



Join us for

## Parent Learning & Support

**You are NOT Alone!** Join us in this safe place with no shame, blame or judgment from the comfort of your home and chat with other parents like you who share similar life experiences with their children. **Register here for these events:** <https://gearparentnetwork.org/events/>

All are welcome to attend these no cost events that are held virtually and on location when specified. **Red listings are special events.** Note: These interactive trainings are not recorded in order to safeguard the personal information shared by participants. All events are facilitated or presented by nationally credentialed parents (CFPS) who can articulate lessons learned from their own lived experience parenting a child and have specialized training to assist and empower families raising children who experience emotional, developmental, behavioral, substance use, or mental health concerns. They also partner with child and family-serving systems to improve family outcomes and strive to eliminate prejudice and discrimination. Additionally CFPS™ assists families and children to bring their voice to the service delivery, planning, and evaluation process of public and private supports and services for children, youth, and young adults. \*The National Federation of Families provides the only National Certification for Family Peer Specialists. [www.ffcmh.org](http://www.ffcmh.org)

### Weekly Events -

**"Nurturing Parenting for Families in Recovery"** Held virtually every Tuesday morning 10a-11:30a AND afternoon from 3:30p-5p, Facilitated by Diane Bouffard, Certified Family Peer Specialist, Team Leader; and Heather Williams, Certified Family Peer Specialist, Regional Parent Support Coordinator

If you are a parent, caregiver or are working on your recovery and want to learn more about the effects of substance use on your family, parenting style, and your relationship with your child/youth, please join us for this FREE 12 week program. You will explore hands on activities, along with guided discussions to enhance your self-awareness and increase your ability to relate to your child/children/youth in a safe and supportive environment surrounded by parents and caregivers who share similar life experiences. Join us to explore ideas and build skills; strengthen your connection with your child or youth! Register online for **Tuesday mornings 10:00 - 11:30 a.m.** Link to register: <https://forms.gle/kUzJvzXDMH24SpxJ7>

**OR Tuesday afternoon from 3:30-5:00 p.m.** Link to register: <https://forms.gle/xT1y8T9uZVShR89P9> or call Megan Belton at 207-859-1580. **If you are in need mental health or substance use services please call Kennebec Behavioral Health Open Access at 207-626-3414.**

**"Parent Support Group"** For parents or caregivers of children/youth with emotional or behavioral health concerns. This group is held on Zoom every **Wednesday** from 1-2:30 p.m. <https://gearparentnetwork.org/events/> to register and receive the link.

These Events are held January through March 2025-

**January 15, 2025 from 5:30p-7:30p - in person only at Bangor Housing Boys and Girls Club, 161 Davis Rd, Bangor**

**“Seasonal Affective Disorder”** Presented by Shannan King, Certified Family Peer Specialist, Regional Parent Support Coordinator

Seasonal Affective Disorder can impact adults, teens, and children. It is estimated about 5% of the people experience SAD in the US and 4 out of 5 are women. One US study found rates of SAD were 7 times higher in New Hampshire than in California suggesting the farther we are from the equator, the more likely we are to develop SAD. Join us for an educational and STRESS-LESS time learning about SAD and how to deal with it.

**February 1, 2025 from 9a-2p**

**“Team Up for Your Child - Family Roadmap”** Presented by Diane Bouffard, Certified Family Peer Specialist, Team Leader

Families of children and youth with autism, ADD/ADHD, behavioral and developmental disorders, or any type of special health needs will find practical strategies in this step-by-step guide designed by parent and Author Wendy Besmann Lowe to help families navigate confusing service systems and work smarter with doctors, schools, agencies and insurers. When a child has serious behavioral health issues, you suddenly have a team of professionals in your life who provide a variety of services and supports. This team could include doctors, therapists, health workers and teachers but remember that the coach of this team is you - the parent. You are the only one who takes care of the whole child. Learn how to identify your child's strengths and needs, make sense of reports and evaluations, understand your child's treatment plan, track your child's progress and translate the Individualized Education Program.

**February 6, 2025 from 6p-8p Virtual and in person @ Windham Public Library, 217 Windham Center Rd, Windham**

**“Building Stronger Families Through Effective Communication”** Presented by Heather Williams, Certified Family Peer Specialist, Regional Parent Support Coordinator

Effective communication skills are vitally important for thriving family relationships. Using tools such as non-violent and non-verbal communication can improve our ability to resolve conflicts that arise and strengthen bonds within families. As parents, we can master these skills and model them for our children. Join us in learning the various strategies that are at the heart of good communication.

