

Hopkinton Youth & Family Services

October 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, contract management, grant administration, budget management, and strategic planning. She provides support through information and referrals, short-term counseling, parent consultation and 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, as well as case management services for residents who struggle to navigate resources, and offers short-term counseling. She also 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 not been 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 network of towns working through a strategic model to identify risk and protective factors for reducing youth substance use. 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, supporting the Hopkinton Organizing for Prevention (HOP) coalition in its efforts to reduce youth substance use in the community. Erin oversees the HOP Youth Interns and HOP Youth Coalition.



Emily Evans (HHS Senior), HOP Intern, supports the Drug-Free Communities grant program's efforts to reduce youth substance use and promote mental health in the Hopkinton community.

National Bullying Prevention Month

National Bullying Prevention Month is an annual observance held every October, launched in 2006 by PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center, to educate communities, raise awareness, and promote a message of kindness, inclusion, and respect to prevent bullying. Research shows that the best way to prevent bullying is coordinated efforts from parents, educators, and students to create safe environments by addressing the impact of both in-person and cyberbullying.

Here are some resources to help families learn more about bullying, bullying prevention, and strategies to help kids navigate a bullying situation:

- The PACER Center established the National Bullying Prevention Center, which offers a comprehensive range of resources to educate and support families affected by bullying. <https://www.pacer.org/bullying/>
- The state of Massachusetts offers a list of local and national resources, tips, and talking points to guide parents and teachers through tough conversations. <https://www.mass.gov/bullying-prevention>
- Spark Kindness, a nonprofit dedicated to building kind and connected communities, offers a comprehensive collection of resources to help families and professionals navigate bullying in schools and beyond. <https://www.sparkkindness.org/resources/bullying-prevention>
- HYFS has a page in our Resource Center dedicated to bullying resources, including the Hopkinton Public Schools Bullying Report forms. [Bullying Resources](#)



Substance Use & Misuse Prevention Month

October is Substance Use and Misuse Prevention Month, a time for our community to pause and focus on the health and safety of our kids and families. In Hopkinton, prevention means more than just saying “no,” it’s about building strong connections, encouraging open conversations, and ensuring our children feel supported as they grow up.

By learning about the pressures faced by young people and sharing resources, families can help kids make healthy choices and feel less isolated. Prevention Month reminds us that when we work together—parents, schools, neighbors, and community programs—we create a safer, more caring environment where every child can thrive.

Some resources to get you started on how to talk about substance use with your family:

- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) “Talk. They Hear You.” campaign aims to reduce underage drinking and other substance use among youths under the age of 21 by providing parents and caregivers with information and resources they need to address these issues with their children early and often. <https://www.samhsa.gov/substance-use/prevention/talk-they-hear-you>
- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) offers a range of downloadable guides for various situations, suitable for both parents and professionals. <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/public-awareness/national-substance-abuse-prevention-month>
- The Drug-Free America Foundation has a PDF with a list of apps that every parent should be aware of, along with the reasons why. [Apps Every Parent Should Know](#)
- Hopkinton Youth and Family Services’ Resource Center offers a comprehensive list of various programs and sites to access support, information, and treatment. [Addiction Resources Main Page](#)



Hopkinton Organizing for Prevention Hosts Programs for Recovery Month and Looks Forward to Prevention Month

And That's a Wrap on Recovery Month in Hopkinton

Hopkinton Organizing for Prevention (HOP) hosted two powerful events at the Hopkinton Center for the Arts to honor Recovery Month.



On September 4, community members gathered for a screening of "Recovery City," a documentary by local filmmaker Lisa Olivieri, which features the stories of four Worcester women in recovery.



On September 21, HOP presented I'll Never Do That by 2nd Act Theater. The play told the story of one family's struggle with addiction, highlighting family dynamics, the challenges of recovery, and the reality that addiction is a "family disease." Both events were well-attended, and participants engaged in thought-provoking discussions with the film subjects and actors about their personal experiences and the role of the arts in recovery.

