Hopkinton Youth & Family Services

December 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 that uses a strategic model to identify risk and protective factors to reduce 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.

[contacthyfs@hopkintonma.gov] [508-497-9781]

December - Grief, Mental Health, Support and the Holidays

Grief and the Holidays

When you lose someone special, your world loses its celebratory qualities. Holidays magnify that loss. The sadness deepens, and the loneliness can feel isolating. The need for support may be the greatest during the holidays. Pretending you don't hurt and/or that it isn't a harder time of the year is just not the truth for you. But you can – and will – get through the holidays. Rather than avoiding the feelings of grief, lean into them. Learn how here

Mental Health America: Surviving Winter Break for College Students

After the stress of finals is over, many students are excited to return home for winter break. It can be a special time for family, friends, and a familiar place. Unfortunately, going home can present its own challenges. Get helpful tips here

Looking for support during the holidays?

The holiday season can be a time of joy, community, and connection, but many people experience an increased sense of loneliness and isolation during this time of year. Whether it is in a crowded room or at home by yourself, loneliness is painful. Free supportive resources available here

What Is Seasonal Affective Disorder?

How it can affect kids, and how parents can help

If you've noticed a shift in your child's mood or behavior as the season changes, you might have wondered if seasonal affective disorder (sometimes abbreviated SAD) could be involved. But what exactly is seasonal affective disorder, and how do you know if your child is experiencing it? Learn more here

Mclean's Guide to Managing Mental Health Around the Holidays

Elvis once crooned about feeling blue at Christmas time—and we're here to tell you: It's perfectly normal to feel that way.

There are several reasons why your days may not be merry and bright during the holiday season. It can be the jam-packed social calendar, deadlines at work, the loss of a loved one, sunless winter days, or all of the above. Keep reading here

9 Ways to Improve a Child's Challenging Behavior Over the Holidays

Mass General Hospital Think Kids has 9 tips to meet your child with empathy at the holidays. Learn more here

Planning a party? Avoid host risk -Prevent underage drinking:

Social Host Liability Law is an important thing to consider as you plan your holiday gatherings. Learn more here

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Updates from Hopkinton Organizing for Prevention (HOP)

Hopkinton Organizing for Prevention (HOP) is planning a Mocktail Event!

HOP is excited to announce an event in partnership with the Hopkinton Center for the Arts. To celebrate Dry January, HOP is hosting an evening at the HCA where attendees can sample a variety of zero-proof drinks, explore a new art exhibit in the HCA gallery, and enjoy live jazz music. This event is scheduled for January 9th from 6:30 to 9:30 pm. There is also an opportunity to upgrade your ticket to a sip and paint class, led by one of the HCA's talented art teachers. (Flyer for registration is below). For any questions about this event, please contact Erin Bartolini at ebartolini@hopkintonma.gov

Here is an example of a recipe card you will receive at the event:

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.

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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

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!

Coming Soon!

This month’s newsletter was delayed as we explored new accessible formats we had hoped to deliver. We are making these changes in response to reader feedback. While we are not ready for this new edition yet, in 2026 our newsletter will look a little different and be more accessible to everyone! 😍

Thank you for your patience and continued support.

Happy New Year to Everyone!

Thank you for reading!