



NEWSLETTER: WINTER 2025

GREETINGS FROM DR. BARB BRADY - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we reflect on an extraordinary 2024, I'm thrilled to share the remarkable strides we've made together in supporting West Virginia's youth. Our organization provided an unprecedented 67 training sessions, reaching **over 800 dedicated youth-serving professionals** from more than **150 school and community organizations**. This collective effort has undoubtedly touched the lives of thousands of young people, equipping them with tools to overcome challenges related to ACEs, the opioid epidemic, and the lingering effects of the recent pandemic.



Through our training and resources, we're building the capacity of West Virginia's youth-serving systems, ensuring that at-risk youth have the support they need to heal, grow, and thrive. Research from the CDC (2019) underscores the critical role of connectedness as a protective factor for young people, reducing health-risk behaviors and improving mental health outcomes. Your dedication to fostering strong, positive bonds with youth is instrumental in helping them overcome trauma and flourish. We recognize the increasing challenges you face in addressing the social-emotional, behavioral, and mental health needs of the youth you serve. To better support you, we invite you to complete our [training needs survey](#), helping us tailor our offerings to your most critical needs.

As we look forward to 2025, we're eager to continue our partnership, providing the training and resources you need to transform the lives of at-risk youth. Please explore our [training menu](#) and reach out if we can assist with your youth development training needs.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to changing the trajectory of young lives from at-risk to thriving. Together, we're breaking the cycle of poverty, addiction, and adversity, one young person at a time.

Warm regards,



IDN WELCOMES NEW LEADERSHIP VISTA

Laren Iezzi joined IDN on January 13th!

Laren Iezzi graduated from Marshall University in December 2024 with a bachelor's degree in **Health Sciences** and minors in **Addiction Studies, Psychology, and Health & Wellness**. She is a native West Virginian and a graduate of Poca High School. While a student at Marshall, Laren completed an **internship** with the **Ronald McDonald House** and continues to volunteer there weekly, doing administrative tasks and aiding guest families. She

also worked as a Medical Scribe in the Emergency Department at St. Mary's Medical Center, honing her professional writing skills. As **President of Health Science Society** at Marshall, Laren led fundraising efforts, coordinated volunteer opportunities, led marketing and outreach efforts for organizational events, and gained experience in public speaking. She has also participated in and organized donation drives benefiting organizations such as Facing Hunger Food Bank, Harmony House, Fisher House, and the Developmental Therapy Center. Laren is excited about her year of service as an **AmeriCorps Leadership VISTA** through **WV Promise** for Inspiring Dreams Network. She can't wait to see the difference she will help make in IDN's youth development movement, impacting youth and the adults who serve them, positively affecting WV communities. After her year of service as a VISTA, she plans to apply to Physician Assistant school, where she plans to prepare for work in Emergency Medicine. She believes her experience with IDN will inform her future career in rural healthcare. Laren is excited to start making a difference!



UPCOMING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES



Adverse Childhood Experience Training Series

ACES 101: Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences

Friday, February 21, 2025

9:00 - 11:00 a.m. (Via Zoom)

ACES 102: Overcoming Adverse Childhood Experiences

Friday, March 21, 2025

9:00 - 11:00 a.m. (Via Zoom)

ACES 103: Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences

Friday, April 18, 2025

9:00 - 11:00 a.m. (Via Zoom)

TRAINERS: John Barton and Corey Beahm

DESCRIPTION: The youth you work with may struggle with the traumatic effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACES). We invite you to learn about ACES, and the impact ACES have on brain development and behavior. ACES often interfere with school success and can negatively impact participation in activities, events, school, relationships, overall wellness, and life outcomes. This ACES training series is intended to help caregivers and adults who serve youth better understand the impact of ACES and to learn some best-practice strategies to help youth and families overcome and prevent the future occurrence of ACES, changing lives in a positive direction.

REGISTER: <https://forms.office.com/r/JZh1WiyMZf>

OR

[Register here!](https://forms.office.com/r/JZh1WiyMZf)



Anger Management: Calming Volcanic Emotions

Wednesday, February 26, 2025

11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. (Via Zoom)

TRAINER: Dr. Barb Brady

DESCRIPTION: This training focuses on strategies, tools, and resources adults can use to help youth emotionally regulate and manage big emotions. Participants will learn step-by-step strategies for helping deescalate volcanic emotions when they erupt, as well as, learn about some emotional regulation and coping skills students can use to help them avoid build up of big explosive emotions, Additionally, this session will review strategies for assessing and controlling's one own emotional escalation when working with emotionally charged youth.

OR

[Register here!](#)

Families and Friends as Allies

Tuesday, March 11, 2025
11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. (Via Zoom)

TRAINER: Paula Kerner, Fairness WV

DESCRIPTION: Increasingly, parents, grandparents, and friends are realizing they want to do better to support their LGBTQ family members and friends. Strong connections to others help youth navigate difficult situations and increase the likelihood that they will be successful socially, emotionally, and academically.

