



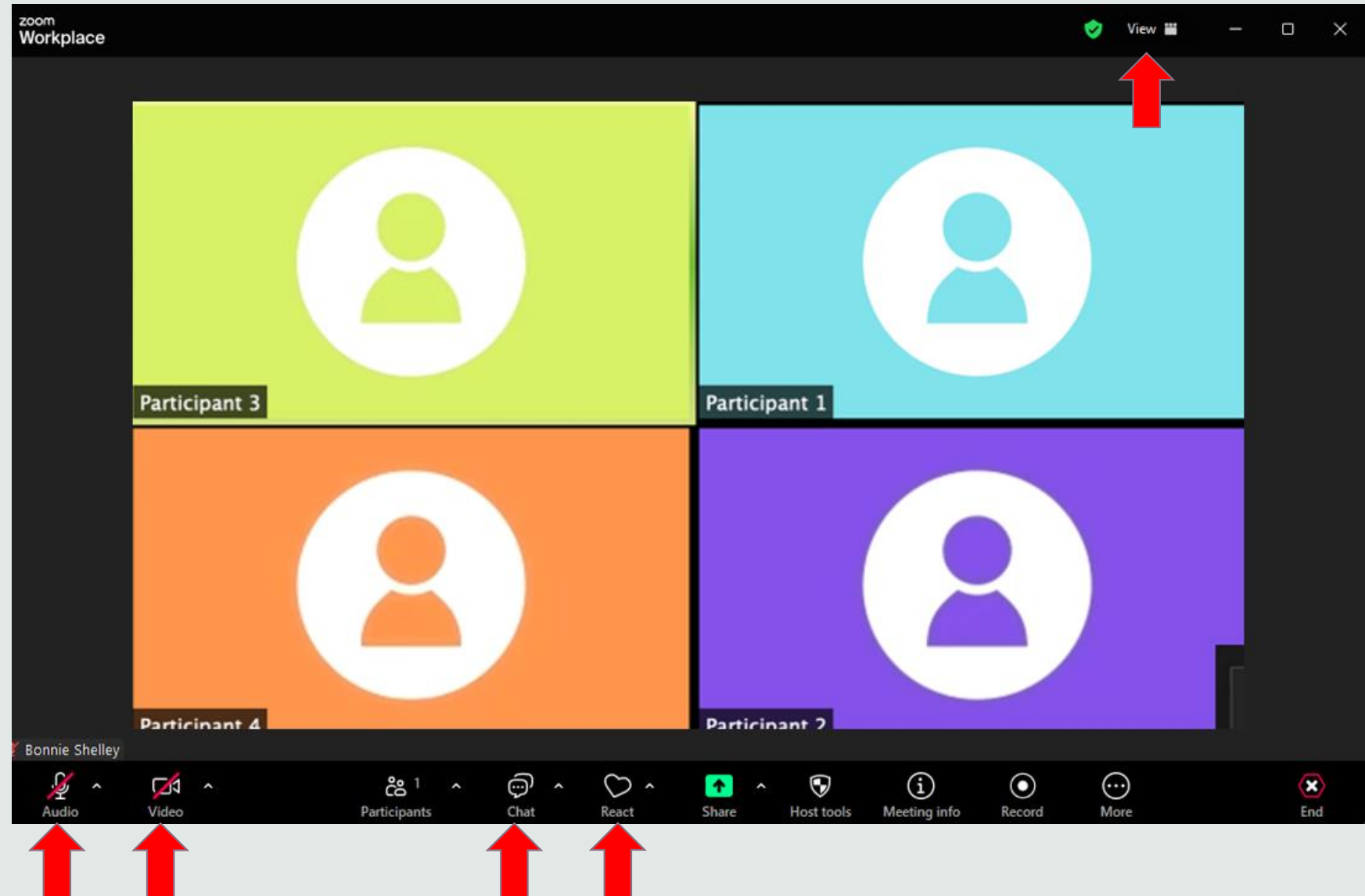
## Zoom Technology Moment: Committee Members

-The "Audio" and "Video" buttons are in the bottom left corner. These help you mute and unmute or turn your video on or off.

-The "Chat" button is just left of the bottom center of the screen.

-The "React" button is to the right of the chat button. You can find the "Raise Hand" function here.

-In the top right corner is the "View" button. This helps you change the way you view the meeting.



# AGENDA

- **Welcome, Intros, Agenda review**
- **Interoperable Workgroup Update**
- **Lived Experience Collaborative Update**
  - *Upcoming guests and topics*
- **988 Help-Seeker Bill of Rights**
- **Community Updates and Opportunities**
- **Open Discussion - Current Events**
- **Next Meeting - Mon. August 11th, 2025 1 PM - 3 PM**

To access these slides scan





## 2025 Meetings, Mondays 1-3 PM

- **August 11<sup>th</sup>**
- **September 8<sup>th</sup>**
- **October 13<sup>th</sup>**
- **November 10<sup>th</sup>**
- **December 8<sup>th</sup>**

**\* Information on how to join the meeting will be sent out one week in advance of each meeting, as well as posted to the HCA Website.**



# Comfort Agreement

Here is our comfort agreement from the last meeting:

- Keep an open mind when others are sharing.
- Experiences are different. Be respectful of differences.
- "Step up and step back."
- Listen and don't judge.
- Keep things confidential and do not disclose without consent.
- Agree to disagree,
- Assume best intent.
- Active listening.



Is there anything that should be added or updated?

# External Working Sessions – Interoperable Docs

Maddy Cope

7/14/25

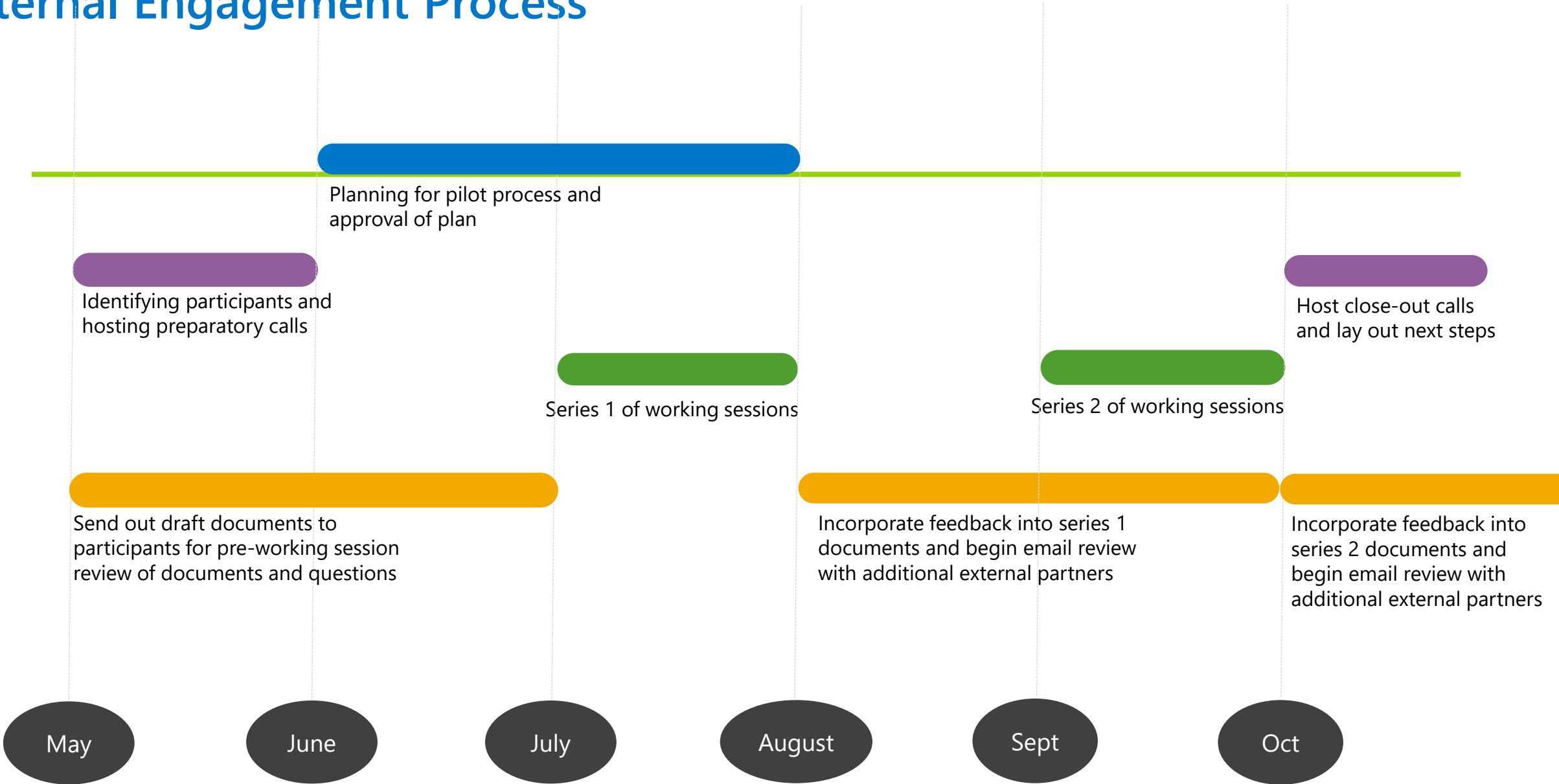
# Today's Objectives

- **Reminder of the working sessions purpose and agenda – what to expect from the next few weeks**
- **Answer any lingering questions before the working sessions begin!**

# Working Session Agenda

- **Before the Working Sessions:**
  - Documents are sent out via email for a pre-review
- **During the Working Sessions:**
  - A reminder about the purpose of each document
  - Work through each document
    - Is this field relevant? Redundant?
    - Does this field serve you properly? Achieve its goal?
  - How can we shorten this document while still fulfilling all needed functions?
  - Are all documents needed?
- **Once all Working Sessions are complete:**
  - The reworked documents are sent out for reference and closing sessions are held

# External Engagement Process



# Next Steps

- ~~• Attend one of the two preparatory sessions~~
- Attend one of the two working sessions for documents 1-3 (July)
- Attend one of the two working sessions for documents 4-5 (September)
- Attend the closing sessions in October and receive follow-up materials and updated documents for reference

# Contact

For additional information, contact:


**Maddy Cope**

[madeline.cope@hca.wa.gov](mailto:madeline.cope@hca.wa.gov)



# Lived Experience Collaborative Plans

## CRIS LINK

- Status CRIS recommendations – Quarterly updates after meetings
  - Crisis System Bill of Rights – In progress
  - MRRCT – August 11<sup>th</sup> meeting
  - Kirkland Connections, MRSS, Co-Response – Waiting for updates
  - Other topics?
- 



# 988 Help-Seeker Bill of Rights

Recommendation from final CRIS Steering Committee Report: "In partnership with consumers, develop a **Caller Bill of Rights** that provides information to consumers about what they should expect when they contact 988, and holds the system accountable"

*"Just because someone is houseless or addicted they have the same rights and deserve the same respect as anyone else!"*

*— Lived Experience Stories Project Participant*

A vertical strip on the left side of the slide features a close-up photograph of pink cherry blossoms. The blossoms are in various stages of bloom, with some showing five distinct petals and yellow centers. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light pink and white, suggesting more blossoms or a bright sky. The branch is dark and thin, with a few leaves visible.

# 6/9/2025 Discussion – Principles for 988 Bill of Rights

- Trauma-informed; honoring that people can respond in different ways while in crisis
- Privacy/confidentiality
- Safety
- Agency
- Transparency
- Alleviate fears, anxiety, stigma about contacting 988
- Plain-talk
- Informed consent, participation in decision-making
- Cultural humility

A close-up photograph of a dark brown branch with several bright pink cherry blossoms. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, with some showing distinct yellow centers. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white and pink, suggesting more blossoms or a bright sky.

# 6/9/2025 Discussion – Content of 988 Bill of Rights

- Information may be requested for coordination of appropriate referrals/resources – sharing personal info is optional; pseudonyms okay
- Services may be impacted based on which info is given/not given – e.g., referrals
- May be transferred to 911 if imminent risk is suspected
- Youth-specific information (or a separate Bill of Rights tailored toward youth)

A vertical strip on the left side of the slide shows a close-up of pink cherry blossoms on a dark branch, with some flowers in sharp focus and others blurred in the background.

