



The National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health Responds to President Trump's Remarks Regarding Individuals with Mental Illness and the Mental Health System

As occurs with every mass shooting tragedy, the events at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School have elevated the national dialogue on gun control and mental illness. As many thoughtful people continue to search for solutions, we find ourselves confronted with a President who chooses to describe individuals who experience mental illness as "sickos", "crazies", and a "horrible plague." During a Listening Session with students, teachers, and parents, the President lamented the loss of psychiatric institutions which, in his view, equates to a loss of services for individuals who require mental health treatment and support. While these remarks reflect a lack of understanding of the nature of mental illness, they also underscore the prejudice that has created a backlash of stigma towards individuals who, through no fault of their own, experience a mental health challenge. This type of language is irresponsible, given that the CDC reports suicide as the 2nd leading cause of death for teens and young adults.

The National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health (NFFCMH) is a national advocacy organization that is focused solely upon children, youth, and young adults who experience mental health challenges and their families. NFFCMH advocates for a strong, community-based mental health system that is available for every individual in every community. We strongly support the mantra that there is "no health without mental health," which translates to parity across physical and mental health and results in the availability of treatment options for every person living in America. We are also fierce advocates for a mental health system that offers a continuum that includes prevention services.

A "lock 'em up" approach to mental health treatment is not the answer. If this had resulted in favorable outcomes, the thousands of institutions that have been closed would have remained open. If, instead, we approach mental illness as we approach all other illnesses, we will find solutions that are effective and enduring. There are examples of effective treatment approaches in communities across the country. These need to be replicated and made available for all children, youth and young adults.

NFFCMH urges President Trump and the White House administration to thoughtfully and resolutely begin to seek solutions that create a comprehensive, community-based mental health system. We offer our support to this important initiative and look forward to the opportunity to partner in crafting a mental health system that improves the quality of life for all children, youth, and young adults.

[*Download the PDF*](#)

Happy Anniversary



Congratulations to the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN) in New Jersey for their 30th birthday. Please join us in recognizing their terrific work helping families navigate education, health, human services, child welfare, juvenile justice, and other systems to get the services their children needed! Read their full story [HERE](#).



Federation in Action

Federation Expands National Team



We are pleased to welcome our newest member of the team, Kelsey Engelbracht, who joins us at the Federation as a Project Manager. Kelsey has always had a passion for children and she wanted her career to be in service to giving them a voice. After graduating from the University of Virginia she spent 11 years working in non-profit, private school administration, which took her to Arizona in 2008. Working in education drew Kelsey's attention particularly to children who have special needs as she met with many parents who struggled to navigate and integrate the services their children needed. Drawn to work with more vulnerable populations, Kelsey found a home at the Family Involvement Center, a family-run organization in Arizona.

[Read More](#)

Children's Mental Health Awareness Week

The 2018 National Theme is
"Partnering for Health and Hope
Following Trauma"

MAY 7 - 13, 2018

We anticipate more than 1,100 communities and 160 national collaborating organizations and federal programs will organize local Awareness Day activities and events around the country. We invite you to share your events with us so we can serve as a resource by promoting the events taking place across the country.



To submit your events, please email the following information

to kengelbracht@ffcmh.org.

1. Name of Event
2. Date and Time
3. Details
4. Contact Person and Phone Number/Email Address
5. Website
6. Attach Flyer and/or Photos



29th Annual Conference



29TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE



NOVEMBER 1 - 3, 2018
HYATT REGENCY - HOUSTON, TX

The only national conference dedicated solely to issues that impact children, youth and young adults with behavioral health challenges and their families. Our conference focus is inclusive of children and youth who experience complex diagnostic challenges.

[Learn about Conference](#)

[Become a Sponsor](#)

Legislation and Advocacy

The Federation actively represents you as part of the [Mental Health Liaison Group \(MHLG\)](#) - a coalition of almost 70 national organizations representing consumers, parents and family members, advocates, providers, and mental health experts dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness.

- The Federation as part of the MHLG thanked Congress on its recent budget deal. The letter outlines support of the deal and the desires to learn more as Congress prioritizes the \$3 billion in additional spending for mental health and addiction treatment for FY2018.
- February 22nd, the Federation joined 75 other national medical, health, public health, and research organizations in writing letters to the Senate and House urging them to find a bipartisan path forward for comprehensive legislative solutions to firearm-related injuries and fatalities. [Letter to the House](#) and [Letter to the Senate](#)
- The Federation joined over 30 other organizations in signing on to the APA's [attached letter](#) to Health

and Human Services in expressing our collective concerns regarding the agency's latest actions related to LGBTQ patients. We urged the administration to consider how these policies would adversely impact LGBTQ individuals and to develop strategies to improve the health and wellness of this population.