In addition, HYFS and HOP once again Organized the Garden of Hope at the Town Common, a memorial honoring those we have lost, those working toward recovery, and those in active recovery. Each flag carries meaning: white for remembrance, purple for recovery, and yellow for support. Community support is an essential part of recovery. Resources are available through the [HYFS Resource Center](#) or by contacting yafs@hopkintonma.gov.



October is Prevention Month!

As we enter Prevention Month, it's a great time to reintroduce Hopkinton Organizing for Prevention (HOP) and explore what substance use prevention really means.

Founded in 2015 by Hopkinton Youth & Family Services, HOP is a community-wide coalition including parents, youth, law enforcement, schools, clergy, health professionals, and individuals in recovery, working together to reduce youth substance use.

When adolescents experiment with alcohol or other drugs, it can heat up and boil over into bigger problems. Just as you prevent a pot of water from boiling by turning off the heat, we work to prevent youth substance use by creating healthy environments at home, in school, and throughout the community, and by cooling down use that's starting to heat up with the right supports and services.

What we do:

- **Education & Training:** Workshops for students, parents, and professionals.
- **Youth Prevention:** Programs that build resilience and promote healthy choices in adolescents.
- **Youth Coalition:** We also have an active youth coalition driving prevention work!
- **Community Assessment:** Using local data to guide prevention efforts.
- **Support & Resources:** Connecting families and youth with tools for healthy living.

If you would like to **get involved**, we are looking for **new parent members**! Email ebartolini@hopkintonma.gov.

Check out the [HOP Website](#) to learn more and follow us on Facebook: hopkintonprevention and Instagram: @hopcoalition



WHO WE ARE

A community-wide collaboration in preventing substance use and abuse.



VISION

A Hopkinton community where everyone has access to information, resources, and support to make healthy decisions around substance use and mental health

MISSION

Prevent youth substance use by providing education, resources, and support to promote well-being and resilience for all Hopkinton residents .

WHAT WE DO

- **Education & Training:** Workshops for students, parents, and professionals.
- **Youth Prevention:** Programs that build resilience and promote healthy choices in adolescents.
- **Community Assessment:** Using local data to guide prevention efforts.
- **Support & Resources:** Connecting families and youth with tools for healthy living.

WHAT IS HOP?

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HOW TO CONNECT

 (508) 497-9781
 @hopcoalition
 hopkintonprevention
 ebartolini@hopkintonma.com
 18 Main Street, Hopkinton, MA 01748

JOIN US

Together is better —everyone who supports our mission is invited to join.

Website:




Need Help?




Supported by Drug-Free Communities & Regional MASSCALL3B Grants


PREVENTION BASICS




The adolescent brain is still under construction and not fully developed until the **age of 25**. The prefrontal cortex allows for fully reasoned decision-making




The younger someone starts drinking or using substances, the more likely they are to develop a substance use disorder – 9 in 10 adults with a substance use disorder started before the age of 18



Most teens **do NOT use** alcohol, nicotine, marijuana and other drugs– 65% of HHS students have never used alcohol, 87% have never vaped, 87% have never used marijuana*




Prevention focuses on making healthy choices and waiting to decide on substance use, **delaying use DOES matter**



TALK EARLY. TALK OFTEN. YOUR CHILD SEES MORE THAN YOU THINK.

It's never too early to talk to your kids about substances.



*2023 Hopkinton High School Merwest Adolescent Health Survey

Coming Programs

For more opportunities, including support group information, behavioral health screens, how to support local nonprofits, and more, check out our coming events by

Bookmark [this page](#) or visit our [website](#).

***HYFS & local partners' 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 consultations 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 aims to enhance and enrich the quality of life for adults aged 60 and older in the Town of Hopkinton by offering activities and services that promote independence, healthy living, and ongoing community engagement. 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 offers a range of recreational opportunities for you and your family. Learn [more](#).

Hopkinton Public Health

The Hopkinton Health Department and Nursing Services ensure that healthy outcomes and lifestyles are accessible and achievable for all who live, work, and 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!](#)