# 6/9/2025 Discussion – Implementation of 988 Bill of Rights

- Post Bill of Rights online (WA 988 site? Centers/Hubs?)
- Text: link to Bill of Rights; Call: dial # to hear a recording of Bill of Rights
- Video/visual component for accessibility and all learning styles
- Efforts to inform people about 988 Bill of Rights
- Create a clear, meaningful pathway to share concerns (i.e. if help seeker feels their interaction didn't align with Bill of Rights)

A vertical photograph of pink cherry blossoms on a dark branch, positioned on the left side of the slide. The blossoms are in various stages of bloom, with some showing yellow centers. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light pink and white.

## 6/9/2025 Discussion – Future Steps

- Continue conversations at Lived Experience Collaborative
- Crucial to include 988 Centers / future Hubs in drafting and implementation
- Do 998 Centers or RCLs currently have similar guidelines in place? (training manuals maybe?)
- Some shared interest in broader reach beyond “someone to contact” – including rights specific to interactions w/ MCTs, DCRs, involuntary commitment, etc.

## 7/14/25 relevant documents collected to date

- **988 Lifeline User Tenets (Frontier BH)**
- **BHA Individual Rights WAC**
- **Individual Rights (VOAWW)**
- 988 Lifeline Best Practices Guidelines (8/23) (HCA)
- ICH Accreditation standards

# 988 Lifeline User Tenets – Frontier Behavioral Health

- Call-takers' training includes handling imminent risk situations, respecting client autonomy, etc.
- Individuals are not required to provide name, age, DOB, gender, ethnicity, race, citizenship status, or any other identifying information – they may voluntarily share info to provide context for their presenting concerns and to connect to resources and referrals – services will not be denied based on the provision of identifying information
- Individuals will not be screened out for not having current thoughts of suicide
- Individuals have a right to consent or decline referrals – exceptions may occur for imminent risk or attempt in progress

# 988 Lifeline User Tenets – Frontier Behavioral Health

- Individuals have a right to consent or decline short-term safety support calls and follow-up services
- If a call is disconnected during an imminent risk situation, FBH will attempt to call back. If no response, call-taker will consult with their supervisor – if necessary, emergency services will be contacted as a last resort to ensure safety
- Individuals have the right to expect that identifying information will not be shared outside of 988 without their consent
- Personally identifying information may need to be disclosed if imminent risk situation cannot be safely de-escalated – in such cases, only relevant information necessary to provide emergency intervention in a life-threatening situation will be shared

## WAC 246-341-0600 – BHA Individual Rights

Each BHA must develop a statement of individual participant rights applicable to the services the agency is certified to provide, including the right to:

- Receive services without regard to race, creed, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability
- Be treated with respect, dignity and privacy (except reasonable searches for contraband)
- Have all clinical/personal info treated according to state/federal confidentiality regulations
- Participate in the development of your individual service plan, receive a copy of it if desired
- Review your individual service record in the presence of the administrator or designee
- Submit a report to the department when you feel the agency has violated your rights or a WAC requirement

## WAC 246-341-0600 – BHA Individual Rights


Each BHA must ensure the applicable individual right are

- Provided in writing to each individual on or before admission
- Available in alternative formats for individuals who are visually impaired
- Translated to the most commonly used languages in the agency's service area
- Posted in public areas
- Available to any participant upon request

# Individual Rights – Hotline, Chat, Text Services – VOAWW

Includes all points from the Individual Rights WAC. In addition, the right to:

- Be free to exercise your rights and to ensure that doing so does not adversely impact the way you are treated
- Receive crisis line services anonymously
- Participate in decisions regarding your BH care, including the right to refuse treatment, and to express preferences about future treatment decisions
- Be free from any form of restraint or seclusion as a means of coercion, discipline, convenience, or retaliation



# Discussion – 988 Help-Seeker Bill of Rights

“In partnership with consumers, develop a **Caller Bill of Rights** that provides information to consumers about what they should expect when they contact 988, and holds the system accountable”

- What would you like to see in a 988 Bill of Rights?
- What resonates from the reviewed documents?

*“Just because someone is houseless or addicted they have the same rights and deserve the same respect as anyone else!”*

*– Lived Experience Stories Project Participant*



# Community

- \* Resources

- \* Information

- \* Opportunities





Washington State  
Department of  
**Commerce**

## New grant funding opportunity

### Healing, Support and Transition Services

Based on [Chapter 268, Laws of 2023](#), OCVA seeks proposals from qualified non-profit organizations, tribes and tribal organizations located in underserved areas of the state to provide healing, support and transition services available to adults 18 and older who have experienced sex trafficking.

#### Funding information

OCVA estimates that approximately \$1,225,000 per year will be available for this grant program. Applicants may request up to \$204,166 for each year.

OCVA anticipates awarding six contracts for a two-year period (09/15/2025 – 6/30/2027): three in Western Washington and three in Central/Eastern Washington.

#### Project timeline:

**Question & Answer period:** July 9 - August 13, 2025

**Proposals due:** August 13, 2025

**Begin work:** September 15, 2025

#### Pre-proposal conference:

**For non-profit organizations:** A bidder's conference will be held Monday, July 21, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. PT. Email the RFP Coordinator at [Matthew.Flores@commerce.wa.gov](mailto:Matthew.Flores@commerce.wa.gov) by July 20, 2025, to receive a meeting link.

**For tribes:** A separate session specifically for tribal bidders will be held Monday, July 21, 2025 at 1:00 p.m. PT. To attend please use [this Zoom link](#).

Learn more and access application materials [on the Commerce website](#).

# Bridge Forward: to better disability care in Washington State

July 24 to August 1

*This bulletin is being sent by the Health Care Authority (HCA) on behalf of the Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC).*

Bridge Forward is a free, virtual event for anyone working to improve support for people impacted by Washington's developmental disabilities and behavioral health systems

This free gathering brings together:

- Individuals with lived experience
- Families
- Providers
- Policymakers
- Community partners from across the state and beyond

Bridge Forward is to raise awareness, share challenges and successes, and chart a path forward together.

[Learn more at the conference website](#)

## Event details

### Free virtual conference

- **Dates:** July 24 - 25
- **Times:** 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Presentations and breakout sessions.

### Post-conference summit

- **Dates:** July 31 or August 1
- **Times:** 10:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Interactive post-conference summit. Attendees will join either day to plan the future of behavioral health and developmental disability supports in Washington.

[Register now](#)

## Conference organizers

Organized by Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council and National Leadership Consortium on Developmental Disabilities.

## Contact

Email: [WA Bridge Forward](#)

Call: (800) 634-4473



# Foundations

Homes | Jobs | Health

July 2025

If you use content blocking software, whitelist Inks.gd to access links in this email.

## In this issue

- [Success story: Pioneer Human Services](#)
- [Superstar SE Fidelity Jeopardy](#)
- [Transition Assistance Program \(TAP\) Health-related Social Needs \(HRSN\) housing transition navigation services updates](#)
- [IPS Principle of assertive engagement](#)
- [People can work: Employment and whole-person care](#)
- [Workforce strategies: Navigating the role of a supervisor](#)
- [About FCS](#)

## Trainer's corner: Trainers need training, too



Trainers receive training, too!

The FCS trainers and teammates participated in day-long technical assistance provided to us by Rutgers University staff Nora Barrett, Earle Leitch, and Joni Dolce. The popular and valuable training series on "Golden Thread" now has a toolkit that HCA trainers will use to provide Golden Thread training in the upcoming year and beyond.

Most planning conversations had a component of continuous quality improvement, and the Technical Assistance for next contract year will have that as a primary focus. For those who are fans of the "Hoarding" series: Earle will be back! Other previews of coming attractions include supervisor learning webinars and learning community, and training on how to develop a meaningful satisfaction survey.

Upcoming training opportunities forthcoming!

# Success story: Pioneer Human Services

## Becoming a person of integrity

We are proud to share a story on **Isaac**, a client who has journeyed through several of our programs on his road to recovery. Isaac has been through the [Skagit Community Detox Center](#) in Burlington, where he worked with **Seth Peebles**, the clinical manager, and the center's staff. Isaac also met continuously with and was assisted by **Shelly Miller**, our [FCS Supportive Housing](#) supervisor, North Sound Region, and worked with **Amber Morris**, one of our **Peer Bridgers**. Key supports in Isaac's journey shared their stories about working with Isaac.

I have had the privilege of working with Isaac as his Supportive Housing specialist for the past four years. During our time together, I've witnessed Isaac navigate the complex challenges of addiction, mental health struggles, homelessness and involvement with the criminal justice system. There were moments when Isaac showed real progress, staying sober and housed in various programs, but unfortunately, old patterns would often resurface, leading him back to homelessness and despair.

Isaac's addiction continued to progress until it reached such a low point that, at times, **all I could do was just keep showing up and simply be there**—offering support, connecting him with treatment resources, sharing information on overdose prevention and handing out boxes of Narcan — *just in case*.

It felt as though there wasn't much more I could do to help him get back on track, yet I refused to give up. I knew, from all our years of working together, that Isaac had a deep desire for something more in life, and that kept me going. I continued to provide resources, support, and most importantly, hope — always praying he would eventually accept it.

Despite being entrenched in his addiction, Isaac remained committed to meeting with me. He expressed time and again his desire to change and turn his life around. As his addiction worsened, his legal troubles also mounted, culminating in his participation in the Skagit Community Court program. It was during this time that Isaac received a pivotal 'Nudge from the Judge' — a final push to either pursue treatment and recovery or face prison time for the growing legal charges against him.

I will never forget the day Isaac said to me, "*I'm done being a piece of trash. I want to be a **man of integrity**. I want to do the next right thing and hold myself accountable to living a higher standard than I ever have before.*"

This declaration marked a significant shift. Shortly after, Isaac found a 12-step sponsor to support him during and after treatment, and he made the decision to move into the Rise Recovery Housing Program, which specializes in supporting individuals involved with the criminal justice system, including participants in Skagit County's Drug Court and Community Court programs. —*Shelly Miller, FCS Supportive Housing supervisor*

I have seen Isaac at high moments and low moments where I was concerned for his safety and wellbeing. When Isaac is well, he is engaging in services and building his peers up around him. However, I have also seen him extremely dysregulated and feeling isolated from family and friends.

Isaac has it in him to live a happy and healthy life; a life that includes engaging in the recovery community. **It brings my great joy to know he is stable, happy, housed and in recovery.** Thank you, Shelly, for continuing to advocate for him. I know every time I have seen him in detox, I was pleased to know he was alive and that Pioneer staff did not give up on him — or anyone — and continues to offer a chance for change.

Isaac was determined to break free and made the decision to request a long-term treatment program that could **address both his addiction and mental health issues**, hoping this would give him a better chance at sustained recovery. He also enrolled in Pioneer's Peer Bridger services, that provides clients with extensive support during their transition out of treatment and into the community. —*Seth Peebles, Skagit Community Detox clinical manager*

I started working with Isaac when he came into our Skagit Community Detox Center. When I met Isaac, he had just been released from jail and shared how **hopeless and defeated he felt**. I explained the Peer Bridger program and reminded Isaac that if he was interested in having a peer and was willing to participate, I could walk this journey with him. Isaac then started crying and we sat and talked about his recovery journey. I also shared some of my story and of how I felt the same way he did when I decided to change my life and began my own recovery in 2012.

Isaac shared that at one time he had been sober four years – then I saw a spark in his eyes. We began working together right away and Isaac made a plan to go to a 90-day treatment program. I visited Isaac weekly in treatment, and what a transformation! Each week Isaac had a new goal he reached and shared in meetings, and he went back on to his mental health medication. Now our visits were full of hope and how Isaac was meeting each goal.

Isaac completed a 90-day inpatient treatment, moved into clean and sober housing at Rise Recovery, finished his Intensive Outpatient Program and secured a sponsor. We then went to all of his community court cases, and he finally graduated from community court. His growth has been amazing, and he has been a joy to work with all this time. We have had many laughs and tears along the way. **Isaac is now giving back and sponsoring others in the program.** That ‘man of integrity’ and much more has been a true blessing to my recovery.