**February 12, 2025 from 5:30p-7:30p - in person only at Bangor Housing Boys and Girls Club, 161 Davis Rd, Bangor**

**“Do You Speak Teen? 'mnE Ps dnt bleev der is a gNR8N d/c b/t em n thr teen”** Presented by Shannan King, Certified Family Peer Specialist, Regional Parent Support Coordinator

Communicating with teens today is more challenging than ever but not impossible! This workshop will explore modern technology and give you some new ideas to peek into your teen's world. The framework of the 40 Developmental Assets® will also be shared. Minneapolis-based Search Institute® has identified 40 building blocks of healthy development - known as “developmental assets” - that help influence choices young people make and help them become caring and responsible adults.

### February 13, 2025 from 1p-2:30p

**“Youth Tobacco and Substance Use and What We Can Do About It”** Facilitated by Diane Bouffard, CFPS; Presented by Annie Dymarczyk and Shaleigh Trask, Somerset Public Health Community Health Educators

We will explore the latest data on youth tobacco and substance use from the Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS), learn about the effects of these substances on brain development, learn how to answer tough questions from a child about substance use, and more!

### February 26, 2025 from 6p-7:30p

**“Sexual Behavior – Age Appropriate vs. Potentially Problematic Sexual Behavior in Youth”**, Facilitated by Shannan King, CFPS; Presented by Heather Tryon, Project Coordinator, Rape Response Services

Join us in addressing the prevalence of child sexual abuse, problematic sexual behaviors, prevention, and safety. In this workshop we will learn what behaviors to expect at different ages and how to respond to concerning behavior.

### March 6, 2025 from 6p-7:30p

**“Perspectives on Youth with Problematic Sexual Behavior”**, Facilitated by Diane Bouffard, CFPS; Presented by Heather Tryon, Project Coordinator, Rape Response Services

Join us in addressing the prevalence of child sexual abuse, problematic sexual behaviors, prevention, and safety. In this workshop we will define problematic sexual behaviors and why they occur, treatment, safety, and hope for the future.

### March 12, 2025 from 5:30p-7:30p - in person only at Bangor Housing Boys and Girls Club, 161 Davis Rd, Bangor

**“Success in Co-Parenting and Blended Families”** Presented by Shannan King, Certified Family Peer Specialist, Regional Parent Support Coordinator

Co-parenting can be very stressful and emotional. Join us to learn more about what some blended families encounter such as significant parenting differences, having false expectations as to what the relationships and family life will look like, how to manage the emotions and work on challenges, as well as seek outside help when needed. We will discuss ways to create a more unified and harmonious family unit truly setting your family up for success to ensure the best outcomes for your children.

### March 20, 2025 from 1p-3p

**“ACEs, Being a Trauma-Informed Parent: Linking Childhood Trauma to Long-Term Health & Social Consequences”** Presented by Heather Williams, Certified Family Peer Specialist, Regional Parent Support Coordinator

Traumatic childhood experiences such as abuse, neglect, domestic violence, or substance abuse in the home can have long-term physical, psychological, behavioral and economic consequences. The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study demonstrates the connection between childhood trauma and a wide array of physical & mental health problems. Despite the trauma in their lives, children can survive and even thrive. Protective factors, including healthy relationships with parents and caregivers, foster resilience in children and help them to overcome early adversity.

**March 29, 2025 from 10a-1p**

**"Understanding Substance Use Disorder and Stigma Effects!"** Presented by Heather Williams, Certified Family Peer Specialist, Regional Parent Support Coordinator

Know the Facts! Substance use among youth and young adults is at its highest level. This disease can cause or increase mental and physical health related issues and can lead to problems at school, home, and work. It can put our youth at risk for involvement with the correctional system or worst of all, lead to loss of life. Substance Use Disorder (SUD) impacts the entire family. This special extended workshop will explore local and national statistics, risk factors, and the effects of SUD on the brain and polysubstance use. A video will be shared, "Pleasure Unwoven" a personal journey about addiction by Kevin McCauley. He turns complex neuroscientific concepts into easy, understandable virtual images that helps explain why SUD is a disease. Also discussed are protective factors, the social and mental impact of stigma and how we can help. This information can be used to start these important conversations with our children and youth. Our kids and young adults are our future, so it is critically important that parents, family and community members truly understand this disease and know that recovery is possible! Do not wait to get started!

**Reach Us Directly:**

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G.E.A.R. Parent Network is a Parent-to-Parent Network of Information & Support for parents of children with behavioral health needs, is a program of Kennebec Behavioral Health, and is funded by the Department of Health & Human Services, the United Way, and private donations.

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