



February 2026 Newsletter

Greetings from Executive Director

Dr. Barb Brady



As we celebrate **Black History Month**, I want to extend my gratitude to every member of the Inspiring Dreams Network community. This month invites us to honor the strength, creativity, and leadership of Black youth, families, and communities—and to recommit ourselves to building environments where every young person feels valued, supported, and empowered to thrive.

In that spirit, we've added a new collection of resources to our [Youth Development Portal](#) from organizations support the mental health and well-being of Black youth. These materials explore culturally grounded approaches to suicide prevention, offer guidance for navigating mental health systems with greater confidence and care, and highlight research-informed strategies for addressing the impacts of adversity and inequity. Together, they provide practical tools for adults who are walking alongside young people and striving to create spaces of safety, belonging, and hope.

Thank you for your continued partnership and for the compassion you bring to this work. By learning, growing, and taking action together, we strengthen the pathways that help youth dream boldly and build brighter futures.

With appreciation,
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.

February ACEs Training Series

ACEs 103: Overcoming ACEs

Date: February 18, 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)**. This training provides a brief review of the concepts in ACEs 101 and various key strategies to preventing ACEs. Participants will explore what is already being done in some communities around the state and brainstorm what they can do in their own communities to prevent ACEs.

***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!



Lean On Me: Supportive Practices for Families to Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect

Date: February 20, 2026 | 11:00am-1:00pm

Trainer: Paula Kerner, Fairness WV

Location: Zoom

Description: This is a great companion course to the Mandated Reporter training to help families with supportive practices. Parenting is hard and imperfect. Everyone needs help sometimes. LEAN on Me WV is an initiative to promote child well-being by supporting families with listening, empathy, affirmation, and nonjudgment. The goal of LEAN on Me is to promote community responsibility to support families, rather than solely report families to CPS. All of us can use the LEAN on Me approach to support families and prevent child abuse and neglect. Techniques practiced in this training will better equip providers including school personnel in making the decision of what resources are needed and if mandatory reporting is utilized.

Objectives:

- Discerning needs vs. neglect
- Building Protective factors
- Child Protective Services – processes, capabilities, and difficulties
- Bias in decision making
- Community resources

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Register Here!

Huntington Children's Museum Staff Trainings



March 2, 2026

ACEs 101- Trainer: Dr. Barb Brady

Connections Matter- Trainer: Dr. Barb Brady

March 10, 2026

Peaceful Conflict Resolution- Trainers: Tiffany Pittman & Dr. Barb Brady

Intro to Neurodiversity- Trainer: John Barton



Mandated Reporting

Date: March 17, 2026 | 1:00pm-4:00pm

Trainer: Sara Robinson & Leslie Slaughter

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.

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[Register Here!](#)

GREAT FUTURES START [HERE](#).



Boys & Girls Club of Parkersburg Staff Trainings

March 13, 2026

Preparing Students for a Successful Summer- Trainers: Dr. Barb Brady & Sarah Barton

April 10, 2026

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

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?



Join Our Team! IDN Board Member Position Now Open

Inspiring Dreams Network is now accepting self-nominations for our Board of Directors. Join a mission-driven team working to strengthen youth resilience, community well-being, and systems that truly support young people.

We're filling **one Board seat** and welcome leaders of all backgrounds—no prior Board

experience required. Members serve a three-year term, meet monthly (virtual), and help guide IDN's strategy, values, and impact.

Walk with us as we build a more supportive, youth-centered future.

[Apply Here!](#)

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 honor of **Black History Month** this February, we're highlighting new resources that support the mental health and well-being of Black youth, families, and communities. This collection includes a culturally grounded introduction to suicide prevention, tools that connect individuals with affirming and identity-centered mental health supports, and research that turns what we know about trauma and adversity into practical strategies for reducing health disparities among African American youth—all designed to strengthen understanding, connection, and hope.