Now, approximately six months after completing treatment, Isaac remains stably housed at Rise Recovery House. He has secured a steady income and manages to pay his own rent each month. *-Amber Morris, Peer Bridger who attended Isaac's court hearings and supported him in Intensive Outpatient Treatment and 12-step meetings*

I have worked with Isaac for many years. There were many times we thought he would be just another statistic. To see him now is nothing short of a miracle! The change in his life is wonderful to see. *-Randal Simmons, RISE Recovery Housing manager*

Isaac has regained his driver's license, purchased a car and obtained insurance. He has successfully completed the Community Court Program and resolved all of his legal cases, even those in other states. Isaac is now very excited about being in the process of getting enrolled in services at the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation for additional support and resources in **reaching his career goals** of becoming a diesel mechanic. Most importantly, Isaac is now a beacon of hope in the community, **sharing his story and offering encouragement to others who are still struggling.**

With FCS support, Isaac was able to achieve permanent independent housing- an important milestone after years of housing instability; couch surfing, nights outside, shelters and never having a place to call home.

When relapse led to serious challenges, strong advocacy from his FCS housing specialist helped shift a pending eviction into a mutual lease termination, protecting him from another major barrier on his record. Although he ultimately lost that housing, the support never stopped. Through treatment, jail, and homelessness, FCS stayed by his side. Today, Isaac has made the intentional choice to enter recovery housing—rebuilding stability with the goal of signing a lease for his own place again, and this time, keeping it.

## Superstar SE Fidelity Jeopardy

*Washington Health Care Authority (HCA) Foundational Community Supports (FCS) team invites you to a supported employment webinar with our FCS employment trainers.*

**Webinar: Thursday, July 10, 2025, 9 a.m.**

Want to learn and have fun doing it? This webinar is both! The July Innovations in Career Services will be all about testing your knowledge of Individual Placement and Support (IPS) while having fun playing Jeopardy. Each question and answer will relate to different Individual Placement and Support fidelity principles. Test your knowledge, memory, come together to learn more about the evidence-based practice of supported employment with our network providers

### Objectives

- Discover key principles of the IPS supported employment model
- Enhance your skills as an SE specialist through increased knowledge of IPS principles
- Interact with colleagues from other agencies to build a base for collaboration

**Register for this Jeopardy webinar**



## Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Health-related Social Needs (HRSN) housing transition navigation services updates

*Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA) Foundational Community Supports (FCS) is hosting this information webinar to provide transition assistance program and health related social needs housing transition service updates.*

**Webinar: Friday, July 11, 2025, from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.**

We're excited to announce the addition of CMS Medicaid HRSN Housing Transition Navigation Services and funds into the TAP Program. Join us to learn more about what this means for you, your organization and communities.

Health-related social needs (HRSN) are a person's unmet social needs that can lead to or cause poor health outcomes. Some outcomes include unstable housing, homelessness, and nutrition insecurity—all of which are more common in Medicaid communities—specifically communities of color and disenfranchised and under resourced communities.

### Objectives

- Brief review of TAP background; historically as well as most recent changes
- Provide brief HRSN orientation as it relates to TAP
- Updates to TAP policies and increased funding
- Discuss availability of state general funds and HRSN funds

[Register for this TAP webinar](#)

## IPS Principle of assertive engagement

*Washington Health Care Authority (HCA) Foundational Community Supports (FCS) team is hosting this new engagement-focused webinar*

**Webinar: Thursday, July 17, 2025, from 8:30 to 10 a.m.**

This webinar will provide participants with essential knowledge related to engaging participants when they cease to engage and participate in services. We will discuss the IPS principle of Assertive Engagement, as well as building rapport, "readiness", and other key concepts used to understand and improve engagement.

This training is ideal for employment specialists, case managers, and mental health professionals who want to increase the follow-through and participation of individuals in services.

### Objectives

- Learn about concepts that impact follow-through and attendance
- Identify underlying issues that may impact engagement
- Develop individualized approaches to enhance engagement

[Register for this IPS webinar](#)

# People can work: Employment and whole-person care

*Washington Health Care Authority (HCA) and the Foundational Community Supports (FCS) team invite you to join us in our monthly topical webinar with supported employment trainers Dawn Miller and Darren Paschke*

**Webinar: Thursday, July 24, 2025, at 9 a.m.**

What does work mean to you? Is work an important part of your quality of life? Employment is proven to improve our quality of life, support obtaining basic needs, and to significantly improve longevity of life (by as much as 25 years according to some studies).

We get a great deal of support from colleagues and supervisors, often speaking of our "work family". Envision this for the people you serve. Once a person considers themselves recovered, then what? We are trying to influence the health care system to embrace employment as a step towards being integrated, recovery focused, and respectful of the choice of participants.

This presentation will make the case for the importance of employment as an integral part of behavioral health recovery and maintaining recovery. It will also highlight the importance of bringing stakeholders together as a more powerful voice to decrease stigma related to the ability of people to be successfully employed. Bringing stakeholders together substantially enhances the quality of services provided by creating wrap-around services.

## Objectives

- Change the system to move away from treating people with disabilities differently and toward helping them achieve what we all want. Move the balance from "professional" and "client" to people working together for a common purpose
- Provide examples of stakeholder collaboration as a means of enhancing service delivery toward recovery for individuals
- Discuss the importance of employment as part of recovery

**Register for this employment webinar**

# Workforce strategies: Navigating the role of a supervisor

*Washington Health Care Authority (HCA) Foundational Community Supports (FCS) team is partnering with Advocates for Human Potential to bring you a new supported employment June training webinar. This reoccurring series includes three virtual 90-minute technical assistance calls.*

**Webinar: Tuesday, June 24, 2025, from 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.**

This webinar, Navigating the Role of a Supervisor, will cover the essential skills and strategies required for effective supervision. A supervisor not only manages daily operations but also plays a critical role in shaping team dynamics, fostering a productive environment, and ensuring employee development. Transitioning from being an employee to a supervisor requires adjustments in mindset and leadership approach. Supervisors must develop various competencies such as leadership, communication, conflict resolution, and time management.

The presentation focuses on key responsibilities, including motivating teams, resolving conflicts, managing performance, and ensuring compliance with legal and ethical standards. Supervisors are also encouraged to continuously improve their skills and leadership styles to meet the evolving needs of their teams.

Through practical advice, real-world examples, and interactive activities, the session aims to equip participants with the tools they need to be confident and effective leaders

## Objectives

- Understand the role and key responsibilities of a supervisor
- Recognize challenges in transitioning from employee to supervisor
- Motivate and engage employees effectively to employment, with real-world examples from the FCS program

**Register for this workforce strategies webinar**

## Share your Story

There are a few different ways to share these successes.

- An agency or participant can write their story.
- Provide a write up along with pictures and/or video.
- Connect with our HCA communications team to participate in an interview to share the success story.

If your agency would like to be part of this great work and have participants, landlords, or employers who want to share their story how FCS has made a difference in their life.

Please be sure to include contact information including full name and email address, send any Protected Health Information in a secured format and include the [HCA media release](#). We will follow up with you for additional information and/ or an interview as requested.

Thanks for helping us share the important work and reach others who can benefit from Foundational Community Supports!

[Contact us to share your story.](#)

## Future scheduling of FCS training note

We will provide virtual training in October 2025, and potentially in person in Western WA in July. Details to be provided prior to each event.

For questions, contact [Dawn Miller](#) or [Darren Paschke](#)

*The Washington State Legislature requires that providers of Foundational Community Supports (FCS) supported employment services provide service through promising and evidence-based practices. Individual Placement and Support (IPS) is the evidence-based practice of supported employment. FCS achieves improved outcomes by offering comprehensive training on evidence-based practices to FCS agency staff, as well as conducting fidelity reviews to help identify areas of continuous improvement for agencies. Improving outcomes is essential to the sustainability of high-quality services.*

## Reminder: AI protocol

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is at the forefront of many conversations these days, bringing with it some exciting advances in technology that we have never seen before. While we at HCA look forward to seeing what AI can do in the world of healthcare, there are some factors that must be taken into consideration. There are concerns from IT, COMs, and leadership regarding potential breaches of safety and privacy.

This being said, ***please refrain from using any AI notetaking in HCA-sponsored trainings.*** We understand the ease and convenience that AI notetaking provides and have other suggestions to offer. For example, whenever possible, trainings are recorded, transcribed, and sent to attendees for them to refer to at their convenience.

If you choose to use AI notetaking, that requires prior approval on a case-by-case basis. Without prior approval, HCA reserves the right to remove attendees from the webinar or training event who are using AI notetaking. Furthermore, any recording that is created through AI is not recognized as an official recording of this session.

## About FCS

Foundational Community Supports (FCS) is an initiative of Medicaid Transformation. It allows qualified providers to receive Medicaid reimbursement for delivering supportive housing and supported employment services for people with the greatest and most immediate social and health needs.

## **SAMHSA Program to Advance Recovery Knowledge Webinar Series**

Join the SAMHSA Program to Advance Recovery Knowledge (SPARK) initiative this summer for a webinar series for behavioral health professionals and providers working in recovery and peer-run organizations. You are welcome to attend any or all events. To register, click on the links below:

### **Financing Models and Federal Resources for Enhancing and Sustaining Peer-Run and Recovery Organizations**

**Thursday, July 24, 2–3:30 p.m. ET**

This webinar will provide practical strategies for implementing braided funding and innovative payment models to support peer-run organizations. Expert panelists will discuss the benefits and challenges of value-based payment and braided funding, highlighting the unique opportunities for peer-run community organizations to leverage these models to provide more comprehensive and coordinated care. The event will equip attendees with the knowledge and resources to secure sustainable funding and improve the delivery of peer recovery support and crisis respite services.

[Register Today](#)

**Thursday, July 31, 2–3:30 p.m. ET**

This webinar will explore the critical role of employment in the recovery journey for persons with lived and living experience receiving behavioral health services. Participants will learn about effective strategies and evidence-based practices for supporting individuals in securing and maintaining meaningful employment, including individualized career planning and skill-building, workplace accommodations, therapeutic interventions, peer support, and community partnerships. Participants will gain actionable tools to enhance employment support services, ultimately empowering individuals to increase their recovery capital, achieve financial stability, promote social connectedness, and foster long-term recovery.

[Register Today](#)

### **Intergenerational Family Substance Misuse & Recovery**

**Thursday, August 7, 2–3:30 p.m. ET**

This webinar will focus on intergenerational family engagement in recovery efforts. Participants will explore the complexity of intergenerational substance misuse, practical approaches to enhance family member engagement in their own recovery practices, promote resilience, and address the unique challenges families face when caring for loved ones who may be actively misusing substances or in recovery. This session emphasizes the importance of recovery-oriented practices that prioritize family well-being and access to supports. By attending, participants will gain actionable strategies to foster collaboration, improve outcomes for families and individuals in recovery, and build stronger, more connected support networks.

[Register Today](#)



## Science of Addiction and Recovery—A Father's Perspective

**Thursday, August 14, 2–3:30 p.m. ET**

This session explores the science of opioid addiction and withdrawal for direct service providers, equipping them with knowledge to better support fathers in recovery. The session is presented from a “user” perspective by fathers in recovery. It will provide an accessible and easy to understand evidence-based look at how addiction impacts the brain and hijacks the reward system, the challenges of withdrawal and long-term abstinence for persons with opioid use disorder (OUD), the impact of subcultures and stigma on treatment and recovery, and the role of trauma and mental health in sustained recovery.

