



Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime

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Goals

- Strengthen partnerships across all community sectors
- Improve access to effective services for children and their families
- Enhance community-wide capacity to identify and support young victims of the opioid crisis.

Key Activities

- Hire a full time Family Advocate to work directly with children and families to navigate community resources
- Ensure a consistent, comprehensive, and effective network of support is provided for victims.
- Implement [Handle With Care](#) in all 16 school districts (partnership between school, first responders, and behavioral health providers)
- Identify training needs to increase capacity of service providers/community partners
- Facilitate opportunities for shared learning and problem solving among community partners
- Develop and disseminate awareness materials about services available
- Use a data driven approach to continually assess the needs of children and youth and determine whether the community response is meeting identified needs.
- As needed, identify, vet and integrate additional resources and services into the community's response

Update – June 2020

- **Family Advocate** has been hired! Melanie Avila will join us as the Joining Forces for Children Family Advocate on June 15th! Stay tuned for information about how to make a referral and when Melanie will begin working with clients!
- **Strategic Plan** in progress. We are using our community assessment to help us refine our action steps to meet the needs of children impacted by substance use. Stay tuned!
Our vision is to create a community where resilient, healthy, and nurturing families prevail.
- **Toolkit and Resource Development**
 - Toolkit for helping professionals to identify warning signs, have difficult conversations, and follow up with children and families in a trauma-sensitive way – in progress!
 - How to Talk to Children about Substance Use Disorders and Recovery toolkit **completed and attached!**

Have an idea for the resource list? Let [Chris](#) know!



We've begun work with the **Joining Forces** website developer to add content **Joining Forces for Children** content on the **Joining Forces** site. Stay tuned for more about our web debut!

Now Scheduling Trainings! Contact [Chris](#) to find out more!

Addiction: Through the Lens of a Child

Trainer: Chris Glover, Project Coordinator, Joining Forces for Children

In this two hour training, participants will learn about the illness of addiction and its impact on family systems. Special emphasis will be on the experience of a child living in a family system experiencing addiction. Training will also introduce participants to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) behavioral health continuum of care including prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery. Participants will learn about individualized risk and protective factors and how they can build protective factors in individuals.

At the end of training, participants will be able to:

- Describe addiction
- Explain addiction as a family illness
- Recognize the impact of substance use on children
- Identify and commit to something they can do to promote wellness

Substance Use Disorder: Implications for the Children

Trainer: Karen Plowman, Director of Prevention Services, Gaudenzia, Inc.

Children living in a family with Substance Use disorder can be chaotic, confusing, and traumatic; but, there are practices that supportive adults such as mentors, teachers, and others can implement to support children and their families. Identifying potential roles that the children are playing in the family can help us to better assist children to share and cope with their feelings.

- Roles of children
- Role of codependency in the family
- How SUD impacts the family
- Helping children cope with BIG feelings



Children Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders – What are We Missing?

Trainer: Karen Plowman, Director of Prevention Services, Gaudenzia, Inc.

This workshop covers the basics of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and interventions that can be used in classrooms, families, and our community to assist persons with an FASD. Also, the implications of undiagnosed FASD are discussed as well as FASD in adults within our communities.

- Strength based approach
- Safety issues
- Community resources

The Process of Recovery

Trainer: Scott Theurer, Certified Recovery Specialist, Lancaster County Recovery Alliance

The recovery process presentation is designed to instigate conversation and spark ideas while it provides education. Our society is enmeshed in one of the worst public health crisis in our times, substance use disorder. Recovery is possible, and in fact, should be the expectation given the right environment of attitudes, supports, pathways, and other capital that enhances understanding and resources.

Today a growing population of people in recovery are returning to our churches, businesses, schools, neighborhoods, and communities. Is the Community ready? Are we?

Understanding recovery is critical to our ability to sustain recovery. It has been shown that communities that are rich in recovery and recovery supports are healthier overall than communities that do not foster that environment. This training is an overview of what that environment could look like for individuals and for communities.

Looking for a training that's not listed – let [Chris](#) know!

Handle With Care Updates

These districts have expressed a willing to receive Handle With Care notifications:

- Cocalico Area School District
- Conestoga Valley School District
- Donegal School District
- Ephrata Area School District.
- Lampeter-Strasburg School District
- Manheim Central School District
- Manheim Township School District
- Penn Manor School District
- Pequea Valley School District
- School District of Lancaster
- Warwick School District



Handle With Care Continued

School districts who are interested and needed to reschedule due to school closures. Chris is actively working to connect with the districts below.

- Columbia Borough School District
- Elanco School District
- Elizabethtown Area School District
- Hempfield School District
- Solanco School District

Our goal is for all schools to be ready to implement Handle With Care at the start of the 2020-2021 school year. Chris is working on a revised training and implementation plan. This includes the development of localized tools and on demand training materials for districts.

Chris is also working to identify additional strategies for implementation in a virtual or hybrid learning environment. Chris is connecting with others throughout Pennsylvania and the United States who are implementing a Handle with Care program to learn how they've adapted the program during recent school closures.

Questions, comments, ideas? Let [Chris](#) know!