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Hi there,

May 7th is National Child & Youth Mental Health Day—a day when we focus on letting our kids know just how seen, heard, valued and LOVED they are. FamilySmart leads this day with the message of "I Care About You," and focuses on the importance of creating caring connections between young people and the caring adults in their lives. May 7th is a gentle reminder that even the smallest moments of connection—like a quick check-in, playing a video game, reading a book, sharing a surprise laugh, or simply listening—can make a world of difference in a child's life.

We truly value how much you do. FamilySmart wants to offer a little extra support, a new perspective maybe, or a new skill, to make those daily conversations with the young people you care about a little easier.

This May 7th, we will be hosting a heartfelt online conversation with Katie DeReus. Katie is a registered clinical counsellor and an elementary school counsellor who understands just how much these moments matter. She'll be talking about children under 12 who are going through deep emotional pain. Katie will share messages of hope, helping us understand why our little ones sometimes feel so much distress, and how meaningful connection can help them feel safe and supported.

If you are a parent, caregiver, or a caring adult for a child who is struggling right now, please know we see you, and we know it's hard. We would love for you to join us.

[Register For This Free Online Session Here](#)

### Family Peer Support

At FamilySmart, our Family Peer Support Workers are the heart of what we do. Family Peer Support Workers are parents who understand the intense emotional struggle of parenting a child with a mental health and/or substance use challenge because we have navigated this journey ourselves.

This month, we're delighted to introduce you to Shawna. Shawna is a Family Peer Support Worker in the community of New Westminster.



**What led you to become a Family Peer Support Worker?** My son brought me to this line of work. I was introduced to FamilySmart over 6 years ago now and it helped me feel less alone when we were just going through the diagnosis process. I finally felt like I wasn't the only one going through what we were, and felt supported.

**How would you describe the work that you do to someone that is new to FamilySmart?** I support families with children and youth that may have mental health or substance use challenges by being a listening ear, providing resources and support. I have my own lived experience, so I get it and know what it can feel like. You're not alone in this journey!

**What do you want families to know who are considering reaching out to FamilySmart but are unsure of what to expect?** We get it! We understand... Sometimes we don't feel comfortable opening up to our own family and friends around what's going on, or have little to no support system. It's nice to have someone to talk to with no judgement.

*"Strong-willed children become adults who change the world as long as we can hang on for the ride and resist the temptation to tame the spirit out of them."*

This quote has always stuck with me when my mother-in-law told it to me once after some difficult times. It helps me put things into perspective.

[Connect With a Family Peer Support Worker Here](#)



We're hiring. Have you parented a child or youth who has struggled with their mental health and/or substance use? We're looking for parents and caregivers like you to help support other families. At FamilySmart, your family's experience is enough. We offer an extensive training program and ongoing support as you work with families. Family Peer Support Workers support caregivers whose children are experiencing mental health and/or substance use challenges from a place of deep understanding and lived experience.

[Learn More Here](#)



Each month brings new opportunities to learn and connect with other families. We would so love for you to join us for one of our free events and be part of the conversations that remind us we're not alone in this journey. Take a look at what's coming up. We hope to see you there.

### Free Events for Parents and Caregivers | 2026

#### ONLINE

- **Emotion Regulation Part 2: Deepening Our Understanding**
- **When Our Children Hurt Inside: Nurturing Awareness and the Power of Relationships**
- **ADHD — The Real Deal**
- **A Conversation for Families About Digital Wellbeing and Mental Health**

#### IN-PERSON

- **Emotion Regulation**
- **Parenting When Anxiety Shows Up As Anger**
- **ADHD — The Real Deal**
- **Mental Health and Preparing for the Transition to Post-Secondary**

[Join Us Online or In-Person](#)

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