[Register Today](#)

**For more info and to ask questions, email [SPARK](#).**

## Bringing Family Lived Experience To You

July 1st, 2025 | Volume 3, Issue 9

### NFF News and Highlights

[Register for the 2025 NFF Conference](#)

[Sponsor the 2025 NFF Conference](#)

Virtual, November 3rd, 5th, 7th, 2025

[SAMHSA-Sponsored Webinar Recording -  
Collective Impact: Working Together to Support  
Individuals with SMI/SED and Their Families](#)

[SAMHSA-Sponsored Webinar Recording -  
Emotional CPR: An Evidence-Based Support for  
Individuals with SMI/SED and Their Families](#)



### Note from the Executive Director

**Unconditional Care: A Legacy  
Family Peers Carry On**

[NFF and NFSTAC Pre-Innovations Institutes  
Training: Family Peer Specialist Through the  
Lifespan](#) and NFF Reception

[Remembering Karl Dennis](#)

### NFSTAC News and Highlights

[Office Hour: Finding Families that Would Benefit  
from Support](#)

July 15th, 2:00 p.m. ET

[National Center of Excellence for Tobacco-Free  
Recovery Cohort 2 Opening Session Panel](#)

[NFSTAC Resources](#)

### Legislative & Advocacy News

[Supreme Court Protects Rights of Students with  
Disabilities](#)

[Report to Congress on Medicaid and CHIP for  
Transition-Aged Youth](#)

Last month, we lost a pioneer in children's mental health systems of care, Karl Dennis. His life's work urged systems to ask families what they need and remove the barriers that prevent them from getting the support they deserve. Karl said, "I don't think it's hard to start unconditional care. It's hard to sustain it. You have to find a way to sustain it." The family peer workforce must continue to sustain this giant's important work! Read our full tribute below.

Our SAMHSA-sponsored webinar on Emotional CPR shared practices to implement unconditional care at the individual level. Make sure to check out the recordings for that webinar and our Collective Impact webinar below! Learn how to effectively collaborate with other organizations to make lasting impact in the behavioral health world.

NFSTAC is gearing up for its final months where we wrap up the event series we've facilitated over the past five years. Our finale Family Connections on Substance Use Disorder 101 was an excellent one to cap off this space for families to come together around shared lived experiences. Our last Office Hour is this month! We'll end the series talking about how to reach families who need support. We'll also have our last FAMILY Partnership Training Institute session this month. Stay tuned for our last NFSTAC event in August.



[Mental Health Excellence in Schools Program Act](#)

[Legislative and Advocacy Facebook page](#)

## **June Advocacy Resources**

[Disability Pride Month](#)

## **Events and Resources**

[NASEM's 2-Day Virtual Workshop: Enhancing Care and Services for Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders](#)

*July 1st & July 2nd, 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. ET*

[Social Current's Following Advocacy Amplified: Strengthening Your Advocacy](#)

*July 8th, 2:00 p.m. ET*

[NASMHPD's Weekly 988 Crisis Jam](#)

*July 2nd, 9th, 16th, & 23rd, 12:00 p.m. ET*

[The National Council for Mental Wellbeing's Act With Hope: Engagement Anywhere](#)

We hope to see you next week at the [Pre-Innovations Institutes Training](#) where NFF and NFSTAC staff will deliver a dynamic training about our Family Peer Specialist 101 course and host a reception for families and family peers.

Let's carry on Karl Dennis's legacy by collectively acting to unconditionally care for all families and advocate for our systems to do the same!



Lynda Gargan, PhD

Executive Director,

National Federation of Families

*July 15th, 3:00 p.m. ET*

[SMI TTAC's Peer Support for SMI During Care Transitions](#)

*July 17th, 1:00 p.m. ET*

[CARS' Peer Support for Pregnant Women - Supporting Women with CPS Involvement](#)

*July 30th, 2:00 p.m. ET*

[CDC Suicide Prevention Communication Campaign Playbook](#) and [Brainstorm Book](#)

[HHS Youth Mental Health and Well-being in Faith and Community Settings: Practicing Connectedness](#)

[NTTAC Learning Capture Report: Navigating Mental Health in a Digital World](#)

[NACoA Celebrating Families! Curriculum](#)

[2025 Training Institutes](#)



Join us **virtually** for the National Federation of Families' 36th Annual Conference on **November 3rd, 5th, and 7th!** If you've never experienced our conference before, this is the year to join us!

The NFF Annual Conference is a one-of-a-kind event that brings together families, caregivers, family peers, community leaders, providers, advocates, and policymakers from across the country. Together, we explore the most pressing issues impacting families and the mental health and well-being of their loved ones—all through the lens of a family-driven approach.

Now more than ever, we need to enhance and grow family leaders to navigate a rapidly changing landscape. This virtual conference offers a powerful platform to connect, learn, and grow alongside a national network of passionate and dedicated individuals. Reserve your spot by registering as a virtual attendee below. Show your support for the family peer workforce while spreading the word about the work your organization does by sponsoring our virtual conference!

[Register Here](#)

[Sponsor Here](#)

## SAMHSA-Sponsored June Webinar Recordings

### Collective Impact: Working Together to Support Individuals with SMI/SED and Their Families

Watch this webinar to learn how Senior Advisor at the [Collective Impact Forum](#) Paul Schmitz has coached organizations, agencies, and communities to come together to form a common agenda, establish shared measurement to track progress towards a goal, integrate all participants' perspectives, and engage in continuous productive communication to create collective impact that is stronger than the efforts of one organization alone to transform the behavioral health systems individuals with SMI/SED navigate to become more effective.



[Watch Here](#)



[Watch Here](#)

### Emotional CPR: An Evidence-Based Support for Individuals with SMI/SED and Their Families

Get an introduction to how Emotional CPR has positively impacted individuals with SMI/SED and their families from [Emotional CPR's](#) Director of Training and Engagement and Coordinator for Allies of Indiana, Kimberly Ewing. She shares what an emotional crisis looks like, a brief overview of the skills that are taught in-depth to those who complete the training, and why we know that Emotional CPR works.

## Register for the NFF and NFSTAC Pre-Innovation Institutes Training: Family Peer Specialist Through the Lifespan

As the definition of family peer support evolves, the skills needed for family peer specialists (FPSs) to effectively support families and caregivers are expanding. Based on NFSTAC's self-paced virtual curriculum, "Family Peer Specialist Through the Lifespan" ([FPS 101](#)). This hands-on, in-person 1.5-day training during the Innovations Institutes Pre-Institutes Training will equip FPSs and the family peer workforce with the skills and tools they need to support families who are navigating child- and family-serving systems in their communities. NFF and NFSTAC staff members will be delivering this training, recommended for family members with lived experience as a caregiver who are considering entering the peer workforce; family peer specialists wishing to expand their field of knowledge to include family lifespan support; individuals who may have some training and wish to have a deeper understanding; family peer supervisors; and family support community members.



[Register Here](#)

*If you are attending the Innovation Institutes, join our NFF Reception for the family peer workforce and families on Wednesday, July 9th at 5:30 p.m. ET in Potomac D!*

## Celebrating the Life of Karl Dennis



The family movement recently lost one of its founding members and most passionate champions for family-driven, compassionate mental health support systems, Karl Dennis. Known as the "Father of Wraparound," Karl was a pioneer and international expert in supporting the "hardest to serve" children and families by providing Unconditional Care, his signature philosophy. NFF gained so much from our partnership with Karl throughout his impressive life, from his time as a Board Member to the many [presentations](#) and [panel discussions](#) where he shared his wisdom, mentorship, and guidance to our leadership and members. We are grateful that we were able to honor Karl and his wife Kathy—who worked

tirelessly alongside him throughout his career—with a Lifetime Achievement Award at our 2023 Annual Conference in Chicago, IL, where he also joined us to present the [Karl Dennis Unconditional Care Award](#) to that year's recipient. We named this award in his honor, because during the 27 years he spent as the Executive Director of [Kaleidoscope](#), a nationally-recognized top five child-serving agency in the country, Karl transformed the way the mental health system thought about what it means to truly support youth and families by listening to their lived expertise and providing the supports that each individual family desired—no matter that family's challenges.

We have Karl Dennis to thank for inspiring countless family advocates, family peers, providers, and other family support stakeholders who will continue to hold Wraparound and other child-serving systems accountable for delivering family-driven support. As Karl once said during an interview with NFF Executive Director Lynda Gargan for a SAMHSA event, **"Under no circumstances do we throw anyone out of our system; there is no one we won't accept. And if we don't have a service for them, we need to plan one. Our commitment is that we will not ever give up, regardless of what occurs."** Thank you, Karl and Kathy, for everything that you have taught us about what it means to practice acceptance!

## NFSTAC News and Highlights



### National Center of Excellence for Tobacco-Free Recovery Cohort 2 Opening Session

Through the National Center of Excellence for Tobacco-Free Recovery (CoE-TFR), CAI is engaging behavioral health providers, state agencies, people who use commercial tobacco products, and other stakeholders in efforts to reduce the high rate of commercial tobacco use among people with mental health and substance use conditions.

## EVENTS

### Office Hour: Finding Families that Would Benefit from Support

July 15th, 2:00 p.m. ET

NOTE WEEK CHANGE

This event will explore effective strategies for identifying families who would benefit from support when navigating the challenges of a child's mental health and/or substance use challenges. Attendees will learn practical approaches to outreach, ways to engage parents empathetically, and how to leverage education and shared experiences to foster meaningful connections.

[Register Here](#)

On June 12, 2025, NFSTAC's Lachelle Freeman participated in the 2nd cohort opening session on a panel that included an individual on their journey to quit using tobacco, two former tobacco users, and Lachelle sharing the experiences of a family member of a tobacco user.

People with behavioral health conditions consume 40% of the cigarettes manufactured in this country and smoke at disproportionate rates ([CDC, 2024](#)). CAI is challenging myths about tobacco and addressing these environmental conditions through the CoE-TFR, a five-year initiative to engage a wide set of experts who will serve as a national planning committee, provide training and technical assistance to staff working in behavioral health care settings on effective evidence-based tobacco cessation interventions, and create and maintain an online hub for accessing quality resources and materials.

[Register Here](#)



### NFSTAC June Event Recordings

[Office Hour: The Family Peer Career Ladder & Grant Writing Tips](#) with Rikki Harris and Carla Pretto

[Webinar: Effective Strategies to Show Off Your Work](#) with the SW Plains Mental Health Implementation Support Hub

[Follow us on YouTube](#)



Family Peer Workforce and Support  
Family Peer Specialist  
Through the Lifespan

Family Peer Specialist  
101 Course



Family & Caregiver  
Toolkit

## NFSTAC Resources

Our team has worked with family members and the workforce to create a number of resources for families and family peers, including:

- [Data Collection Tools for Family-Run Organizations](#)
- [Combined Core Competencies Infographic](#)
- [Family, Youth, and Adult Peer Support Differentiated](#)
- [Tips for Supervisors Supporting Family Peers in Writing Lived Experience Narratives](#)
- [Interview Questions to Understand a Candidate's Family Lived Experience](#)

Find more on the NFSTAC Resource webpage!

Access All Resources

*Stay tuned for some exciting new NFSTAC products coming soon! You can visit our Resources webpage to be the first to know.*

## Legislation and Advocacy

### National Policy News

#### Supreme Court Protects Rights of Students with Disabilities

On June 12, 2025, the Supreme Court unanimously ruled that families suing schools under the Americans with Disabilities Act for discrimination against students with disabilities, including mental health and behavioral challenges, do not need to prove "bad faith or gross misjudgment" on part of the school. This will allow families whose children do not receive legally-required support to continue to use the court system to hold schools accountable.

Learn More

#### Report to Congress on Medicaid and CHIP for Transition-Aged Youth

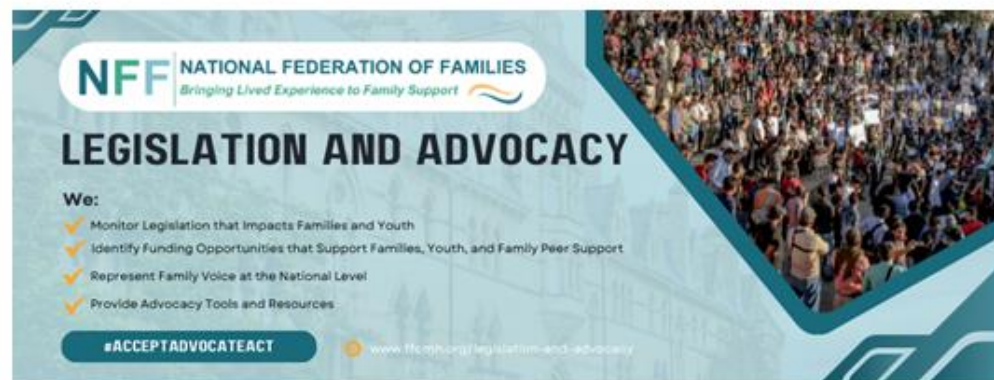
The Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission released a [report](#) on June 11, 2025 that includes recommendations on transitions from pediatric to adult care for Medicaid-covered children and youth with special health care needs, including mental health and substance use challenges. This report was sent to Vice President JD Vance and House Speaker Mike Johnson to inform policy.

