



Hopkinton Youth & Family Services

MARCH 2025 - Parent/Caregiver Newsletter

Clinical Staff

Dawn Alcott-Miller, LICSW Director 508 497-9700 x1449

Dawn oversees all operations of the HYFS department, including staff and intern supervision, contracts, grants, budget management, and strategic planning. She is deeply invested in all HYFS services and provides support through information and referrals, short-term counseling, parent consultation/coaching, case management, grant management, and educational and supportive programming.



Colleen Souza, LICSW Social Worker/Case Manager 508 497-9700 x1450

Colleen provides information and referrals, case management services for residents having difficulty navigating resources, and short-term counseling, and she co-leads the Hopkinton Organizing for Prevention Youth Coalition.

Holly Morand, MSW, DBH Resource Counselor/Case Manager 508 497-9700 x1451

Holly provides outreach and case management services to enhance equity for residents, particularly those for whom traditional services have yet to be a good fit. She also provides outreach to special populations and those furthest from opportunity.



Prevention Staff



Lauren Mayer, MACP Regional Prevention Coordinator - MassCALL3B Grant 508 497-9700 x1456

Lauren leads a regional cluster of towns working through a strategic model to identify risk and protective factors for youth substance use reduction. Through member engagement, she provides coordination support to the HOP coalition.

Erin Bartolini, MSCHPM Program Coordinator Drug-Free Communities Grant 508 497-9700 x1456

Erin is the Drug-Free Communities grant coordinator and supports the Hopkinton Organizing for Prevention (HOP) coalition in reducing youth substance use in the community. And oversees the HOP Youth Interns and HOP Youth Coalition.



Neha Ninan (HHS Junior), Anna Noroian (HHS Junior), Emily Evans (HHS Sophomore), HOP Interns

Three youth interns support the Drug-Free Communities grant program's efforts to reduce youth substance use and promote mental health in the Hopkinton community.

YOU CAN ALSO REACH OUT TO HYFS AT 508-497-9781

We are hiring!

- **A Full-time Social Worker/Program Coordinator**
- **Contact the director to learn more.**

We have all heard about Spring Cleaning for our surroundings, but what about our inner selves?

Spring Cleaning for the Mind

Airing out your inner space can go a long way toward supporting mental health treatment. Use the following checklist with tips on how to remove unhelpful mental clutter and invite positive changes into your life.

Break Bad Habits

- ✓ Tackle one habit at a time.
- ✓ Decide on a clear and unshakeable end goal.
- ✓ Break it down into incremental steps.
- ✓ Choose a start date.
- ✓ Enlist the help of your support network.
- ✓ Discover your triggers and develop strategies for defusing them.

Eliminate Negative Thoughts and Speech

- ✓ Cultivate positive and empowering beliefs.
- ✓ Take responsibility for what happens to you rather than blaming others.
- ✓ Approach problems as opportunities.
- ✓ Take positive action whenever negative thoughts enter your mind.
- ✓ Reflect on why a particular person or problem is bothering you.
- ✓ Avoid attaching stories to people or experiences.
- ✓ Give yourself a time limit for venting.

Clear Your Physical Space

- ✓ Make a list of areas in your home, and start with the easiest.
- ✓ For each item, ask yourself:
 - Do I like it?
 - Do I use it?
 - How much hassle does it cause?
 - Why am I keeping it?
 - How does it make me feel?
- ✓ Give away one item each day.
- ✓ Create a "maybe" box for items you're not sure about.
- ✓ Every six months, get rid of any unused items in your "maybe" box.

Cultivate Gratitude

- ✓ Make a list of things you're grateful for—however small.
- ✓ Take time to appreciate simple pleasures.
- ✓ Write in a gratitude journal.
- ✓ Begin and end each day with a moment of gratitude.
- ✓ Express your gratitude to the people in your life.

Develop Positive Friendships

- ✓ Commit to spending quality time together.
- ✓ Listen to each other's viewpoint without judgment.
- ✓ Offer encouragement and compliment each other's strengths.
- ✓ Promote each other's freedom without possessiveness.
- ✓ Forgive each other's faults.
- ✓ Remain sensitive to each other's needs.

Practicing Mindfulness

- ✓ Accept how you feel right now, rather than denying or striving to change it.
- ✓ Bring a feeling of warm compassion to your momentary experience.
- ✓ Let experiences pass without trying to hold on or push them away.
- ✓ Observe what you're experiencing without judging it as good or bad.
- ✓ Improve your capacity for patience.

What to do When Your Child is a Bully

We sometimes assume that children who bully are "bad kids." But many otherwise well-behaved children get involved in bullying because they want to fit in with a group of bullying kids. Children who want attention or are naturally assertive may also become bullies. They may not understand how their actions or words impact other children. Kids who are bullied themselves, whether at home or school, often become bullies, too.

Help and Support Navigating Children Who Bully:

- [Working with a Bully 7 Strategies to Help Your Child When They Are a Bully](#) from Aligning for Growth.
- [My Child Is Bullying Others: What Should I Do?](#) From the Child Mind Institute

[Click here for more bullying resources.](#)

BULLYING FACTS

NCTSN The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance.

