



Marijuana is now legal. What it means for teens. January 2023



Dear friends;

February 1st marks 25 years that I've had the honor of working at McCall. I began when my oldest daughter Emma was six months old, and throughout these years, I have had the good fortune to serve in several capacities including my present role as our CEO. I've witnessed growth and transformation – in McCall, in our communities, in the field of behavioral health – and certainly in myself. I reflect on some of the constants as well; the through lines of compassion, connection and hope that define our work here and have kept my heart and soul invested.

I started in our prevention department, working with children and families impacted by addiction. We'd talk with kids about the three C's: they didn't cause the problem, they can't control the problem and they can't cure the problem; but there are actions we can take to care for ourselves. We'd discuss the concept of "both, and" - that you can love and care for someone and also experience pain, anger and disappointment as a result of their behavior. We'd practice setting healthy boundaries and identify safe and trusted adults to go to with big feelings. We looked at healing from a holistic and systems point of view and operated with the hope that by providing opportunities for healing, families could effectively arrest much of the intergenerational trauma that had otherwise inhibited growth, peace and joy.

Twenty five years later, and with all the advancements we've made, these simple yet profound principles still stand. Now my Emma is in graduate school getting her Master's Degree in Social Work (MSW)- and my Abigail recently completed her MSW! (Fun fact; Abigail was born on the day of the last McCall kids' carnival for those of you who remember that fun tradition!) They carry the inspiration from witnessing the everyday miracles that happen here as a result of the extraordinary staff's commitment to our mission. Thank you, my friends, for the privilege to continue to do this work that I love so much.

Gratefully,

Maria Coutant Skinner, LCSW
President & CEO



The Changing Youth Perceptions Around Marijuana

Recreational Cannabis sales kicked off this month here in Connecticut. In the first eight days, the seven sites approved for recreational sales brought in over \$2 million. In December, Governor Ned Lamont announced that thousands of low-level cannabis possession convictions will be erased as of January 1st of this year. For many these are wonderful changes that will allow for job growth and new opportunities. However, for adolescents in our state, we should be mindful of the changing environment.

For as long as we can remember it has been illegal. Now, adults 21 and over may purchase a variety of marketed products containing THC, or tetrahydrocannabinol, the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana. Products that look like candy, seltzer, or others that promise to help you relax or stay focused.

McCall's Prevention Services program is seeing a change in youth perceptions around cannabis use. Teens and tweens are now experiencing a paradigm shift as their perception of harm around cannabis decreases. They think, "If it is safe enough to be legal, then it must be okay for me to use." We know that as perception of harm lowers youth usage rates go up.

That is why it is important for parents to speak to their children early and often about substance use, there are many risks for adolescents, but more importantly help them learn healthy and safe ways to cope with tough emotions. Model healthy behaviors at home and be genuine. Ask them questions about what they know and encourage them to keep talking.

Keeping our Kids & Pets Safe

NBC reported the results of a recent study published in the journal Pediatrics. The study found that calls to poison control centers as a result of children five and under consuming edibles containing THC rose from 207 in 2017 to 3,054 in 2021. Nearly all of the children (97%) found the edibles at home.

Be in The Know CT is a wonderful resource for adults, youth, parents, and pet owners. They have provided the following tips on how to keep your loved ones safe:

1. Keep cannabis and other substances in a secure and locked place. Cannabis products should be out of sight and out of reach of children and pets to avoid accidental ingestion.
2. Store cannabis products in their original containers and keep the label. Labels on cannabis products from licensed cannabis establishments will have important information including how much THC is in the product.
3. Consider using a safe or lockbox with a combination lock or keypad.
4. Make a list of cannabis products in your home. Knowing exactly what cannabis products you have in your home can help with medical treatment in case of accidental ingestion.

McCall has over 50 years of experience treating substance use and mental health disorders. We understand that substance use and other behaviors – from opioids to marijuana to gambling or food – may start off helping

you cope with unresolved pain, but often can end up making everything worse. If you are concerned about your substance use or that of a loved one, call 860.496.2100 or visit mccallbhn.org. It's never too early or too late to reach out for help.

If a child ingests cannabis, call Poison Control immediately 1.800.222.1222.

If a pet ingests cannabis, call Animal Poison Control 1.888.426.4435.

WZBG Interview with Andrew Lyon, MPH, CPS, Director of Prevention

Andrew spoke with Dale Jones from FM 97.3 WZBG on Wednesday, Jan 18th, about the start of recreational marijuana sales in CT and the changing youth perceptions. No matter the substance or the behavior, it is important to find healthier ways to cope with our pain and anxiety.

Click on the image to listen!

Tune in on the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 8:20 to hear us in real-time.



TOPIC:
USING
SUBSTANCES &
BEHAVIORS TO
COPE WITH
PAIN

WEDNESDAY
JAN 18
8:20 AM

NEW INTERVIEW

WITH ANDREW LYON, MPH, CPS
DIRECTOR OF PREVENTION SERVICES

FROM OPIOIDS TO MARIJUANA TO GAMBLING OR FOOD - THEY MAY START OFF HELPING, BUT OFTEN MAKE EVERYTHING WORSE. IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THIS WAY. TUNE IN TO LEARN HOW MCCALL CAN HELP!

MCCALLBHN.ORG



Program Spotlight: Supportive Employment Services



McCall's Supported Employment Services is designed for individuals diagnosed with severe and persistent mental health diagnoses. Our team works with clients to provide individualized personal supports for those looking to both obtain and maintain successful employment.

Some of the services offered (but not limited to) include: connections made with local employers, resume writing, assistance with filling out applications, mock interviewing, and continuing support once employment is obtained.

Our team works closely with the individual's clinical & case management teams to ensure that wrap around supports are provided and that the client is receiving a high quality of care.

For additional information and/or to receive a copy of the Referral/Notification of Interest Form, please contact Kelly Scherker,

Supported Employment Program Manager at 959.229.4564 or kelly.scherker@mccallbhn.org.



Family Recovery Coaching

with the CLEAR initiative.

Recovery for the entire family.

- ✓ Family Recovery Plans
- ✓ Addiction Education
- ✓ Individual Support & Guidance
- ✓ Practicing Skills
(self-care, boundaries, communication)

Contact **Julia Merchant, LMSW**, with any questions or referrals.

 959.229.4814  julia.merchant@mccallbhn.org



Teens, We Can Make Quitting Easier

Join us for a free, youth Tobacco Cessation Group



Every Tuesday Starting Feb. 7



3:30pm-4:30pm



Email Darian Graells to sign up!
darian.graells@mccallbhn.org



Our Contact Information

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