Learn More

## Mental Health Excellence in Schools Program Act (H.R. 3534, S.1895)

The [Mental Health Excellence in Schools Program Act](#) was reintroduced in the House and Senate on May 21, 2025. The bill would create a partnership between the Department of Education and universities to create tuition grants for students who complete a training program that leads to a credential as a school mental health professional. NFF endorsed this legislation.

[Learn More](#)



Follow our [Legislative and Advocacy Facebook page](#) and use the data and facts shared there in concert with your advocacy skills to represent the voice of families where you live. Some highlights shared this month include:

- [PBS's article about the effect of Medicaid cuts on family caregivers](#)
- [A powerful success story about one family's advocacy](#)
- [World Eating Disorder advocacy materials](#)
- [APA's advisory on AI's impact on children's mental health](#)
- [Active Minds call for Student Advisory Committee Members](#)
- Tons of briefs, articles, and action alerts to advocate against Medicaid cuts

## July Advocacy Campaign

A

**Acknowledge** and respect individual experiences and abilities.

L

**Learn** about different disability types.

L

**Leverage** your influence to promote accessibility and inclusion.

Y

**Yield** the floor to people with disabilities to help identify and eliminate barriers.



## Disability Pride Month

Disability Pride Month recognizes the importance of the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (ADA) which was signed into law 35 years ago July 26th. This is the month to celebrate disability culture, history, and community pride. Disability pride is about accepting and honoring each person's uniqueness.

As family members and caregivers know, disability is not something to hide or fix—it's part of who we are and who our children are. Disability pride has often been described as "accepting and honoring each person's uniqueness" so they can thrive.

The [Center for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) offers a range of resources for people with disabilities, caregivers, and providers. Be sure to check out how to be a [Disability A.L.L.Y.](#) and access CDC's free social media designs and messaging! Get inspired by [Real Stories](#) and learn more about [Disability and Health](#).

## Events and Resources



### Upcoming Family Mental Health Events

[NASEM's 2-Day Virtual Workshop: Enhancing Care and Services for Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders](#)

July 1st & July 2nd, 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. ET

[Social Current's Following Advocacy Amplified: Strengthening Your](#)



### HHS Youth Mental Health and Well-being in Faith and Community Settings: Practicing Connectedness

In a new toolkit, the [Health and Human Services Center for Faith](#) reports more than 40% of teenagers say they struggle with persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, while more



### CDC Suicide Prevention Communication Playbook and Brainstorm Book

Death by suicide is a serious public health problem with long-lasting effects on families and communities. It's also a difficult topic to discuss. If your organization or community wants to create a prevention strategy, the CDC just released two connected resources to help develop campaigns

### [Strengthening Your Advocacy](#)

July 8th, 2:00 p.m. ET

### [NASMHPD's Weekly 988 Crisis Jam](#)

July 2nd, 9th, 16th, & 23rd, 12:00 p.m. ET

### [The National Council for Mental Wellbeing's Act With Hope: Engagement Anywhere](#)

July 15th, 3:00 p.m. ET

### [SMI TTAC's Peer Support for SMI During Care Transitions](#)

July 17th, 1:00 p.m. ET

### [CARS' Peer Support for Pregnant Women - Supporting Women with CPS Involvement](#)

July 30th, 2:00 p.m. ET

hopelessness, while more than half of parents and caregivers express concern over their children's mental well-being. [Youth Mental Health and Well-being in Faith and Community Settings: Practicing Connectedness](#) outlines how faith communities can support youth who are experiencing challenges related to their mental health.

Created in 2001, the [HHS Center for Faith](#) assists and partners nationally with faith-based groups, houses of worship, and community organizations. This toolkit outlines how faith-based and community organizations can educate congregations and their communities about mental health issues through education forums and fostering connections with youth and their families.

help develop campaigns that fit your community's needs. It also creates a nonjudgmental space for candid conversations.

CDC's [Suicide Prevention Communication Campaign Playbook](#) and [Brainstorm Book](#) work together. The Playbook includes data sources, actionable steps, and exercises to help your organization develop effective campaigns. The Brainstorm Book has step-by-step exercises for organizers to understand their community, address possible barriers, and craft calls to action. Both align with the 2024 [National Strategy for Suicide Prevention](#) and CDC's [Suicide Prevention Resource for Action](#).

[Access Playbook](#)

[Access Resource](#)

[Brainstorm Book](#)



[Access Resource](#)

### NTTAC Report:

#### Navigating Mental Health in a Digital World

Earlier this year, the National Training & Technical Assistance Center (NTTAC) convened a Technology Roundtable to explore how social media is shaping mental health, generational experiences, and the way we connect with one another.

The voices of those at the roundtable inspired a rich community discussion that was grounded in research. This report highlights both the positive aspects and challenges of social media's impact on mental health, as well as generational perspectives on how social media is perceived. Read about the themes and insights that can help inform program development, policy efforts, and foster better understanding across generations.

### NACoA: Celebrating Families!

The National Association for Children of Addiction (NACoA) just updated the curriculum for "Celebrating Families!", a Whole Family Recovery Program. This intergenerational program is designed to break cycles of substance use disorder, while increasing protective factors to nurture resilience for children and families in recovery from the effects of substance use disorders. It's currently implemented in over 40 U.S. states, Washington D.C., and Alberta (Canada).



[Access Resource](#)

### 2025 Training Institutes – Register Today!

Join nearly 2,000 experts and leaders, including family leaders, from across the U.S., working at the federal, state, and local levels to transform public human services systems, programs, and services. Choose from an array of workshops and presentations on cutting-edge research and innovative programs, services, and practices all focused on improving outcomes and building bright futures for children, youth, young adults, and their families. NFSTAC staff will be presenting at the [Pre-Institutes Training Program](#), so make sure to register for that, too!



[Register Here](#)



## A Note from the Director

Our theme for this month's newsletter is focused on athletics. We want to highlight the importance of sports and athletics in 2SLGBTQIA+ lives, whether someone plays or is a sports fan. Sports are universal and global. We don't have to speak the same language to play together or cheer a team on. Rooting for your favorite team invites connection, comradery, and even purpose. As an athlete, overcoming challenges and testing one's limits physically and mentally strengthens resilience, leadership skills, and confidence. Athletics brings people together and creates bonds and memories that can last a lifetime.

Personally, I loved baseball growing up. I started playing in the 3rd grade. Picture utter chaos in the form of children playing catch with their own baseball mits in the outfield, rolling in the grass, and running in the wrong direction. Over time, I learned about the game, my own physical strengths and weaknesses. I saw myself as a ballplayer. It helped me hold my head up higher and walk with more purpose.



I was never the fastest, but I was one of the most consistent players on my team. My favorite coach used to tell us that practice makes permanent not perfect. I still use this philosophy today. I learned the value of showing up, managing my time, getting back up, learning from failing and the importance of trying again. Playing on a team teaches communication skills, especially under pressure, how to manage disappointment and losing, and being gracious with each win. I played with and against girls who were more naturally gifted than I was. I also learned from them and got better.

All of these lessons have formed how I think about and engage with the world. I never had dreams of being the best. My dream was to be a part of something bigger than me and to belong. The role adults play in inclusion and access is critical. Especially with young people. Every child deserves the right to explore all of the invaluable lessons and opportunities athletics provides.

Lisa Keating, Executive Director - Washington LGBTQ Commission

"What I would say to trans youth is that you are not alone, that there's so many people behind you, supporting you. As an athlete, I know how important a role sports can play in a young person's life."

— Sue Bird, Seattle Storm basketball star [\[source\]](#)

## New Website Page: 2SLGBTQIA+ Inclusion in Sports, Activities, and Recreation

The Washington State LGBTQ Commission is excited to announce [a new resource page](#) on our website dedicated to knowing the facts around 2SLGBTQIA+ sports.

It is so important for 2SLGBTQIA+ people of all ages to be included in athletics. It is especially important that Two Spirit, transgender, non-binary, gender-diverse, and intersex individuals are allowed and encouraged to play on the team that best aligns with their gender identity.

This topic has become highly politicized in recent years and lots of misinformation surrounds transgender inclusion in sports. The intention of this page is to provide reputable information on this topic and share how Washington state approaches athletic inclusion. We hope you find the resources and information gathered here helpful. Resources included here are for educational purposes only and do not indicate affiliation or partnership with the Washington State LGBTQ Commission.



[LGBTQ.WA.GOV/SPORTS](https://lgbtq.wa.gov/sports)

## Transgender Participation in Sports in Washington

Across the nation, debates and rhetoric surrounding the participation of transgender individuals, primarily women and girls, in sports and athletics. Washington state has been no different. Washington has strong laws and policies that protect the ability for trans youth to participate in sports, however, there have been recent efforts on the behalf of some school boards in Washington to introduce amendments to change this. This year those efforts did not succeed.



In April, the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association held votes on two amendments that would have limited or banned the ability for transgender girls to participate in girls K-12 sports. These were *advisory* only, as WIAA made clear that these proposed amendments would violate state law and would not be implemented if passed.

The two amendments failed to receive a majority of the votes and were not passed.

"The WIAA is committed to supporting participation opportunities for all students, including 2SLGBTQIA+ students. School athletics and activities have the unique power to bring communities together, rallying around their schools and students. These experiences allow students to represent their communities while developing invaluable life skills that translate to their adult life. While there may be differing opinions on what participation should look like, the WIAA firmly believes that every student deserves the opportunity to take part in school athletics and activities. Inclusion strengthens our communities, and ensuring that all students feel welcome and supported is essential to the mission of education-based athletics," said Mick Hoffman, Executive Director of WIAA.

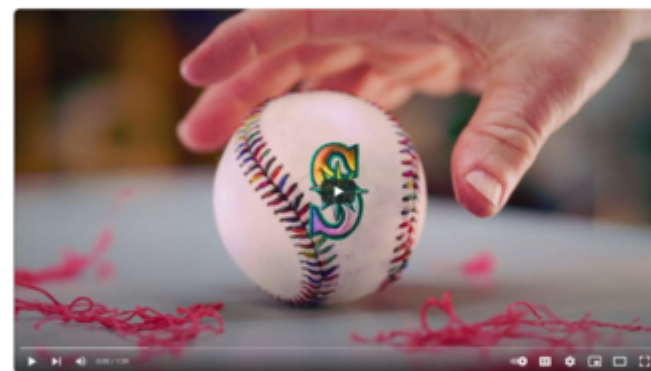
The WIAA and Gender Diversity created a model policy for transgender and gender diverse youth in sports in 2007. You can learn more by viewing their [Gender Diverse Youth Sport Inclusivity Toolkit](#).

Despite these votes failing and current policies reflecting inclusion for transgender students, the attitudes towards transgender athletes remain hostile across schools in our state. The Washington State LGBTQ Commission continues to track these issues and work to ensure that Washington remains a safe place for all 2SLGBTQIA+ athletes.

## Seattle Sports Teams Show Up for Pride

While one might not typically think of sports and games as an inherently inclusive environment for 2SLGBTQIA+ people, teams in Seattle have been actively working to show their support for the community and back those words up with actions. From all leagues hosting pride nights to visibly show support, to [raising money to support gender-affirming care](#), teams are showing up for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community during a critical time when we need support.

The major league sports teams of Seattle, the Seahawks (NFL), Mariners (MLB), Sounders FC (MLS), Kraken (NHL), Storm (WNBA), and Reign FC (NWSL) have all supported the work of WIAA and Gender Diversity in the creation of their [Gender Diversity Youth Sport Inclusivity Toolkit](#).