The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (US Department of Health & Human Services)

Bullying Happens in Many Ways

- Verbal**
 - Teasing
 - Name Calling
 - Inappropriate Sexual Comments
 - Taunting
 - Threatening to Cause Harm
- Social**
 - Being Purposefully Exclusive
 - Telling Others Not to be Friends with Someone
 - Spreading Rumors
 - Embarrassing Someone in Public
- Physical**
 - Hitting / Kicking / Punching
 - Spitting
 - Tripping / Pushing
 - Taking or Breaking Someone's Things
- Cyber**
 - Takes Place Using Technology
 - Includes Cell Phones, Computers, and Tablets
 - Using Social Media Sites, Text Messages, and Websites

FACT

1 in 5 high school students are bullied in the US

That's **8.2 Million** every year

Resources of the Month

National Developmental Disabilities Month

Facts about Co-occurring Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health

Adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) report mental distress *almost five times* more often than adults without disabilities. Despite the prevalence, little is known about the best approaches for supporting the needs of people with IDD and co-occurring mental health challenges. Individuals with IDD can experience a multitude of psychiatric disorders; however, unlike the general population, psychiatric symptoms in this population are often attributed to their disability rather than mental illness, in a phenomenon known as "diagnostic overshadowing."

-Vanderbilt University Medical Center

Help and Support for Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health:

- [Tips for Mental Health Providers Serving Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities](#) - The Vanderbilt Kennedy Center has a lot of great information for providers on research and strategies for helping folks through a dual diagnosis.
- [National Center for START Services® | Institute on Disability](#) - The University of New Hampshire Office on Disability has great resources on a variety of topics that impact people with co-occurring mental health and developmental disabilities.



Coming Programs

MARCH 20
12 pm or
7 pm

VIRTUAL Parent FOCUS GROUP


Your input matters!

Help inform future programming and policy initiatives in the community.

To register, scan here:



Free \$25 Target gift card!
Share your thoughts about youth.
Focus group open to parents and caregivers!



For more opportunities, including support group information, behavioral health screens, and more, check out our coming events by [Bookmarking this page](#) or visiting [our website](#).

***HYFS & local partner's upcoming events are updated & change frequently.
Please check back often!***

Check out our Community Partners

Families for Depression Awareness

Did you know that you have access to a host of webinars that help those with depression manage their illness and caregivers supporting those they love (adults of all ages and teens)? Check out their [offerings!](#)

Project ABC

A grant-funded program managed by YMCA-Metrowest offers local playgroups and caregiver consultation for preschool-age children and their caregivers. Read about the Project and its many FREE activities [here!](#)

Hopkinton Senior Center

The Hopkinton Council on Aging seeks to enhance and enrich the quality of life for adults aged 60 and older in the Town of Hopkinton by providing activities and services that encourage independence, healthy living, and continued participation in the community. Learn more [here](#)

Hopkinton Public Library

The library hosts educational, therapeutic, and skill-building programs exploring current issues for all ages. Check out its [offerings!](#)

Hopkinton Park & Recreation

Hopkinton Parks and Recreation provides recreational opportunities for you and your family. Learn [more](#)

Hopkinton Public Health

Hopkinton Health Department & Nursing Services ensures that healthy outcomes & lifestyles are accessible & achievable for all who live, work, & visit the town. Our mission is to promote public health through education, advocacy, & provision of high-quality healthcare services. Learn more [here](#)

HYFS provides programs & services that promote behavioral health

Call us to learn more at 508-497-9781

[INTERFACE Referral Service](#)

All Hopkinton residents can access free and confidential help finding an outpatient mental health provider in as little as two weeks that best matches their needs in terms of location, the specialty of the provider, insurance or fee requirement, and availability. 1-888-244-6843

[Mindwise Behavioral Health Screening](#)

Twelve free, anonymous, scientifically validated screenings are available to assess topics ranging from general well-being to mood, anxiety, and substance use. Take one today to gain insight and access resources.

[Hopkinton Organizing for Prevention](#)

The mission of Hopkinton Organizing for Prevention (HOP) is to prevent youth substance use by providing resources, education, and support to promote well-being and resilience for all Hopkinton residents. Adults and youth can always get involved. Contact us to find out how, and visit us on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook!](#)

[Additional resources](#)

HYFS has a user-friendly landing page for many resource needs! Check it out for yourself or someone else.

About Us

Mission

To provide access to comprehensive social services for youth and families and to enhance behavioral health for the entire Hopkinton community.

Vision

Hopkinton will be a town in which all people are valued, where behavioral health is a high priority, and residents have a place to turn when they need help.

For any questions, comments, or concerns, please reach out to Dawn Alcott-Miller, Director, at dalcott@hopkintonma.gov or 508-497-9781

Visit us on our [Website](#), [HOP's Website](#) & [Facebook](#) & [Instagram!](#)