L.E.T.S. Save Lives: An Introduction to Suicide Prevention for Black and African American Communities

Black Mental Health Resources

Translating Research into Action to Mitigate ACEs–Related Health Disparities Among African American Youth

Partner Updates

Free Parent Teen Connection Conference

This conference is for you if:

- You want fewer power struggles and more real conversations with your teen.
- You're ready to stay calm when emotions spike instead of getting pulled into the chaos.



- You want a clear, science-based understanding of your teen's brain and behavior.
- You need practical ways to set limits that keep respect and connection intact.
- You're looking for tools that make everyday family life easier — without yelling, lecturing, or bribing.

Join thousands of parents and educators learning how to bring peace back home — with **research-backed tools, relatable stories, and practical steps** you can use right away.

[Register Here](#)



Search Institute Youth Opportunity Toolkit

When youth have not one, but a web of developmental relationships, they are more likely to grow, learn, and develop social-emotional skills and resilience in the face of obstacles. These transformative relationships are foundational to supporting young people in building, strengthening, and activating their social capital.

Search Institute's **Youth Opportunity Toolkit** is a free tool designed to help organizations gain insight into the benefits of social capital while introducing the key components to support leaders and practitioners in getting started on a pathway to becoming a social capital promoting organization.

[Access the Toolkit](#)



KVC West Virginia "How to Talk With Teens About Dating in the Age of Social Media"

KVC West Virginia has released a new parent guide to help families navigate teen dating in the digital age. This resource offers practical tips for supporting healthy relationships, recognizing red flags, and fostering open communication as young people explore online and offline connections.

[Access the Article](#)

WVU CED Positive Behavior Support Upcoming Training



De-Escalation Techniques

Date: February 18, 2026

Time: 10:00am – 12:00pm

Location: Zoom

Description: This free, interactive online training explores ways to recognize and manage one's own stress as well as ways to de-escalate a crisis. Participants can expect to learn how to recognize compassion fatigue and burn out. Assess your level of stress and anger, along with the effects and ways to manage those effects. The crisis cycle will be discussed along with tools and techniques to de-escalate a crisis.

School professionals, first responders, social workers, therapists, and direct support providers are encouraged to attend.

After attending, you will be able to:

- Differentiate between compassion fatigue and being burned out
- Recognize a power struggle and ways to avoid it
- Identify ways to effectively de-escalate a situation

2 Social Work CEUs will be available for this webinar

[Learn More & Register](#)

Volunteer WV Disaster Recovery Training Opportunity



Essentials for Disaster Case Management: 2-Day Training

Where: Welch, WV 24801

When: February 24 & 25, 2026

Time: 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM each day

Description: Developed by Catholic Charities USA, this training equips case managers, community responders and volunteers with the tools they need to help individuals and families recover from disasters. Participants will take part in interactive sessions covering 10 key areas of disaster case management. Upon completion of the training, they will earn a National Disaster Case Management Certification.

Who Should attend?

- Case Managers who will provide service to disaster victims
- Supervisors of disaster case managers
- Long term recovery group representatives
- Community members interested in volunteer disaster case management

[Register Here](#)

Mott Million Dollar Challenge: A Pitch Competition for Kids and Teens



Kids and teens everywhere have world-changing ideas that deserve the spotlight, and the Mott Million Dollar Challenge is their chance to shine. This national pitch competition invites **K-12 students** to submit a simple 30-90 second video sharing an idea that betters their very own school, home, or community.

Students can enter individually or in teams of up to three, and **\$1 million in prizes** will be awarded across the competition! There is a guaranteed winner from every

state. [Submissions are due February 27, 2026.](#)

[Learn More](#)



WV Peer Recovery Upcoming Trainings

[PRSS Micro-Credential Class](#)

Date: February 16-17, 2026

Location: Southern WV CTC - Logan Campus Location

[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



TRY THIS
WEST VIRGINIA

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! **APPLY LATER**
Our next round will be due mid-June

 **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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