We would like to share the video that the Seattle Mariners released to celebrate this year's pride month. You can view the video by clicking [this link](#).

We reached out to the Mariners to hear their thoughts about the importance of inclusion in sports. Here's what they had to say:

"Baseball's history is built on the struggle for inclusion, and the

Mariners are firmly committed to that same struggle for equality and belonging that makes the game so uniquely meaningful. Baseball has the power to improve the lives of individuals and communities, and participating in any sport offers lasting lessons that can make life richer and more satisfying. The Mariners believe that everyone deserves a chance to learn, grow, and thrive in these ways. We therefore believe that *everyone* belongs in baseball, that *everyone* can be an athlete, and that *everyone* deserves a chance to play." - the Seattle Mariners

## Game Changer: Commissioner Jade Thornwood on 2SLGBTQIA+ Inclusion in Sports

Commission staff sat down with Commissioner Jade Thornwood to discuss how inclusion in sports have impacted her life and why she believes that inclusion is critical to the success and health of 2SLGBTQIA+ youth.

Commissioner Thornwood lives in Spokane and serves as a board member for [Odyssey Youth Movement](#), an organization for LGBTQ+ youth in the Inland Northwest. She has played sports all through her life and currently is a part of a roller derby team in Spokane.



**Q: What positive impact have sports made in your life?**

**A:** Personally, I think the social impact is such a big deal. Having an immediate group of people who you have something in common with and you have a common goal to learn leadership and teamwork skills and just have fun together. I think it's such an important thing to have, and I think when your thing is sports and you're able to connect in that way, I think it's so powerful the camaraderie that can form from that.

**Q: Why do you think it's important for people to feel affirmed in the sports that they play?**

**A:** I think it creates a sense of belonging... meeting any child where they're interested in and letting them learn things like teamwork and collaboration and all these things, in an environment that they enjoy is so important, whatever it is. In this instance, its sports, and I think that is such a beautiful thing and needs to be fostered. I think generally when we think about trans people and queer people in general, in like the stereotypical sense, most people don't think about sports or haven't thought about sports. But I think that's been such a neglective thing, and I think there's so much power in a sense of belonging, and I think we get so lost into the competitive and rhetoric of it all, and don't remember why we play sports, why we liked them. It's because we have fun, and kids should have fun, and kids should learn the things that they need to learn in a fun environment. That's pretty simple to me.

**Q: What message do you have to young LGBTQ athletes?**

**A:** I would say that there are still people out here who care about their inclusion and that they belong in their leagues and in their sports. It might seem like the loudest voices in the room are winning, but there are a lot of people who care very deeply about them and about you, myself included, and I have to believe that that our spirit will win out in the end.



## WA LGBTQ+ Survey Report



In 2024, a groundbreaking statewide survey was conducted to gain a comprehensive understanding of the characteristics and experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals in Washington State. This pioneering research, funded by the Washington State LGBTQ Commission, was meticulously designed for LGBTQ+ Washingtonians. The survey's findings are set to play a pivotal role in shaping policy recommendations presented to the Office of the Governor and the Washington State Legislature and beyond. Survey participants were also invited to enter raffle drawings as a token of appreciation for their invaluable contributions. Through this initiative, we successfully captured diverse voices from across the state, marking a significant step forward in advocating for inclusive and equitable policies. You can [read the](#)

[final survey report now!](#)

## LGBTQ+ Business Certification - NOW LIVE!

The Washington State Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE), in partnership with the Washington State LGBTQ Commission, proudly introduces a new state-level certification for LGBTQ+ owned small businesses. This joint effort expands access to opportunity, fosters economic fairness, and ensures LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs are fully recognized and welcomed in the state marketplace. [Learn more and start your application today!](#)



### Washington LGBTQ+ Business Certification is FREE!

There are no application or registration fees—just real benefits and expanded access.



## LGBTQ Commission on OIC Answers Podcast



The Washington State Office of the Insurance Commissioner had two guests from the LGBTQ Commission on their OIC Answers podcast this week to talk about your right to access gender-affirming care! State Insurance Commissioner Patty Kuderer sits down with LGBTQ Commissioner Darlin Lozano and LGBTQ Commission Policy and Operations Manager Sam Fennell to discuss the LGBTQ Commission's work, the hurdles involved in receiving care, and where to turn for help when seeking care.

Head to [this link](#) or listen on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or online at [insurance.wa.gov](https://insurance.wa.gov) to listen now! Thank you to Insurance Commissioner Patty Kuderer and the entire team at OIC for having us on to talk about this

important topic and for your continued outspoken support for Washington's 2SLGBTQIA+ community.



## Request for Applications: Religious and Nonprofit Security Grant



Washington State  
Department of  
Commerce

The Washington State Department of Commerce is initiating a Request for Applications (RFA) to solicit applications from those qualified and interested in grant funding for nonprofit organizations including, but not limited to, religious nonprofits, by-and-for organizations, or cultural community centers, to fund renovation or other security enhancements, construction or renovation, target hardening, preparedness planning, training, or exercises.

Grant recipients must provide proof or evidence that they have been targeted or are at risk because of their mission, ideology, or beliefs.

**Question and Answer period:** June 18 – July 2, 2025 **Applicants' Conference:** June 26, 2025, at noon PT **Proposals due:** July 31, 2025 **Evaluate proposals:** August 5 – August 19, 2025

Please review the RFA documents, available on [the funding page of the Commerce website](#), for more information.



The Washington State LGBTQ Commission has compiled the following state agency statements that might relate to the 2SLGBTQIA community. These are agency statements that have been released since our last newsletter. To look at our previous newsletters, [click here](#).

- **Washington State Governor's Office**

- [Governor Ferguson appoints Dennis Worsham as Secretary of Health](#) - June 9th, 2025
- [Joint statement of Governor Bob Ferguson, King County Executive Shannon Braddock, Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell, Pierce County Executive Ryan Mello and Tacoma Mayor Victoria Woodards](#)- June 11th, 2025
- [California, Oregon and Washington condemn dismissal of CDC vaccine panel, call on other states to join them](#) - June 12th, 2025
- [Governor Ferguson appoints Ryan Moran as Health Care Authority Director](#) - June 18th, 2025
- [Governor Ferguson statement on U.S. vs Skrametti](#) - June 18th, 2025
- [Governor Ferguson statement on revenue forecast](#) - June 24th, 2025
- [Governor Ferguson again urges Congress to abandon budget that will fundamentally disrupt Washington's health care system](#) - June 26th, 2025

- **Washington State Office of the Lieutenant Governor**

- [Statement from the Joint Select Committee on Civic Health condemning political violence](#) - June 25th, 2025

- **Washington State Attorney General's Office**

- [Court orders halt to AmeriCorps funding cuts after AGs sue](#) - June 5th, 2025
- [WA leads multistate amicus opposing Trump's public safety cuts](#) - June 9th, 2025
- [WA joins federal suit to prevent Trump administration's efforts to distribute thousands of machine gun devices](#) - June 9th, 2025
- [First arrest, charges made in connection to MMIWP cold case work](#) - June 11th, 2025
- [AG Brown leads 21 states opposing Trump's military deployment in California](#) - June 11th, 2025
- [Attorneys General from around the country filed amicus in support of Jobs Corps](#) - June 13th, 2025
- [Washington state will receive up to \\$105.6 million from national settlement with Purdue Pharma](#) - June 16th, 2025
- [AG Brown applauds judge's ruling blocking Trump cuts to medical and public health research](#) - June 17th, 2025
- [MMIWP Task Force Releases Annual Report and Two Commissioned Reports](#) - June 17th, 2025
- [Statement from Washington Attorney General Nick Brown on this morning's Supreme Court birthright citizenship opinion](#) - June 27th, 2025
- [Washington State leads lawsuit against Department of Education's mental health funding cuts](#) - July 1st, 2025
- [Washington State sues Trump Administration for illegally sharing personal health data with ICE](#) , [El estado de Washington demanda a la administración de Trump por compartir ilegalmente información personal de salud con ICE](#)- July 1st, 2025
- [Preliminary report into Indian boarding school history lays the groundwork for dismantling policies that have harmed Indigenous people](#) - July 1st, 2025
- [Washington state makes tribal warrants enforceable by state law enforcement agencies](#) - July 1st, 2025
- [Attorney General Brown wins court order blocking Trump administration's dismantling of Health and Human Services](#) - July 1st, 2025
- [Statewide hate crimes and bias incidents hotline now active in Clark, King, and Spokane counties](#) - July 1st, 2025
- [Washington state files amicus brief in support of legal challenge to unlawful termination of Job Corps](#) - July 2nd, 2025

- **Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction**
  - [State Superintendent Chris Reykdal's Statement on the Trump Administration's Proposed Federal Budget](#) - June 5th, 2025
  - [State Superintendent of Public Instruction Chris Reykdal to Fund Statewide High School and Beyond Digital Platform](#) - June 16th, 2025
  - [State Superintendent Chris Reykdal's Statement on the Federal Government's Threat to Withhold Congressionally Approved Funds from Washington State and All Other States](#)- July 1st, 2025
- **Washington State Secretary of State**
  - [Legacy Washington's "Love, Equally" Exhibit Heads to the City of Everett](#) - June 17th, 2025
- **Washington State Office of the Insurance Commission**
  - [New federal rule creates unnecessary health coverage hurdles for nearly 300,000 Washingtonians](#) - June 24th, 2025
  - [Kuderer convenes advisory board to look at how insurers use artificial intelligence and its impact on consumers](#) - July 1st, 2025
- **Washington State Commissioner of Public Lands**
  - [Application Period Opens for DNR Trust Land Transfer Program](#) - July 1st, 2025
- **Office of the Washington State Auditor**
  - [A quick tour through more than \\$20 billion in federal funds](#) - June 23rd, 2025
- **Washington State Department of Health**
  - [Washington State Department of Health welcomes Dennis Worsham as new Secretary of Health](#) - June 9th, 2025
  - [Washington sees 25-fold increase in whooping cough cases in 2024 compared to previous year](#) - June 13th, 2025



## July 2025

- **MONTH LONG:**
  - Disability Pride Month
  - French American Heritage Month
- **DAYS:**
  - July 4th: Independence Day
  - July 14th: International Nonbinary People's Day
  - July 16th: International Drag Day
  - July 25th: National Hire a Veteran Day
  - July 26th: ADA Day

## Monthly Upcoming Appointment Opportunities:

Washington is home to vibrant communities and diverse Washingtonians who all have unique talents, skills and experiences. Governor Ferguson places a high priority on boards, commissions, and agencies that are reflective of the diverse make-up of Washington and that utilize the impressive talent of Washingtonians. We are always seeking skilled and experienced individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds to participate in boards and commissions ensuring an effective and representative government.

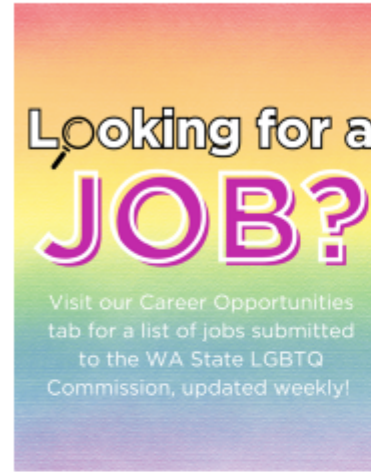


We are excited to share the highlighted [Current and Upcoming Gubernatorial Appointment Opportunities](#).

As someone with deep roots in your respective communities and organizations, we hope that you will share these opportunities. Anyone interested in being appointed will need to fill out this [Application](#). Please explore the [Boards and Commissions Profiles](#) if you are interested in learning more about the many opportunities to get involved!

Thank you for your assistance in helping Governor Ferguson find well-rounded candidates with significant talent and diverse experiences. Please feel free to reach out to [Boards and Commissions staff](#) with any questions you might have. Thank you for your time.

## Job Opportunities for LGBTQ Washingtonians



Check out the list of job opportunities for the community on our [Careers Opportunities page by visiting this link](#).

