



December 2025 Newsletter





Greetings from Executive Director

Dr. Barb Brady

As we enter this season of reflection and celebration, I want to extend my **warmest holiday wishes** to every member of the Inspiring Dreams Network community. Your dedication, partnership, and unwavering belief in the potential of young people continue to move our mission forward in powerful ways.

December also marks **Universal Human Rights Month**, a time that calls us to reaffirm the inherent dignity, worth, and rights of every young person we serve. In that spirit, I'm proud to share that we've added a new collection of **trauma-informed, youth-centered resources** to our [Youth Development Portal](#). These tools are designed to support educators, families, case managers, youth advocates, and community partners as they help young people navigate moments of transition, challenge, and growth.

I invite you to explore these new materials and share them widely. Together, we are building environments where youth feel seen, supported, and empowered to dream boldly.

Wishing you peace, connection, and renewed hope throughout the holiday season and into the year ahead.

With gratitude,
Dr. Barb Brady

Upcoming IDN Trainings

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



Supporting Youth with Career Dreams and Financial Literacy Zoom Trainings

Partnering with Families to Inspire Youth Career Dreams

Date: December 18th, 2025 | 9:00-10:15am

Location: Zoom

Trainer: Heather McChesney, Higher Education Policy Commission

Supporting Youth in Building Financial Literacy Skills

Date: December 18th, 2025 | 10:30am-12:00pm

Location: Zoom

Trainer: Rashad Sanders, Chase Bank

Who Should Attend? This training has been requested by Step-By-Step for their afterschool program, but we are inviting anyone interested in the training to participate!

[Register Here!](#)



Intersection of Suicidality & LGBTQ+ Youth Support

December 18, 2025 | 10:00am-12:00pm

Location: Zoom

Trainer: Paula Kerner, Fairness WV

Paula Kerner is an expert in providing support for LGBTQ+ Youth and collaborates with IDN to provide evidence-based training to help youth-serving adults provide needed support to help youth thrive. During this session, participants will analyze current data on LGBTQ+ youth and mental health to understand their challenges and needs and how this relates to the amount of acceptance and support received.

Examining identity bullying and how intersecting identity traits may compound challenges is a key component of this session. Participants will also work through scenarios on how to deal with specific needs and disclosures. Participants will also develop personalized plans to meet their organization's needs. This is particularly beneficial to those working in a school setting or community after-school programs.

Objectives:

- Understanding trauma & suicidal ideation-emphasis on challenges for LGBTQ+ youth
- Analyzing identity bullying & how making connections to students can mitigate harm
- Examining how trauma can affect brain development even into adulthood
- Evaluating your program/school for strengths and weaknesses
- Discuss (briefly) how AI may be affecting mental health of youth
- Examine the success of LGBTQ+ youth in supportive environments
- McKinney-Vento and other programs to support LGBTQ+ youth



[Register Here!](#)

Mandated Reporting

Date: January 14, 2025 | 1:00pm-3:00pm

Trainer: Sara Robinson

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.

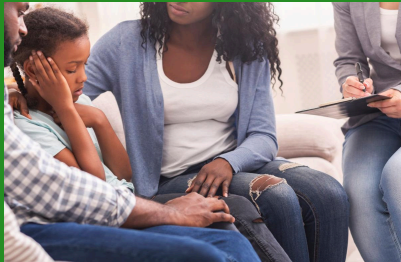
This training is open to anyone who is a mandated reporter.

***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

Pending Addictions CEUs

Register Here!



Mental Health 101: Understanding and Taking Charge of Mental Health

Date: January 27, 2025 | 11:00am-12:30pm

Trainer: Dr. Barb Brady

Description: This training supports youth-serving adults in leading safe, nonthreatening discussions to help youth understand the components of mental health based on the CDC and WHO definitions. This training empowers adults to discuss what good mental health looks like and what we can do to take charge of and improve mental health. Additionally, participants will be able to access their own mental health and employ strategies to enhance their own wellbeing, capacity to overcome life stresses, and better prepare themselves to engage with others in healthier ways that contribute to positive mental health. This training provides mental health resources to improve mental health and identifies some basic coping skills, resiliency traits, and habits that anyone can develop to lead to positive mental health outcomes.