- The Federation joined with over 160 organizations in expressing our deep concern about Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' (CMS) recent decision to approve Medicaid waivers that allow states to deny Medicaid benefits to individuals who fail to comply with a "work requirement" or "community engagement" provision. These provisions will have a significant and disproportionately harmful effect on individuals with chronic health conditions, especially those struggling with substance use disorders (SUDs) and mental health disorders, as well as those with conviction and arrest records. [Letter to Secretary Azar](#)
- The Federation [wrote in support for H.R. 2345](#), The National Suicide Prevention Hotline Improvement Act.
- The Federation along with other national mental health and substance use stakeholder organizations wrote to Secretary Azar to inquire about the next steps for the [Interdepartmental Serious Mental Illness Coordinating Committee](#).
 - Read the [ISMICC's full report](#) issued in December.
- The Federation joined the National Council on Behavioral Health in support of Mental Health Access Improvement Act (S. 1879/H.R. 3032). This legislation would authorize mental health counselors (MHCs) and marriage and family therapists (MFTs) to serve as Medicare providers. . Recognizing these clinicians as Medicare providers would increase access to mental health and addiction services for the elderly and disabled, especially in rural and underserved areas.

Webinars and Training

PAX Tools for Parent Peer Support Specialists



On January 30th, Dennis D. Embry, Ph.D., and Erin Roepcke from PAXIS Institute conducted a webinar on PAX Tools for Peer Support Specialists. As PAX has evolved, an emphasis on parent/family support has emerged. PAX tools are now being developed that families need to reinforce the strategies children are learning through the Good Behavior Game. By utilizing parent/family peer specialists who are PAX trained, we predict enhanced outcomes for children and their families.

Look for more news about PAX Tools for Parent Support Providers coming soon!

PAX Tools for Families Webinar



Challenging Behaviors & School Success: The Role of Section 504 and Special Education

Date: Tuesday, March 06, 2018 - 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM Central Time

Every child has the right to an education, but children and youth with challenging behaviors often struggle to be successful in school. This workshop will cover the role of Section 504 and Special Education as well as the importance of using a strengths-based approach when working with the school to address behavior concerns and knowing when to use the Alternative Dispute Resolution process to resolve concerns.

Making the Move from Early Childhood Special Education to Kindergarten

Date: Tuesday, March 13, 2018 - 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM Central Time

Kindergarten is a big step in any child's life. Parents of young children with disabilities will learn how to plan for the transition and learn strategies to help their child be successful.



The Michigan Alliance for Families offers **on demand webinars** you can attend without having to leave your home or office. It's an opportunity to hear an expert speak for about an hour on special education and related topics. These webinars are available to parents, caregivers, and educators for free and can be viewed anytime on YouTube. Email the [Michigan Alliance for Families](mailto:info@michiganallianceforfamilies.org) at info@michiganallianceforfamilies.org to request the handouts for a recorded webinar.

Visit the YouTube Channel

Resources

From the TA NETWORK



We are heartbroken by last month's devastating tragedy in Florida. Our thoughts are with the victims, their loved ones, the Stoneman Douglas High School community, first responders, and our colleagues in Broward County.

Below are resources for communities and caregivers to assist them with coping and supporting others after traumatic events involving mass violence.

SAMHSA Resources:

- [Disaster/Distress Helpline](#)
- [Tips for talking with and Helping Children & Youth Cope after a Disaster or Traumatic Event: A Guide for Parents, Caregivers, and Teachers](#)
- [Incidents of Mass Violence](#)

General Resources:

- [Effects of Traumatic Stress after Mass Violence, Terror, or Disaster](#)

Resources for Parents and Guardians:

- [Supporting Children Who Have Faced Trauma](#)
- [Talking to Children about the Shooting](#)
- [Restoring a Sense of Safety in the Aftermath of a Mass Shooting: Tips for Parents & Professionals](#)
- [Parent Guidelines for Helping Youth after the Recent Shooting](#)

From Child Mind Institute

In the wake of a traumatic event, your comfort, support and reassurance can make children feel safe, help them manage their fears, guide them through their grief, and help them recover in a healthy way. The guide linked below was assembled by psychiatrists, psychologists and mental health experts who specialize in crisis situations. It offers simple tips on what to expect, what to do and what to look out for.



CHILD MIND[®]
INSTITUTE

- [Helping Children Cope After a Traumatic Event](#)

From Understood

Understood

for learning & attention issues

When your child has learning and attention issues, you may sometimes be so focused on what your child needs to improve that it can be hard to see his strengths. Here's a cool—and crafty!—way to identify your child's many strengths and connect them in a paper chain, or a "strengths chain."

- [Download: Hands-On Activity to Identify Your Child's Strengths](#)
- [Video: How to make a strengths chain](#)