We are excited to share job postings sent to the LGBTQ Commission. There are three requirements to be included on our page:

- The job needs to be able to be done in Washington State (virtual works)
- The business must have an inclusivity and/or equal opportunity statement
- The job posting must include a salary range.

Please send any job opportunity to share with the community to [contact@lgbtq.wa.gov](mailto:contact@lgbtq.wa.gov)

Have something you want to share in our newsletter? Please send any submissions to [contact@lgbtq.wa.gov](mailto:contact@lgbtq.wa.gov).

**Deadline for all submissions is the last Tuesday of the Month at 12:00 Pacific Time.**

Published the first Wednesday of every month.

July 2025

Can't access the links? Add "lnks.gd" to the allowlist of your content blocking software.

## Peers, by the numbers

We've certified 1,497 new peers since July 1, 2024!

## In this issue

- [Peers, by the numbers](#)
- [Reflections on first annual Peer Wellness campout](#)
- [Peer feature: Teri Cochran-Fredrick](#)
- [Upcoming events and trainings](#)
- [Monthly Peer Blend webinar](#)
- [OPS weekly office hours](#)
- [Youth Network Wellness Summit](#)
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- [Peer resources](#)
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- [Nominate a Peer](#)
- [Peer poets](#)

## Reflections on first annual Peer Wellness campout



The first annual Peer Wellness Campout in Easton, Wash., was more than just a weekend getaway. It was a powerful experience of **healing, collaboration, and community-building**. Hosted in partnership by **P.E.P., WPN, WRA, WSCC, and HCA**, the campout brought together individuals and organizations from across the state for an unforgettable time of learning, reflection, and authentic networking.

From **peer-led workshops** to shared meals and late-night conversations around the campfire, this event created a safe, welcoming space where attendees could recharge, grow, and connect. The **resource exchange** and **relationship-building** that took place were not only impactful—they were priceless.

*"The campout was so much fun and I'm looking forward to next year!"* — **Katy Coons**

*"First Peer Wellness Campout was refreshing. I took my bike and was able to find quite a bit of time to ride. Thank you to all those who made this happen. WPN, Peer Washington, Peers Empower Peers, WRA, HCA, and all the individuals there and not there that worked tirelessly to support us."* — **Caleb Steel**

This event reminded us all of the strength found in peer support and the beauty of being present in a shared mission. A heartfelt **thank you** to everyone who contributed their energy, wisdom, and presence. Your participation made the event truly meaningful.

We can't wait to see **you—and even more new faces—next year** as we continue to grow this incredible community.

*-Thomas Jackson, Program Director, Washington Peer Network (WPN)*

## Update: Peer support DOH summer office hours

With the upcoming availability of the new Certified Peer Support Specialist and Trainee credentials on Tuesday, July 1, 2025, the Department of Health (DOH) is hosting intermittent office hours sessions to answer questions regarding applications and forms, the credentialing process, and general questions about the profession.

This is a Q&A format with a brief overview of the website and a sample application at the beginning, with the majority of time spent answering your questions about peer support specialists. Beginning in September, these will occur monthly.

### DOH summer office hours for Peer Specialists

- Wednesday, July 2, 2025, at 3 p.m.
- Wednesday, July 16, 2025, at 1 p.m.
- Monday, July 29, 2025, at 10 a.m.
- Tuesday, August 12, 2025, at 10 a.m.
- Friday, August 22, 2025, at 1 p.m.

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 222 878 291 021 5

Passcode: 9NX74cy6

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Dial in by phone

+1 564-999-2000, 477079388# United States, Olympia

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## Peer feature: Teri Cochran-Fredrick



I would like to nominate **Teri Cochran-Fredrick**. She is such a wiz at her job! Teri has great connections throughout the Peer community. Teri is our housing and administrative supervisor, and she has been with Capital Recovery Center for four years.

She is someone I can go to no matter what. Teri is always ready and willing to jump in when and where she is needed. She also is so empathetic. She is the epitome of a peer.

[Capital Recovery Center](#) is a Peer-supported nonprofit in Olympia that fosters recovery, healing, growth and community engagement through Peer services, housing resources, and more.

*Nomination written and submitted by Certified Peer Counselor Sara Smith*

A decorative background image featuring pink cherry blossoms in focus and out of focus, framing the text boxes.

## Upcoming events and trainings

### Operationalizing Peer Support (OPS) training

HCA's [Operationalizing Peer Support \(OPS\) program](#) supports Peer supervisors, administrators, organizations, and agencies who want to begin offering or enhance their current peer programs. ***These trainings are for current administrators and supervisors of Peer Specialists only.***

Through our virtual training, monthly webinar series, and technical assistance support, we equip agencies, organizations, or individual providers with the knowledge and resources to help develop, manage, and grow their peer support programs.

#### OPS Training

This 12-hour virtual training consists of evidence-based knowledge and leading practices that are essential for peer support supervision and administration. It also provides opportunities for an open dialogue, in a safe environment.

#### OPS training dates

- **Tuesdays July 22 and July 29:** 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. with a 30-minute lunch

Attendance will be tracked for those required to complete the OPS training and those who would like to receive a certificate of completion.

To sign up, [email OPS](#) with your preferred dates.

### Quarterly OPS trainings for administrators and supervisors of Peer Specialists

The quarterly virtual OPS training spans a three-month period, with two-hour sessions held twice a month with a 30-minute post-training segment available to reflect and dive deeper into the content.

This flexible series, available quarterly, allows you to join any session in any order. However, for the most enriching experience, we recommend following the structured progression, as each session builds upon the last.

- **Monday, July 7:** 8 to 10 a.m.: (1) *Peer Support in Washington State*
- **Monday, July 28:** 8 to 10 a.m.: (2) *The Peer Support Role: What it is and is not*
- **Monday, August 4:** 8 to 10 a.m.: (3) *How to Create a Culture of Recovery*
- **Monday, August 25:** 8 to 10 a.m.: (4) *Supervision of Peer Workers*

To sign up, [email OPS](#) with your preferred dates.

**Additional OPS details**

## Crisis Awareness and Communication in Peer Support (CACPS)

Beginning July 1, 2025, any entity that uses certified peer specialists as peer crisis responders, may only use certified peer specialists who have completed CACPS training.

### CACPS training details:

- Attendees must be certified peer counselors. (If your name has changed since your initial peer certification, please let the training organization know to avoid being removed from registration.)
- Peers working in crisis settings are given priority.
- Peers must complete the online prerequisite "[Power of peer support in crisis services](#)" training to attend this training and download a copy of the certificate to be offered as proof of completion to the hosting training organization.
- Peers must complete the post-traumatic growth survey (sent by the training organization) before the first day of training.
- Peers must attend the training in person, there is no virtual option.
- The training is 36 hours.
- Peers must cover their own travel and hotel accommodations.
- Breakfast, refreshments, and lunch will be provided during the training day.

Times, dates, and locations for CACPS trainings may shift and change in response to regional needs. Please reach out to [Amanda Polley](#) for more information.

[View upcoming CACPS trainings](#)

## Peer Pathways: 10th anniversary

This year, Peer Pathways celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary! The event will occur Wednesday, August 13, and Thursday, August 14, 2025, at the Lynnwood Event Center. This year's theme: Staying Peer in an Expanding Workforce.

Please visit the conference website, [Peer Pathways](#), for details. The Washington State Health Care Authority's Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR) is pleased to sponsor this transformative and uplifting gathering hosted by The Rainbow Makers and Jones Community Solutions.

### Monthly Peer Blend webinar

**The July Peer Blend is cancelled due to the holiday; please look forward to joining us in August!**

August's Peer Blend features Tanya Moore and WELD. WELD supports those with legal system impacts and those in recovery from substance use and mental health. Tanya Moore (Program Manager and Evaluation Manager at WELD) is a CPC and DBHR-approved Trainer as well as a certified sexuality educator.

### OPS weekly office hours

Need support with your organization's peer support program?

Drop in to the Operationalizing Peer Support (OPS) office hours: weekly **Mondays from 1 to 2 p.m.**

[Drop in via Teams](#)

### Washington Peer Network open peer support hours

Launched in February, WPN hosts an open one hour

### Youth Network Wellness Summit

Join SPARK Peer Learning and HCA **July 26 and 27, 2025**, in an interactive two-day workshop in Wenatchee.

This [summit](#) is designed for young adults 18 to 35 and space is limited, so register early!

[Register for the summit](#)

(Program Manager and Evaluation Manager at WELD) is a CPC and DBHR-approved Trainer as well as a certified sexuality educator. She has over 25 years in the nonprofit world focused on social justice, reproductive health, and legal system impacted. She has lived experience from her mental health journeys and navigating the legal system.

**Thursday, August 7, 2025, from 9 to 10 a.m.**

**Register to attend via Zoom**

## **Washington Peer Network open peer support hours**

Launched in February, WPN hosts an open, one-hour-long virtual meeting every weekday.

This is a space for Peer supporters to network, connect, and will be a safe and supportive space for Peers to receive the support they need.

**The meetings are daily from 9 to 10 a.m.**

**Join WPN now**

**submit**

## **Live event captioning available**

Communication Access Real-time Transcription (CART) services, or live closed captioning, are available for events, on demand. Scheduling CART services requires a three-week lead-time.

To request this accommodation, please submit a request as soon as possible to [Marie Marchand](#).

# **Peer job-seeker resources**

## **Washington peer jobs database**

[The Washington Peer jobs database](#) is an online platform dedicated to connecting individuals in the behavioral health and substance use recovery fields with employment opportunities.

This database

- Provides a centralized resource for peer support roles.
- Offers listings for job seekers and recruitment tools for employers.
- Aims to enhance workforce development by promoting careers in Peer support, ensuring that individuals with lived experience can contribute to recovery services and support others on their journeys to wellness.

## **Peer resources**

### **New certified Peer specialist FAQ**

Have questions about the changes related to the new legislation about certified Peer specialists?

**Learn more**

## **Washington Peer Network**

The Washington Peer Network provides comprehensive and accessible training and support for peer counselors across our state.

## Department of Health Peer Specialist licensing

Are you interested in knowing more about what the Department of Health (DOH) is doing to support the efforts of recent Peer legislation (SSB5555) and moving forward with our Washington State Legislators and the future of licensing for Peer services?

[Learn more at DOH](#)

## Peer support in the news

- [LEAP Services brings hope to adults with severe mental illnesses](#)
- [Student Voice of Mental Health award winner Nora Sun on the power of Peer-to-Peer support](#)
- [Peers offer a potential solution to rural mental health needs](#)

## Nominate a Peer

Do you know a CPC or Peer-run organization who you think deserves a little extra kudos? We want to highlight them in an upcoming newsletter!

Please email Marie Marchand as much information as possible:

- Name of person/organization
- Their location
- Why are you highlighting them?
- Their picture (optional)

[Email Marie Marchand to nominate a Peer or Peer organization](#)

## Peer poets

Poetry is a great avenue for self-expression and community-building. Every month, we feature poetry written by peers in the community.

To be considered for publication in the newsletter, submit a hopeful, resilience-inspired poem to [Marie Marchand](#), our Peer support training coordinator, before the twentieth of the month.

Last month's featured poet was Nicholas Graham. Nominate a Peer poet or submit a poem of your own to be featured in our August newsletter!

[Read June's Peer poem](#)



# **Join SAMHSA's Webinar on the Role of Peer Specialists in Early Serious Mental Illness Programs**

**Tuesday, July 29, 12–1 p.m. ET**

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration National Training and Technical Assistance Center for Early Serious Mental Illness (SAMHSA ESMI TTA Center) is hosting a webinar series that addresses a range of topics related to early serious mental illness (ESMI), including clinical high risk for psychosis and first episode psychosis.

This one-hour webinar will describe the role of peer specialists as a part of ESMI teams. Participants will learn about the philosophies and practices that peer support specialists employ on ESMI teams and strategies to best support peer support specialists on ESMI teams.

## **Featured Presenters:**

- **Vanessa Vorhies Klodnick, Ph.D., LCSW**, The Texas Institute of Excellence in Mental Health, Steve Hicks School of Social Work, The University of Texas at Austin
- **Brianne LaPelusa, MFA, CRSS**, The Texas Institute of Excellence in Mental Health, Steve Hicks School of Social Work, The University of Texas at Austin

Learn more about the [ESMI TTA Center](#).

