Youth Support Directory

Mental Health Advocates of Western New York

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What is Peer Support?

“Peer support showed me that I am strong, and that I can do this.”

Peer Support involves getting help from someone whose experiences are similar to yours. People with similar stories are able to listen, to offer hope, and to provide support for recovery in a way that is different from, yet just as valuable as, professional services.

Purpose

This booklet was created to give youth easy access to support programs, self-help groups, youth empowerment programs, and other community resources.

The utilization of peer support, community resources, and self-help groups is essential to the recovery process and to the growth of an individual.
Meet Our Youth Peer Advocates

Mercedes Busby (YPA Coordinator)
Supports youth at BestSelf, Buffalo Public Schools, and 20 Something Group

Julianna Hill (YPA Coordinator)
Supports youth at BryLin, Erie County Medical Center (ECMC), Western New York Children’s Psychiatric Center (WNYCPC), and Teen Peer Support Group

Kaylee Barker
Supports youth at Teen Peer Support Group and 20 Something Support Group

Katie Bernard
Supports youth at Buffalo Public Schools, Teen Peer Support Group and 20 Something Support Group

Anthony Donalson
Supports youth at BestSelf, Buffalo Public Schools, School presentations, and 20 Something Support Group

Alyssa Erazo
Supports youth at Buffalo Public Schools, Teen Peer Support Group and 20 Something Support Group
Meet Our Youth Peer Advocates

Douglas Hahn
Supports youth at BestSelf, School presentations, Teen Support Group, and phone support

Alexis Kennedy
Supports youth at BestSelf, BryLin, Buffalo Public Schools, Teen Peer Support Group, and Writing & Wellbeing

Bré’on Myree
Supports youth at Buffalo Public Schools, Teen Peer Support Group and 20 Something Support Group

Nafiza Niloy
Supports youth at OLV Human Services, Buffalo Public Schools, Erie County Medical Center (ECMC), and Teen Peer Support Group

Caleek Roman
Supports youth at BestSelf, Buffalo Public Schools, Teen Peer Support Group and 20 Something Support Group
Overview of Programs

Community Teen Programs

These are various teen programs in the community including recreational, mentoring, educational programs, and more.

Support Groups

Support Groups are peer-to-peer community meetings where youth can speak with other youth who are going through similar life experiences. This allows them to gain important skills, receive advice and support, and to support others in their recovery.

Youth Empowerment Programs

Youth empowerment programs help youth to develop various skills in areas such as leadership, assertiveness, advocacy, and mentoring. They are also able to work on making new friendships and building connections in their communities.
Community Programs

Spotlight On Youth (SOY) is an open mic series held from 5:30-7:30 PM on the third Wednesday of every other month at Shea’s Smith Theatre. It provides young people (ages 13-19) in the WNY area a safe and supportive space to share their artistic talents. All art forms welcome, as long as the content is respectful.

- **Location:** 658 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14202
- **For more information, please visit:** https://buffaloartstechcenter.org/event/spotlight-on-youth/

Compeer recruits, screens, and matches trained volunteers and mentors in one-to-one supportive friendship relationships with children in Erie County who are striving for good mental health. Compeer mentors bring sunshine and hope into the lives of children and youth, aged 3-17, who are in need of a positive adult role model and a trusted friend.

- **Location:** 24 Ludington Street, Buffalo, NY 14206
- **Contact:**
  - Phone: 716-883-3331
  - Email: staff@compeerbuffalo.org
- **For more information, please visit:** http://www.compeerbuffalo.org
Northwest Buffalo Community Center offers recreational and educational programs for children and teens, ages 6-19. Programs include summer day camp, tutoring, boxing, and more.

- **Location:** 155 Lawn Avenue, Buffalo, New York 14207
- **Contact** (Boxing): Don Patterson
  - Phone: 716-876-8108 ext. 16
- **For more information, please visit:**
  http://www.northwestbuffalo.org

The Seneca Street Teen Program is both an after school program and outreach mission. Teens receive homework assistance and dinner Monday-Thursday, and on Fridays they destress together as the only group in the building. During the summer, teens have the option to take part in the Mayor Summer Youth Program where they work at Summer @ Seneca Street, acting as Junior Camp Counselors for the younger kids. As part of this program, they also take part in a Job Readiness program.

- **Location:** 1218 Seneca Street, Buffalo, NY 14210
- **Contact:** Jamie Ryder
  - Phone: (716) 939-3501
  - Email: jryder@senecastreetcdc.org
- **For more information, please visit:**
  http://senecastreetcdc.org/
M&T First Fridays at The Gallery hosts free admission to parts of the Albright Knox Art Gallery and select events to everyone every first Friday of the month from 10:00 AM – 10:00 PM. Certain events are available for a fee and special exhibition admission is Pay What You Wish.

