

Optum Idaho manages outpatient behavioral health benefits for Idaho Medicaid members. It is our commitment to help transform Idaho's behavioral health outpatient system by focusing on helping people reach recovery in their own health journey, one person, one family, one community at a time.

2023 Winter Issue



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Certified family support partners can help

By Stephanie Hoffman, Ph.D., CFSP

Editor's Note: Stephanie Hoffman lives in Idaho and is the owner of Family Support Partners and Training, LLC where she trains CFSPs. She has over 25 years' experience working with children, families and caregivers in education, children's mental health, substance use disorders and juvenile corrections.

When a child with mental illness is struggling, so are his/her parents or caregivers. Clinical professionals team-up to ensure that the child has what is needed to create the best

possible outcomes as part of the child's treatment services. What about the people who care for that child? What supports do they receive?

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Resources For You

If you're feeling suicidal or in crisis, please call or text **988** for the Suicide Crisis Lifeline. You can also chat at **988lifeline.org**.



Optum Member Access & Crisis Line

If you have questions, concerns or need assistance with an issue, we're available 24/7 and a healthcare professional is ready to help. Call us at **1-855-202-0973** or for TDD/TTY, dial **711**.

You can also visit us at **optumidaho.com** for more resources, including current and past issues of this newsletter.

Youth Empowerment Services (YES) Newsletter

Click here for more information about youth mental health empowerment services.

Certified family support partners *(cont. from page 1)*



Raising a child with a mental health diagnosis is not easy and can be as difficult as raising a child with a complex medical illness. We know that supporting caregivers improves the quality of life for the caregiver as well as for the care recipient. With assistance from a parent peer provider, children's needs are met "more efficiently, and with greater confidence and hope." (SAMHSA)

Optum Idaho provides support and guidance for the caregivers of children with mental health needs by utilizing Certified Family Support Partners (CFSPs) who work alongside caregivers. Unlike a clinical role, CFSPs are members of the child's team who have lived experience raising a child with a mental health diagnosis and they share this experience. CFSPs better understand what the caregiver is going through because they have been through a similar journey. This lived experience establishes credibility with the caregivers and meets them where they are in that journey. CFSPs offer an emotional connection as a parent peer, informational and educational support about how to navigate systems (i.e., children's mental health, insurance, juvenile corrections, education), support to caregivers as they

develop day-to-day approaches to the family's needs, and resources (i.e., child care, transportation). Through sharing their own stories of resiliency and knowledge of what worked for their family, CFSPs become the scaffolding that can hold a family up until they have gained the skills they need to carry on without the CFSP.

As a professional, CFSPs complete 40 hours of training and pass an exam, then participate in 100-200 hours of supervised work before becoming certified. To maintain their certification annually, they complete 10 hours of continuing education units. This position can be very rewarding to the CFSP and their partnered families.

Marytheresa, a CFSP from A-to-Z Counseling in northern Idaho, describes her work as "exciting and heartfelt. Every day is different because each family is different with a unique set of needs and strengths." She finds her work "hugely important because parents are the most important people in a child's life" and if she can help them be their best then it feels good, and she knows that she has done her job well. Marytheresa says her role is to walk with the parents/

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Certified *(continued from page 2)*

caregivers and help them discover their goals and what they need. Through listening and being supportive she builds rapport. “It’s not just about parenting, but also about them and their needs.” Marytheresa talks with caregivers about how they can take care of themselves. “We learned in training to put our oxygen mask on first before helping others because if we’re not breathing, we’re of no use to anyone else.”

Marytheresa’s hours are flexible so she can sometimes meet with parents one-to-one in her office in the evening, although she often meets with them in their home or at a park where the children can play or at the library while the child is enjoying story time. Her time is spent listening to and problem-solving with parents. She often points out to the parent the successes they are having, and she validates their feelings. They find her to be a good sounding board and often simply need to hear themselves think out loud. The more challenging times are when she points out to parents how what is happening in their life is affecting their child. For example, when a parent becomes disabled, how this changes the lives of all the family members. She teaches parents better ways to respond to situations and she role models effective behavior in tough situations. Marytheresa has found the practice of walking them through self-reflection to be quite beneficial. When they look at their past progress, they believe they can move forward with hope.

Families looking for access to this service can contact **Optum Idaho** or the regional behavioral health offices through the **Idaho Department of Health and Welfare**. ■



How to identify and prevent parent burnout

By Optum Idaho Pediatric Neuropsychologist and Senior Clinical Program Consultant Dennis J Woody, Ph.D.