Course Objectives:

- Building strong supportive relationships.
- Creating understanding and safe spaces at home.
- Navigating policies and procedures that protect youth at school.



REGISTER: [Families, Friends, and Caring Adults as Allies of LGBTQ and Other Vulnerable Youth](#)

OR

[Register here!](#)

WHAT HAS IDN BEEN UP TO?



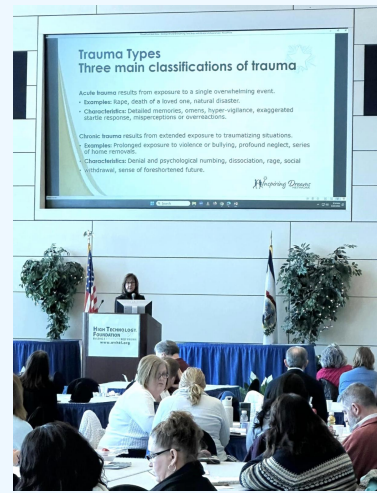
Success isn't just about what you accomplish in your life.
It's about what you inspire others to do.

Neurodivergence & Accessibility
"What Is Neurodivergence?"

The snow storm kept us from providing an in-person training in *Elkins for Youth Health Services* on January 20. Instead, John Barton did a full-day Zoom training on **Neurodiversity and Accessibility**. Nearly 30 staff members attended. Great training!

KEYNOTE ON OVERCOMING TOXIC STRESS

Dr. Barb Brady represented IDN as the keynote speaker to kick off staff development for over 100 employees at *Pierpont Community and Technical College in Fairmont* on January 20. The topic was "**Living with and Overcoming Toxic Stress and Adverse Life Experiences**" with a focus on what staff can do to help students overcome and succeed. We love collaborating with higher education!!



ACES AND RESILIENCE TOWN HALL

Pleasants County is starting a movement to prevent and help families overcome Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). A large group of community members including educators, mental health professionals, families, business leaders, and other community agencies met at Belmont Community Center on January 31. *Dr. Barb Brady facilitated an engaging evening that included*

viewing and discussing the movie **Resilience: The Biology of Stress and Science of Hope**. Following the movie participants discussed what they can do to build a stronger, resilient, connected community. *They left inspired with the goal of started a Pleasants County ACEs Coalition. So exciting!* Reach out to us if you want us to facilitate an ACEs and Resilience Town Hall in your community.

PARTNER UPDATES



ACEs Virtual Train the Trainer Event

Monday, February 3, 2025
9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m. (Via Zoom)

DESCRIPTION: Join the ACEs Coalition's network of statewide ACEs trainers & register today to attend this virtual event!

[Register here!](#)

National Youth Preparedness Council is Recruiting New Members!

DESCRIPTION: Do you know a young leader who is passionate about disaster preparedness and community resilience? Encourage them to join FEMA's Youth Preparedness Council (YPC). The YPC is a nationwide program that brings together young leaders who want to make a difference in their community and build valuable leadership skills.

Council members serve for **one year** and collaborate on projects that promote emergency preparedness, participate in engaging discussions with national leaders, and gain insight into careers in emergency management.

WHO CAN APPLY? [Students in grades 8 through 11](#)

APPLY BY: [March 3, 2025](#)

[Apply here!](#)

To learn more about YPC, you can also attend the informational webinar and get your questions answered!

Tuesday, February 11, 5:00 p.m. ET
[Register in advance on Zoom for government.](#)



Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) [Free E-Book](#)

DESCRIPTION: These **10 de-escalation tips** from CPI provide strategies and techniques to help you respond to difficult behavior in the safest, most effective way possible.

[See complete article!](#)

FILL OUT OUR TRAINING NEEDS SURVEY!

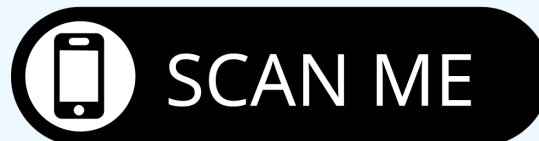
Inspiring Dreams Network is excited to provide training and partner with you to support the youth you serve. Help us serve you better by clicking the button below to complete our training needs survey.

[Training Needs Survey](#)

CHECK OUT OUR YOUTH

DEVELOPMENT RESOURCE PORTAL!

IDN has been awarded a Healthy Communities Grant through the **Pallottine Foundation of Huntington**. Through this grant, IDN has developed a Youth Development Resource Portal to provide free resources to support West Virginia youth and their network in areas they commonly struggle with, such as academic, career, mental health, and social supports. The resource portal caters to three broad stakeholder groups: youth, families, and youth-serving adults



New Resources Just Added!

[Visit our Website](#)



Inspiring Dreams Network | 4035 Ridgeview Lane | Hurricane, WV 25526 US

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