• **Location**: 1285 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14222

• **For more information, please visit**: https://www.albrightknox.org/events/mt-first-fridays-gallery

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**Support Groups**

People Against Trafficking Humans (P.A.T.H.) Enrichment Center provides drop-in support services to any woman or youth that is at risk or has been exploited through sex or labor trafficking including art therapy, counseling, grief support, etc. All services are free and no registration is required.

• **Contact**:
  o Phone: 716-601-5678

• **For more information, please visit**: https://pathofwny.org/enrichment-center/
Teen Peer Support Group provides youth with an opportunity to connect with peers to discuss and explore pathways to recovery. Open to youth ages 13-18. Not necessary to register beforehand.

- **City Location** (Mental Health Advocates of WNY):
  999 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209
  - Meets 1st and 3rd Friday of every month from 6:00-7:30 PM
- **Northtown Location** (WNYCPC Community Services):
  575 Alberta Drive, Suite 2, Amherst, NY 14226
  - Meets 2nd and 4th Thursday of every month from 6:30-8:00 PM
- **Contact**:
  - Phone: 716-886-1242 ext. 345
  - Email: peersupport@mhawny.org

Gay & Lesbian Youth Services (GLYS) offers a variety of opportunities and services for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth and their friends, ages 14-21.

- **Drop-In Center Hours**:
  - Open Monday, Wednesday, Thursday (*September-June*) from 2:30-7:30 PM
  - Open Tuesday and Thursday (*July-August*) from 12:00-5:00 PM
- **Location**: 393 Delaware Ave, Buffalo NY 14202
- **Contact**:
  - Phone: 716-855-0221
  - Email: info@glyswny.org
- For more information, please visit: http://www.glyswny.org/
Youth Empowerment Programs

Youth Empowerment & Leadership (YEL) provides team building and leadership training, with the goal of empowering youth to engage other youth ages 13-22 living in Erie County. All youth are members of the YEL Youth Advisory Board. YEL develops avenues for youth voice in the community at large. Currently, group meetings are held at two sites with future expansion planned so we can reach youth in all of Erie County.

- **Location:** Family Help Center, 60 Dingens St, Buffalo, NY 14206
- **Contact:**
  - Call: 716-822-0919
- **For more information, please visit:** http://familyhelpcenter.net/

YOUTH POWER! is the New York State network of young people who have been labeled and are seeking change. Through peer-to-peer mentoring, YP! empowers young people to be active citizens, aware of government operations, their rights and the ability to use their voices to influence policy, practice, regulation and law.

- **Contact:** Alex Carpenter, Western Regional Youth Partner
  - Phone: 585-314-2452
  - Email: ACarpenter@YOUTHPOWERNY.org
- **For more information, please visit:** http://www.youthpowerny.org/
Youth M.O.V.E. National is a youth and young-adult driven, chapter-based organization dedicated to improving services and systems that support positive growth and development. Their goal is to unite the voices of individuals who have lived experience in various systems including mental health, juvenile justice, education, and child welfare.

- **Contact:**
  - Phone: 1-800-580-6199
- For more information, please visit:
  http://www.youthmovenational.org/

BestSelf Behavioral Health (BBH) is an innovative organization formed through the merger of Child & Adolescent Treatment Services and Lake Shore Behavioral Health. BBH offers a wide range of services and programs including after-school programs, vocational programs, mobile services, and mental health counseling.

- **Contact:**
  - Phone: 716-884-0888
  - Email: info@bestselfwny.org
- For more information, please visit:
  http://bestselfwny.org/
Transition-Age Youth Resources
(For young adults 18-30 yrs.)

Employment and Education

ACCES-VR works with students, families and school districts to coordinate appropriate services for students with disabilities who are leaving secondary education and entering adult vocational rehabilitation and related services. These efforts are crucial to enable students to achieve maximum success in post-high school activities consisting of integrated employment (including supported employment), post-secondary education, independent living, and community participation. Students who are expected to exit school within two years should be referred to ACCES-VR when the school, student and/or parents jointly recognize that the student's disability will interfere with his/her ability to work in the community. Additionally, the vocational rehabilitation services needed cannot be among the continuum of mandated school district programs.

- **Location:** 508 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14202
- **Contact:** Sarah Wolf
  - Phone: 716-848-8054
  - Email: Sarah.Wolf@nysed.gov
- **For more information, please visit:**
  http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr
ACE Employment Services offers a range and continuum of vocational rehabilitation services that assist customers to choose, get, and maintain preferred competitive employment positions. The team is comprised of a Job Developer, Job Coaches, Life Coaches, Certified Benefits Advisors and Rehabilitation Practitioners.

