer

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

Trainer: Sarah Barton

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

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Marshall University School Health
Technical Assistance Center



Register Here!

Shack Neighborhood House Upcoming Staff Trainings



June 2, 2026

- **Mandated Reporting** | 9:00-11:00am | Trainer: Sara Robinson
- **Lean On Me (Part I)** | 11:15am-12:15pm | Trainer: Paula Kerner
- **Lunch** | 12:15-1:00pm
- **Lean On Me (Part II)** | 1:00-2:00pm | Trainer: Paula Kerner
- **Preparing Students for a Successful Summer** | 2:15-3:30pm | Trainers: Dr. Barb Brady & Nick Larson

Location: Shack Neighborhood House, 537 Blue Horizon Dr, Pursglove, WV 26546

June 3, 2026

- **Calming Volcanic Emotions** | 9:00-11:00am
- **Peaceful Conflict Resolution (Part I)** | 11:15am-12:15pm

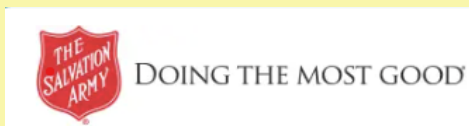
- **Lunch | 12:15-1:00pm**
- **Peaceful Conflict Resolution (Part II) | 1:00-3:00pm**

Trainers: Dr. Barb Brady & Nick Larson

Location: Shack Neighborhood House, 537 Blue Horizon Dr, Pursglove, WV 26546

School & community partners who support Shack Neighborhood House youth are invited to participate on an availability basis.

Register Here!



Salvation Army Afterschool Program & Summer Camp Staff Training Series

May 12, 2026

- **Keep Them Safe:** Suicide Safety Planning and Lethal Means Accessibility Conversations | **9:00am-12:00pm**
- **Trauma Informed Care | 1:00-4:00pm**

Location: The Salvation Army Red Shield Youth Center, 301 Tennessee Ave, Charleston, WV 25302

June 8, 2026

- **Toxic Stress:** Supporting Youth to Overcome Trauma | **10:00am-12:00pm**
- **Lunch | 12:00-1:00pm**
- **Calming Volcanic Emotions | 1:00-3:00pm**

Location: The Salvation Army Red Shield Youth Center, 301 Tennessee Ave, Charleston, WV 25302

June 9, 2026

- **Peaceful Conflict Resolution | 10:00am-12:00pm**
- **Lunch | 12:00-1:00pm**
- **Cyber Safety | 1:00-4:00pm**

Location: The Salvation Army Red Shield Youth Center, 301 Tennessee Ave, Charleston, WV 25302

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

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Register Here!

May ACEs Training Series

ACEs 101: Understanding ACEs

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

ACEs 102: Overcoming ACEs

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

ACEs 103: Preventing 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.

***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)**.



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 WV's Promise Youth Alliance, Inc., 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



EXCITING OPPORTUNITY!!

Full-Time AmeriCorps VISTA

In partnership with WV's Promise Youth Alliance, Inc., Inspiring Dreams Network (IDN) is recruiting a motivated full-time AmeriCorps VISTA to serve a year-long term beginning **August 4th, 2026**. This role focuses on capacity-building to strengthen programs that support youth, families, and communities across West Virginia.

What You'll Do:

- Develop curricula and training materials
- Support grant writing, data collection, and reporting
- Assist with fundraising and community outreach
- Build partnerships and support IDN committees
- Create marketing materials, websites, and social media content
- Design templates, manuals, and program infrastructure
- Support youth-voice data collection and IDN training initiatives

Who Can Apply:

- 18+
- U.S. Citizen/National/Legal Resident
- HS diploma/GED
- Able to pass background checks

- Must apply through the AmeriCorps portal.

Benefits:

- Bi-weekly living allowance (~\$960)
- End-of-service award (\$7,395 education award or \$1,800 cash)
- Healthcare allowance
- Loan forbearance
- Professional development
- 10 personal and 10 medical days
- NCE eligibility
- WV SB 610 tuition waivers.

Apply by: July 17th, 2026 | Start date: August 4th, 2026

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 **National Stress Awareness Month**, IDN is featuring new resources added to the portal that highlight the impact of stress on young people and offer practical, accessible tools to help youth, families, and professionals recognize stress early, build healthy coping strategies, and create supportive environments where young people can thrive. April is also **Autism Acceptance Month**, and we're proud to share newly added resources that promote understanding, inclusion, and strengths-based support for autistic youth. These materials help deepen awareness, encourage affirming practices, and equip caring adults with tools to foster environments where neurodiverse young people feel valued and empowered.



What is Stress?

Stress Awareness Fact Sheet

Stress Awareness Month 2026 Resources

Partner Updates



Nonprofit 411 Upcoming Workshops

WV Nonprofit 411 supports nonprofit organizations in diversifying and expanding funding. Owner, Sarah Barton invites you to participate in the upcoming workshops.

Every Monday | 2:00-3:00pm

The Fundraising Roadmap Small Nonprofits Need

Description: In this free workshop, Sarah Barton from Nonprofit411 walks you through the Fundraising for Small Teams Roadmap — a 9-step framework designed to help small nonprofit teams move from scattered fundraising efforts to a structured system that builds reliable, recurring donor revenue.

Register Here!

April 28, 2026 | 2:00-3:00pm

Build Broad Based Community Support through Individual Giving

Description: Most nonprofits know individual giving matters — but building a program that actually retains donors and grows over time is a different challenge. This session walks you through the essential elements of a strong individual giving program: donor engagement, storytelling, segmentation, and retention. You'll leave with a practical, step-by-step plan you can begin implementing right away.

Register Here!

May 26, 2026 | 2:00-3:00pm

International Fundraising

Description: This session will break down what actually makes international fundraising work and where organizations commonly go wrong. Drawing on nearly two decades of experience supporting projects across 75+ countries, Nichole Yamchuk, of Advocate Fundraising, will walk through the realities of entering and working within communities, navigating cross-border compliance considerations, and positioning programs in a way that funders can trust and support.

Register Here!

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!



2026 Try This WV Youth Summit

This year's **Youth Summit** is bigger than ever, now a two-day event celebrating the theme of **West Virginia Heritage**, chosen by the Youth Advisory Board. Hosted **June 5-6 at WV Wesleyan College**, the Summit remains **free and open to ages 13-22** (and all others), with meals and overnight lodging provided. Youth will explore topics like labor rights, Appalachian arts and culture, and community advocacy—alongside hands-on activities, outdoor fun, creative projects, and opportunities to connect with peers from across the state. **Registration is now open!**

For presentation ideas, group coordination, or questions, contact director@trythiswv.com or schedule a meeting through the link on our website.

[Learn More & Register](#)

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 shows that by increasing parenting knowledge and skills, children are more likely to be resilient 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



How did you like this email?



Inspiring Dreams Network | 4035 Ridgeview Lane | Hurricane, WV 25526 US

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