Objectives:

- Review the WHO and CDC definitions of mental health
- Understand the components of good mental health
- Access one’s strengths and weaknesses in relation to mental health
- Identify best-practice strategies to improve mental health, including building resiliency, coping skills, and self-care practices

***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!](#)

February ACEs Training Series

ACEs 101: Understanding ACEs

Date: February 4, 2025 | 2:00-3:30pm

ACEs 102: Preventing ACEs

Date: February 11, 2025 | 2:00-3:30pm

ACEs 103: Overcoming ACEs

Date: February 18, 2025 | 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 has IDN been up to?

This Month's Training Highlight:

On **November 11, 2025**, Corey Beahm and Nick Larson delivered a professional development training for the Boys & Girls Club of the Eastern Panhandle at BGC Parkersburg.

Staff participated in “**Anger Management: Calming Volcanic Emotions**,” a trauma-informed session focused on understanding how anger builds, how to recognize early signs of escalation, and how to support youth through intense emotional moments with calm, grounded responses. The training blended practical strategies, real-world examples, and interactive discussion to help staff strengthen their confidence in de-escalation and relationship-based support.



Participants walked away with tools they can use **immediately**—skills that help create safer, more predictable environments where young people feel understood rather than punished. This kind of training not only benefits youth in moments of crisis but also strengthens long-term emotional resilience and trust between staff and the young people they serve.

This training was provided free of charge thanks to generous funding from The Milan Puskar Foundation, whose support allows IDN to bring high-quality, evidence-based learning opportunities to youth-serving professionals across our region.



IDN Offering Social Work CEUs for Trainings

Inspiring Dreams Network is excited to announce that we are partnering with the *National Social Work Association WV* and will soon be able to offer **Continuing Education Units (CEUs)** for **social workers** participating in our trainings. This milestone reflects IDN's commitment to professional development and our growing role as a trusted resource in the social services community. By aligning our workshops and educational offerings with CEU standards, IDN will empower social workers to deepen their skills, stay current with best practices, and meet licensure requirements—all while engaging in trainings that center equity, youth advocacy, and trauma-informed care. Stay tuned for launch details and accreditation updates as IDN expands its impact.

IDN is excited to share a new collection of supports now available on our [Youth Development Portal](#), our free, trauma-informed hub designed 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 honor of **Universal Human Rights Month**, we've added resources that strengthen adults' ability to create safe, inclusive, and affirming environments for all youth. This month's additions offer guidance for families supporting children through school-based transitions, actionable strategies educators can use to build welcoming classrooms, and connections to affirming mental-health support for LGBTQIA+ young people. **Together, these tools reinforce our shared commitment to dignity, belonging, and the well-being of every child.**



A Parent's Quick Guide for In-School Transitions

Welcoming Schools: 10 Actions Educators Can Take

Rainbow Youth Project

Partner Updates



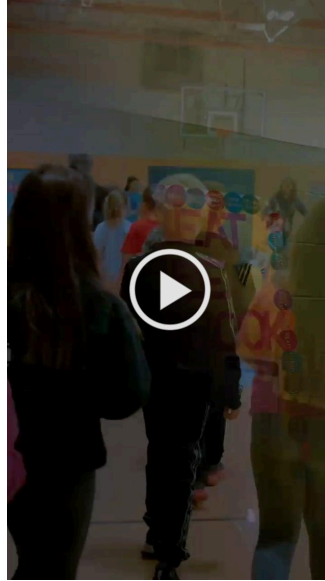
Itty Bitty Therapy Horses

Itty Bitty Therapy Horses is a nonprofit based at the Smith Farm in Scott Depot, WV, continues to be a valued partner in bringing the **L.E.A.D.** (**Love, Encourage, Advocate, Defend**) program to children across our region. Through their animal-assisted activities with **miniature therapy horses**, the team helps young people build empathy, confidence, and connection while learning how to recognize and respond to the needs of others with kindness and courage. The Smith Farm is also home to **Horseshoe Heaven**, an event venue that hosts educational group trips for schools and youth programs.

These visits offer hands-on experiences such as scavenger hunts, barn lessons, large-horse meet-and-greets, grooming and leading mini horses, farm exploration, hayrides, pond visits, and feeding goats and fish. The organization's staff are **PATH International–certified Equine Specialists in Mental Health and Learning**, allowing them to collaborate with behavioral and speech therapists, counselors, and educators to support youth through therapeutic, experiential learning. We are grateful for their continued

partnership and the meaningful impact they bring to children and families in our community.

 Check out the video below!



Visit the Itty Bitty Therapy Horses Facebook page for more information!

[Click Here](#)

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 drbarbrady@inspiringdreamsnetwork.org



How did you like this email?



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