**Register Today**

JULY 1, 2025

## Join inaugural housing Community Advisory Team (CAT) meeting Aug. 7

### Meeting is open to the public

The Community Advisory Team (CAT) is holding its first public meeting from 5-7 p.m. **Thursday, August 7**. This new advisory group was created by the Department of Commerce and the Affordable Housing Advisory Board (AHAB) to elevate community voices in housing development decisions across Washington.

Washington has urgent housing needs. The CAT is working to ensure the voices of people most impacted by housing insecurity are at the center of the conversation, as the state works to expand access to safe and stable housing for all.

CAT members, non-member stakeholders, and the general public are invited to attend online via Zoom.

### Community Advisory Team (CAT) meeting

- **5-7 p.m. Thursday, August 7**
- If you cannot attend, a recording will be posted later on the [CAT website](#)
- The meeting agenda will be available on the [CAT webpage](#) by July 31

**REGISTER TO JOIN ON ZOOM**

## Upcoming meetings

- 5-7 p.m. Nov. 6 ([Register to attend](#))
- 5-7 p.m. Feb. 5, 2026
- 5-7 p.m. May 7, 2026

## Questions?

If you have questions or need assistance accessing the meeting or materials, contact Augustine Sughrua at [Augustine.Sughrua@commerce.wa.gov](mailto:Augustine.Sughrua@commerce.wa.gov).



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## Understanding Medications

### In Child and Youth Mental Health

As a service provider, you play a vital role in helping youth and families navigate mental health medication decisions.

These conversations matter deeply - they can shape how families understand treatment, and how young people feel about their own healing journey.

This newsletter provides evidence-based information and practical tools to support you in these important moments, helping ensure that discussions are collaborative, informed, and centered on each young person's unique needs.

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## Key Points to Share with Families About Medications

- **Emphasize the comprehensive approach:** Support youth and families in understanding that medications are just one tool in a broader treatment plan. The most effective support combines multiple options - therapy, peer support, school accommodations, family connections, and cultural practices that resonate with each young person and family.

- **Highlight individualization and youth voice:** Every young person responds differently to treatment. When discussing medication, reassure youth and families that healthcare teams consider and include multiple perspectives - the young person's experiences, health history, family context, and importantly, the youth's own voice in age-appropriate ways throughout the process.
  - **Address safety concerns:** Families often have valid questions about the safety of psychiatric medications. While medications approved for youth undergo testing and oversight, it's important to remember that no treatment is one-size-fits-all. The goal isn't just symptom management—it's supporting young people in feeling more grounded, connected, and empowered in their healing.
- 

## Engaging Youth and Families in Shared Decision-Making

Effective communication between youth, families, and healthcare providers is the foundation of successful treatment. As a service provider, you can help facilitate this collaboration by preparing youth and families for these important conversations.

### » Help them prepare meaningful questions:

Encourage youth and families to write down questions in advance, especially when they're feeling overwhelmed.

### For example:

- *How will we know if this medication is working?*
  - *What should I watch for in terms of side effects?*
  - *What if we miss a dose?*
  - *What happens if we need to stop the medication?*
  - *How will this interact with my child's other treatments?*
  - *How long might this medication be needed?*
- 

### » Support age-appropriate youth participation:

Guide families on what information to share and how to involve youth based on developmental stage.

### For younger children, families can share:

- How they typically react to new situations
- What helps them feel better or calmer
- Any patterns in behavior or symptoms
- Family values, concerns, and priorities



School-age children can begin to share:

- How they're feeling in their own words
- What activities or situations are easy or hard for them
- Simple preferences about their care

Teens can participate more fully by sharing:

- Their own perspective on symptoms and challenges
- Goals for treatment and how they want to feel
- Concerns or fears about medication
- How they want to be involved in treatment decisions

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» **Remember to help families understand that young people of all ages have valuable insights about their experiences.**

Families provide important context and support, especially for younger children who are still developing the ability to express complex feelings. Healthcare providers bring medical expertise to help everyone make informed decisions together.

For more guidance on building effective healthcare relationships: [Read Parents Partnering with Healthcare Providers \(PDF, 12 pages, 650 KB\)](#)

## Supporting Youth and Families Through the Medication Process

As youth and families begin a medication journey, you can provide support with practical recommendations and realistic expectations.

### » Help youth and families start with small wins:

- Support them in creating routines that feel natural (like taking medication with breakfast)
- Suggest visual reminders if they might help
- Encourage celebrating consistency, even if it takes time to establish a routine

### » Support ongoing communication:

- Remind youth and families to check in regularly about how the young person is feeling
- Help them notice and track changes in sleep, appetite, or energy
- Suggest keeping a simple log to share with healthcare providers
- Emphasize the importance of regular check-ins, especially during the first few months

### » Prepare youth and families for the process:

- Help them understand that finding the right medication sometimes takes time
- Reassure them that if the first choice doesn't work perfectly, it doesn't mean medication isn't right - it might just mean trying a different approach
- Explain that medication optimization - the process of finding the right medication, dosage, and timing that works best for each individual - is normal and expected in pediatric mental health treatment

### » Support planning for medication changes:

- Prepare youth and families that there may come a time when reducing or discontinuing medication is appropriate
  - Emphasize that these decisions should always be made collaboratively with healthcare providers
- 

## Practical Safety Tips to Share with Youth and Families

Help youth and families establish safe medication practices from the start and know what to watch for during treatment.

### » Help create good habits from day one:

- Suggest setting phone reminders for medication times
- Recommend storing medications in a secure, consistent place
- Encourage keeping a current list of all medications with them
- Remind youth and families: never share medications with others, even if they have similar symptoms—prescriptions are personalized for each individual and sharing can be unsafe

### » Share what to watch for:

- Changes in mood, especially increased sadness or irritability
- Physical symptoms like headaches or stomach upset
- Sleep changes or unusual tiredness
- Any behavior that seems concerning or different

### » Support emergency planning:

- Remind them to call in refills several days early to avoid running out
  - Ensure they know how to reach their prescribing provider in emergencies
  - Emphasize keeping medications in original bottles with clear labels
- 


## Facilitating Coordinated Care

Mental health medications work best when everyone supporting the young person is informed and working together. Here's how you can help facilitate coordination:

» **Support medical coordination:** Encourage communication between prescribing providers, primary care doctors, and any specialists involved in care.

» **Facilitate school partnerships:** Help youth and families connect with teachers and school counselors who can provide valuable feedback about how medication is working during the school day. Support coordination with school nurses about medication timing, especially for medications given during school hours.

» **Promote therapy integration:** If you're providing counseling or therapy, maintain regular communication with prescribing doctors to ensure all treatments work together effectively. If referring to therapy services, emphasize the importance of this coordination.



» **Support youth and family involvement:** Help ensure that all family members involved in daily care understand the medication plan and know how to support treatment goals. Facilitate age-appropriate youth participation in treatment decisions, from simple choices for young children to full partnership in decision-making for teens.

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## Discussion Questions to Use with Families

When youth and families are evaluating whether medication might be helpful, use these questions to guide meaningful conversations:

- *What other treatments have we tried, and what were the results?*
- *What specific symptoms or challenges are we hoping to address?*
- *What are our treatment goals, and how might medication help us reach them?*
- *What support systems are in place to help monitor progress?*
- *How will we measure whether the medication is working?*
- *What's our plan if this medication doesn't provide the expected benefits?*
- *How does this fit into our overall treatment plan?*

## Resources for Youth and Families

### From NTTAC Partners

#### » American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP)

The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry is the leading national professional medical association dedicated to treating and improving the quality of life for children, adolescents, and families affected by mental, behavioral, or developmental disorders.

**Parents' Medication Guides:** Comprehensive medication guides for specific mental health conditions in children and adolescents. [AACAP Parents' Medication Guides - external link](#)

#### Psychiatric Medication Information:

- [Psychiatric Medication For Children And Adolescents Part I - How Medications Are Used - external link](#)
- [Psychiatric Medication For Children And Adolescents: Part II - Types Of Medications - external link](#)
- [Psychiatric Medication For Children And Adolescents Part III - Questions To Ask - external link](#)

**Medication Safety:** [Preventing Misuse and Diversion of Medication - external link](#)

## » Georgetown University Thrive Center for Children, Families, and Communities - Haven

Haven offers practical, evidence-based resources covering the full spectrum of child and youth mental health topics. From understanding medications and trauma to supporting transitions and building resilience, Haven provides brief, accessible guides and videos designed to help youth, families, and the professionals who support them navigate complex mental health challenges.

### Medication-Related Resources:

- [A Teen's Guide to Psychopharmacology - PDF, 2 pages, 850 KB - external link](#)
- [Best Practices in Psychiatric Medication - Video, 17 minutes, 49 seconds - external link](#)
- [Helping Parents Understand Psychosis - Video, 2 minutes, 37 seconds - external link](#)

### Full Resource Collection:

- [GU Haven Mental Health Resources - external link](#)

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## Additional Resources

- **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) - Talking to Your Kids About Psychiatric Medications:** Guidance for parents on how to discuss psychiatric medications with their children. [Website: Talking to Your Kids About Psychiatric Medications - external link](#)

- **Psychotropic Medication Utilization Parameters for Children and Youth:** Evidence-based guidelines for safe and effective use of psychiatric medications in young people. [Texas HHS Medication Parameters - PDF, 27 pages, 1.2 MB - external link](#)
- **National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH):** Comprehensive government information about mental health medications and research. [Website: Mental Health Medications Information - external link](#)

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## Final Thoughts for Providers Supporting Families

As a provider, your guidance and support can make a world of difference in how families understand and approach mental health treatment.

By partnering with families, sharing evidence-based resources, and centering youth voice, you help create pathways to healing that are safe, collaborative, and developmentally appropriate.



## Feedback Survey Series

### Survey 4: Embedding core WA Thriving values into the P-25 Behavioral Health Strategic Plan

The fourth survey in the Washington Thriving feedback survey series is now live!

**This survey focuses on embedding the Washington Thriving *Vision and principles* into the structure of the behavioral health system** for prenatal-through-age-25 Washingtonians, their caregivers and families. **Please support the Washington Thriving effort in reaching:**

- **Youth and young adults** (ages 25 and under)
- **People from BIPOC communities** (and in particular, **Asian and Asian Americans** are currently underrepresented in survey responses relative to proportion of the state's population)
- **2SLGBTQIA+** community members
- **Men** with lived/living experience
- Residents of **rural counties**

- People from historically **underrepresented and/or underserved communities or identities and intersectional identities**

**Please share this survey opportunity within your networks and encourage participation from these key demographics. All perspectives are crucial to developing a comprehensive and inclusive strategic plan.**

**Help Shape How Washington State Helps Young People With Behavioral Health:** We're asking for 20-25 minutes of your time because what you share will directly inform the actions of state lawmakers who decide how to spend millions of dollars on behavioral health services and supports for children, youth, and young adults in Washington State. Your answers may become the foundation for new laws, funding decisions, and programs that could help thousands of families across Washington. Whether you're a young person, parent or caregiver, work with young people, or just care about your community, your voice will help build a better behavioral health system for the next generation.

**The 20-25 minutes you spend today could improve services and supports for Washington's young people for many years to come!**

[Click here for more details and access to the survey link.](#)



# Open Discussion & Sharing

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**#We can apply Ragnar, Relay for Life, Staggered breath singing ideas to the work we do!**

**we Work - we Rest**

**we Take Turns!**

**We do it Together!**

A vertical strip on the left side of the slide shows a close-up of pink cherry blossoms on a dark branch, with some flowers in sharp focus and others blurred in the background.

# What We Covered

- **Welcome, Intros, Agenda review**
- **Interoperable Workgroup Update**
- **Lived Experience Collaborative Update**
  - *Upcoming guests and topics*
- **988 Help-Seeker Bill of Rights**
- **Community Updates and Opportunities**
- **Open Discussion - Current Events**
- **Next Meeting - Mon. August 11th, 2025 1 PM - 3 PM**

