



YES News & Updates

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT SERVICES NEWSLETTER

Issue 18: August 2020

Division of Behavioral Health partners with Idaho Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health for advocacy, support and education

By Stephanie Hoffman, PhD, CPM, CFSP

The Division of Behavioral Health is pleased to announce a contracted partnership with the Idaho Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health (IFFCMH). As the voice of parents, youth and families for children's mental health concerns, resources, support and information statewide, the IFFCMH began renewed efforts for the division in July of this year. Since the contract is funded through federal Block Grant dollars and state Youth Empowerment Services (YES) monies, the requirements of the contract meet obligations of both funding sources. IFFCMH's role falls into three categories of activities: advocacy, support and education.

Advocacy activities

As advocates representing the family and youth perspective, IFFCMH promotes the highest standards of care throughout all contractual activities, and builds relationships with multiple stakeholders across Idaho. As they partner with these individuals and groups, the IFFCMH will discern what is working well as well as any concerns, gaps, and barriers in types of services and access to services, then relay this information to the division with recommendations for maintaining system strengths or mitigating issues. The IFFCMH will annually be visiting with staff of regional offices and the adolescent unit of State Hospital South (then State Hospital West when it opens). These visits are to provide division staff support, technical assistance, education, and informational products or activities needed in assisting regional staff as they improve the lives of families.

Other advocacy activities included in the contract pertain to outreach events (e.g., focus groups, forums, written or verbal testimony) that seek out family and youth voice and input, and provide information to family members regarding children's mental health legislation, events, standards, trainings, rules, etc.

Youth and family involvement are provided via the formation of work orders that are originated by staff from one of the YES partner agencies: the Department of Health and Welfare, State Department of Education and Department of Juvenile Corrections. (Work orders can be found on the IFFCMH's website <https://www.idahofederation.org/>, under the Forms tab.) The IFFCMH staff will screen and train Parent Leaders and Youth Leaders to participate in the work of the YES system of care, from policy and process making to workgroup and committee duties.

Support activities

The contract provides several support activities for parents, youth and families. These include assisting individuals in navigating the system of care, accessing services and understanding their role while participating in services. The main support service provided through this contract is the Family Support Line, whereby Idahoans call and receive guidance about obtaining help for a child with a behavioral health concern. IFFCMH staff with lived experience are trained in how to respond to these situations, including crisis situations. All staff will be provided with supervision and coaching. In addition, data and trends will be reported to





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the division. The IFFCMH staff will also assist the state hospital adolescent unit in supporting youth and their families as youth are discharged and transitioning to their communities.

Educational activities

Educational activities are paramount in raising, living with or helping children with behavioral health disorders. Therefore, the IFFCMH will provide educational events to family members, youth, policy-makers, primary care physicians and the general public. An annual parent education workshop will be held, and awareness campaigns will be implemented throughout the year. The IFFCMH will facilitate travel arrangements and reimbursement to family members who wish to attend conferences regarding children's mental health. Their website will be informative and contain numerous resources for youth and family members who want help with behavioral health challenges. Hope, recovery supports, and guidance are available to families through our contract and partnership with the IFFCMH.

For more information, please contact the contract monitor, Stephanie Hoffman, stephanie.hoffman@dhw.idaho.gov.