We spend a lot of time and energy as parents thinking of ways to assist our children in practically everything they do. Everything that has happened in our world over the last few years has made parenting more difficult, and it is easy to become overwhelmed at times.

Recent research has shown that we’re at risk for “parent burnout,” which can lead to changes in our abilities to support our children. Parent burnout can leave you feeling like you have nothing left to give. It’s no surprise that burnout parents typically feel dismal and negative about most things and people, even their children.

Burnout Symptoms

Exhaustion. Feeling physically and emotionally depleted. Physical symptoms may include headaches, stomachaches, and appetite or sleeping changes.

Isolation. People with burnout tend to feel overwhelmed. As a result, they may stop socializing and confiding in friends, family members and co-workers.

Escape fantasies. People with burnout may fantasize about running away or going on a solo vacation. In extreme cases, they may turn to drugs, alcohol, or food as a way to numb their emotional pain.

Irritability. Burnout can cause people to lose their cool with friends, co-workers, and family members more easily. Coping with normal stressors like preparing for a work meeting, driving children to school, and tending to household tasks also may start to feel insurmountable.

Frequent illnesses. Burnout, like other long-term stress, can lower your immune system, making you more susceptible to colds, the flu and

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NAMI Support Groups for families and individuals

NAMI Idaho offers Family Support Groups and Recovery Support Groups throughout the state. Click [here](#) or scan the QR Code with your smartphone camera to find available sessions in your area.



NAMI Family Support Groups are free, confidential and safe groups of families helping other families who live with mental health challenges by utilizing their collective lived experiences and learned group wisdom.

NAMI Connection is a weekly recovery support group for people living with mental illness in which people learn from each others' experiences, share coping strategies, and offer each other encouragement and understanding.



Burnout (continued from page 3)

insomnia. Burnout can also lead to mental health concerns like depression and anxiety. ([How to Identify and Prevent Burnout | healthline.com](#))

Burnout appears to be a fairly natural occurrence that can be avoided or mitigated with minimal forethought on our part. Normal living causes stress, which can accumulate to the point that we feel unable to manage it well. However, just as an athlete will stretch and exercise to improve their performance, we can do some things on a daily basis to help us manage our stress and prevent becoming burned out. It can't be fixed overnight but the following six steps can help you build better emotional availability and space for your health.

1. Take time for yourself

For most parents, it is not always possible to take time for yourself, especially when you are a parent of more than one child. However, even taking 5-10 minutes for yourself per day will make a significant difference in your day-to-day life. Looking for other quick self-care options? [Here](#) are 75 self care activities that take five minutes or less.

2. Ask for help

Asking for help can come in the form of asking a parent who lives nearby to carpool to school together a few times a week, or even a family member to help out every now and then with the children. You would be surprised by how many people would lend a hand.

3. Be self-compassionate

Recognizing that you are doing the best you can and patting yourself on the back for the steps you take is crucial in preventing parental burnout.

4. Have an accountability partner

Whether it's a spouse, family member, close friend or neighbor, having someone keep you accountable for putting your needs first will significantly help your progress in preventing parental burnout.

5. Rearrange your child's schedule and activities

Consider rearranging your child's schedule and activities. Sometimes things add up so quickly that you don't even realize how hectic your child's schedule is. Sit down and prioritize your child's schedule and perhaps cut one to two activities where possible.

6. Support your child's mental well-being

Lastly, if your child is in need of more attention and is acting out, you can teach them self-care for children. Mental health services can also be an impactful option. Optum Idaho network clinicians provide children ages 0-18 with mental health services that they need to thrive in all aspects of their life. With an incredible team and the best resources, the Idaho Behavioral Health Plan provides individualized services and family therapy to assist.

Perhaps the most significant point is that parent burnout is something we can avoid and improve on if we find ourselves in the midst of it. When you take care of yourself, you are truly taking care of your children. ■

How to be a mental health ally

By Optum Idaho Senior Trainer Kirsten Dickens



A mental health ally is someone who helps create a mental health-friendly environment through their words and actions for those around them. Anyone can be a mental health ally—whether you are a family member, friend, schoolmate or work colleague.

Here are some ideas for being a mental health ally:

Normalize discussions about mental health

- Begin a conversation about mental health by asking your friends, family or peers how they are doing.
- Share your own mental health struggles.

How to talk about mental health

Do you need help starting a mental health conversation with your child or others? Begin with the following questions. Make an effort to actively listen to their response.

