

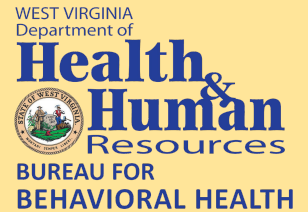
December 2022/ISSUE IX

# FAMILY CONNECTIONS

News for families from the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources,  
Bureau for Behavioral Health's Office of Children, Youth and Families

Family Connections  
Issue IX

*Happy Holidays. It is a busy and fun time of the year. Children are excited for the holidays to begin. For some people, the [holidays](#) can be very stressful. Remember to take care of yourself. It is the best gift you can give yourself.*



## Developmental Disabilities Council

The West Virginia Developmental Disabilities Council is a 31-member organization established by an Executive Order of the Governor on March 6, 1972. More than sixty percent of the Council are citizens with developmental disabilities and family members of people with developmental disabilities.

The Developmental Disabilities (DD) Council is federally funded under the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill Rights Act (P.L.106-402).

Developmental disabilities are a natural part of society. Having one does not preclude a person from living a full and productive life. People who have disabilities are, when given appropriate support and services, able to live in communities of their choice and actively participate in the workforce.

The DD Council is dedicated to improving the lives of all West Virginians with developmental disabilities, working hand in hand with the citizens of West Virginia to improve public policies and practices that promote living in homes, and not facilities; integrated competitive employment; inclusive education; adequate and reliable transportation throughout the state; and meaningful relationships.

The mission of the DD Council is to assure that West Virginia's citizens with developmental disabilities receive the services, supports, and other forms of assistance they need to exercise self-determination and achieve independence, productivity integration, and inclusion in the communities. They do this by the following ways: including people with developmental disabilities and their families in the development of policies and programs; analyzing the needs and advocacy for improvements to the human services system; and providing training and technical assistance to build competent and inclusive communities.

Each year the DD Council sends out a call for investments notice to solicit innovative grant proposals that promote the DD Council's vision. The notice announces the amount of funding available as well as the areas of highest concerns to people with developmental disabilities and their families. ***Continued on next page***

## Developmental Disability Council (cont.)

Each year the DD Council offers a variety of training. Some of the training events have included Partners in Policymaking (PIP). PIP is leadership training for people with developmental disabilities and parents of young children with developmental disabilities to teach them how to be effective advocates and system change agents. Another training is Supported Decision Making, a tool that allows people with developmental disabilities to retain their decision-making capacity by choosing supporters to help them make choices. Social Role Valorization (SRV) is another training the DD Council offers. SRV is a dynamic set of ideas and strategies useful for making positive change in the lives of people disadvantaged because of their status in society.



For more information on the DD Council, visit [www.ddc.wv.gov](http://www.ddc.wv.gov) and connect with the WV Developmental Disability Council on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/people/WV-Developmental-Disabilities-Council/100064754796054/>.

Submitted by Christy Black, Advocacy Specialist, DD Council

## Handling Holiday Stress



Are you stressed during the holidays? If so, you are not alone. One reason could be financial challenges and overstimulation due to commercialism. Sometimes people have high expectations for the holidays. Movies make the holidays look perfect. The decorations and food are spectacular. Everyone in the family is getting along and so happy to be together; however, these are manufactured for entertainment. Your family dynamic may not look the same as what is portrayed in the movies. You or your family member may have physical sickness or may be dealing with a challenging mental health diagnosis or a substance use disorder. The children may be noisy and full of energy due

to the extra sugar and excitement of the holidays. It is good to recognize your limits and prioritize what is most important to you. Make a list of what you want to accomplish, set boundaries, and make a budget and stick to it. Enjoy small enjoyable moments during the holidays with children, such as crafts and reading. Take small breaks to do something you enjoy, such as drinking hot chocolate, looking out the window to watch the snow falling, playing in the snow, taking a drive to look at the decorations, and attending plays. Do something for someone less fortunate.

Call West Virginia's Emotional Strength Line if you want someone to talk to at 1-877-HELP 304, text 877-435-7304 or chat at [www.help304.com](http://www.help304.com).

Submitted by Roxanne Chaney



## Cathy's Story

You have a voice, so make it count.

I am Cathy, someone who has dealt with mental, mobility and visual disabilities for years. I consider myself an advocate for advocacy, but that was not always the case. Years ago I did not realize that I could speak for myself. I did not have the skills that I now have. After having had my second of three major strokes in 1994, I ended up at a rehabilitation hospital and had a horrible experience as I did not have an advocate.

I was blessed to have learned advocacy skills from the Marion County Family Resource Network and Family Leadership conferences. I graduated from Partners in Policy Makers in 2000 and from Leadership Marion in 2002.



Family members do have a voice. Get involved on boards if possible and educate yourself. I have visited our State Capitol many times and know a number of our State Legislators. In 2002, I was able to speak about the importance of family leadership at a Robert Wood Johnson Conference in Chicago, Illinois.

Now I am President of the Greater Fairmont Council of Churches and on the board of Disability Rights of West Virginia. Previously I was chair of Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI). Take small steps to be a voice and make a difference, as I hope I have been able to do.

Submitted by Cathy Reed

## Resources

- [24/7 Children's Crisis and Referral Line, 844-HELP4WV](#)
- [WV Kids Thrive Collaborative, including weekly Resource Rundowns](#)
- [West Virginia Statewide Family Advisory Board](#)
- [Bureau for Behavioral Health, Office of Children, Youth and Families](#)
- [West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#)
- [West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources Local Offices](#)
- [West Virginia Positive Behavior Support \(PBS\)](#)
- [West Virginia Family and Community Support Program](#)
- [West Virginia Birth to Three Program](#)
- [West Virginia Developmental Disabilities Council](#)
- [National 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#)