- **Erie County Location:** 327 Elm Street, Buffalo, NY 14203  
  - Phone: 716-884-5216
- **Genesee County Location:** 220 East Main Street, Batavia, NY 14020  
  - Phone: 585-343-9162
- *For more information, please visit:*  

Pathways to Success offers four distinct college preparatory program pathways leading to college success. All programs are non-credit and tuition-free. The mission of Pathways to Success is to increase the successful movement of students from basic educational programs to college completion through partnerships between Erie Community College, Buffalo Public Schools Adult Education Division, Erie 1 BOCES, Kenmore-Tonawanda School District, Maryvale Community Education, and Erie 2-Chautauqua-Cattaraugus BOCES. The Pathways to Success program is for anyone at least 17 years of age who is not eligible to be enrolled in high school and wishes to enroll at Erie Community College.

- **Contact:**  
  - ECC City Campus: (716) 851-1109  
  - ECC North Campus: (716) 851-1423  
  - ECC South Campus: (716) 851-1691
- *For more information, please visit:*  
  https://www.ecc.edu/college-prep/
Support

**Twenty-Something Support Group** is open to youth ages 18-30. Provides peer support to young adults facing mental health and/or substance use struggles.

- **City Location** (Mental Health Advocates of WNY):
  999 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209
  - Meets 3rd Friday of every month from 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

- **Southtown Location** (Watermark Wesleyan Church): 4999 McKinley Parkway, Hamburg, NY 14075 (Enter Door #5)
  - Meets 2nd Friday of every month from 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

- **Contact:**
  - Phone: (716) 886-1242 ext. 345
  - Email: peersupport@mhawny.org

**Writing & Well-Being Workshop** is free and open to youth ages 18-30 who are interested in using writing in their mental health recovery.

- **Location:** Mental Health Advocates of WNY:
  999 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209
  - Meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month from 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

- **Contact:** Bridget McNally
  - Email: bmcnally@mhawny.org
Refreshing Waters Respite is available to adults ages 18+ in Erie County who are struggling with a mental health issue and want an alternative to hospitalization. *Refreshing Waters* is a short term (1-5 days), peer-run respite home that provides a peaceful and calming environment that promotes health and wellness.

- **Contact:**
  - Phone: (716) 248-2886
- **For more information please visit:**

Clubhouse Buffalo is a welcoming atmosphere focused on a peer-to-peer model for young adults (16 to 23) recovering from a substance use disorder or at risk for developing one. Their non-clinical approach encourages a supportive community and fosters leadership roles for individuals to build a meaningful life in recovery.

- **Hours:** Open Monday-Friday from 3:00-9:00 PM
- **Location:** 66 Englewood Ave, Buffalo, NY, 14214
- **Contact:** Marsha West
  - Phone: (716) 832-2141 ext. 217
- **For more information, please visit:**
  - [https://rsiwny.org/what-we-do/clubhousebuffalo.html](https://rsiwny.org/what-we-do/clubhousebuffalo.html)
**Smartphone Apps**

- Calm Harm
- Headspace: Guided Meditation
- I Am: Daily Positive Reminders
- Not Ok
- Operation Reach Out
- Rise Up + Recover
- Self-Help for Anxiety Management
- Smiling Mind
- Suicide Safety Plan
- The NOW
- Wunderlist
- WRAP – Wellness Recovery Action Plan
Social Media Resources

www.justtellone.org
www.rainymood.com
www.recoveryourlife.com
www.itgetsbetter.org
www.teencentral.net
www.usreachout.com/wecanhelpus
http://www.twloha.com
http://www.blahtherapy.com

24/7 Crisis Hotlines

Youth under 18: Spectrum C.A.R.E.S. (716)882-4357
Adults: Crisis Services (716)834-3131
Addictions Hotline: (716)831-7007
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
Crisis Text Line: Text “HOME” to 741-741 or use Facebook Messenger:
https://www.facebook.com/crisistextline
Who We Are

At Mental Health Advocates of Western New York, we take a holistic approach to supporting the mental health of individuals and families. Whether you need help getting through life’s challenges or finding treatment for a mental illness, you can count on us to listen, comfort, and guide you to the right program or healthcare resource.

Contact Us

999 Delaware Ave. Buffalo NY, 14209
(716) 886-1242
(Youth Peer Program: ext. 345)
(Child & Family Support Program: ext. 313)
Email: peersupport@mhawny.org
http://www.mhawny.org

Meet with a Youth Peer Advocate!

Youth Peer Advocates work part-time and typically give youth support in a group setting, but if you or someone you know is interested in meeting one-on-one with a Youth Peer Advocate, feel free to request a meeting before your next group or send an email to peersupport@mhawny.org