- Could you tell me more about what is going on?
- How are you doing?
- Have you had feelings like this before?
- How can I help you in feeling better?
- Do you want to talk to someone else about your problem?
- I'm concerned for your safety. Can you tell me if you have thoughts about harming yourself or others?

Creating a safe space to talk

Let your friends and family know you are available to them if they need to talk. If they choose to share with you:

- Listen patiently, without judging or blaming them.
- Empathize with them: “I can see that this is upsetting for you.”
- Do not give advice unless they ask for it.
- Do not put them under pressure to talk about something that they don't want to talk about.

Respect their personal boundaries

You must keep information shared with you strictly confidential. If they or someone else is in danger, you must share only the information necessary to get them the help they need while maintaining the safe environment.

Getting them help when they need it

There is only so much you can do as a mental health ally or caregiver. It is important to understand your own limitations as a family member or caregiver.

Take care of yourself

It can be difficult to watch your child and others struggle with mental health issues. You may also feel distress as a result of worry and guilt. Take breaks as a caregiver and reach out to your peers for support. ■



Register
for local
MHFA
classes



Scan the QR code above with your phone or tablet, or click **here** to register for MHFA classes in your area.

Learning Opportunity: Mental Health First Aid



Mental Health **FIRST AID**

from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR MENTAL WELLBEING

Gain skills to support someone experiencing a mental health or substance use issue.

Optum Idaho is offering FREE Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) classes in your area. MHFA is a skills-based training course that teaches participants to identify, understand and respond to mental health and substance use challenges. With Adult or Youth MHFA training, you will be equipped to offer assistance to a person who may be developing

mental health or substance use challenges or experiencing a mental health crisis.

Who benefits from learning MHFA?

- Parents
- Teachers
- Fire/EMS
- Public safety personnel
- Veterans
- Older adults

To learn more about the MHFA program, watch a short video about Optum Idaho's free MHFA training classes **here**. Register for local classes by scanning the QR code on the left.



Important Changes Taking Effect April 1st

Your Medicaid Protection

Medicaid Protection was put in place at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and provided continued Medicaid coverage for individuals who may have otherwise been ineligible. Congress has recently passed a bill that **ends this continued coverage requirement on April 1, 2023**.

This does not mean your Medicaid coverage will automatically end on April 1, 2023 even if you are receiving Medicaid as a result of this special protection. Be sure to visit the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare page to learn more about Medicaid Protection and how it impacts your Medicaid coverage:

www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/medicaidprotection

Or scan the QR code to the right with your phone or tablet:



Language Assistance Services and Alternate Formats

This information is available in other formats like large print. To ask for another format, please call the toll-free number **(855) 202-0973**. TTY **711**.

French: Vous avez le droit d'obtenir gratuitement de l'aide et des renseignements dans votre langue. Pour demander à parler à un interprète, appelez le **1-855-202-0973**.

Japanese: ご希望の言語でサポートを受けたり、情報を入手したりすることができます。料金はかかりません。通訳をご希望の場合は、1-855-202-0973までお電話ください。

Romanian: Aveți dreptul de a obține gratuit ajutor și informații în limba dumneavoastră. Pentru a cere un interpret, sunați la 1-855-202-0973.

Sudan: Urafise uburenganzira bwo kuronka ubufasha n'amakuru mu rurimi gwawe ku buntu. Kugira usabe umusobanuzi, hamagara 1-855-202-0973.

Persian: ناگه‌ار روط هب ار دوخ نابز هب تا‌عالطا و کمک هک دیراد قح امش
دی‌یامن لصاح سامته‌رامش اب یهافش مچ‌رتم تساو‌خ‌رد یارب. دی‌یامن تفای‌رد
0973-202-855-1

Ukrainian: У Вас є право отримати безкоштовну допомогу та інформацію на Вашій рідній мові. Щоб подати запит про надання послуг перекладача, задзвоніть на 1-855-202-0973.

Haitian: Ou gen dwa pou jwenn èd ak enfòmasyon nan lang natifnatal ou gratis. Pou mande yon entèprèt, rele nimewo 1-855-202-0973.

Hindi: आप के पास अपनी भाषा में सहायता एवं जानकारी न:शुल्क प्राप्त करने का अधिकार है। दुआ के लिए 1-855-202-0973 पर फोन करें।

Portuguese: Você tem o direito de obter ajuda e informação em seu idioma e sem custos. Para solicitar um intérprete, ligue para 1-855-202-0973.

Member Access & Crisis Line:
1-855-202-0973 (TTY: 711)

Your Voice Matters

We want to hear what you have to say!

What's working well for you? What could we do differently?

Email us at
membermatters@optum.com.

