

## Talbot DSS Hosts Conversation about Adverse Childhood Experiences and Building Resiliency

On September 13 from 6 to 8 p.m., Talbot County Department of Social Services sponsored an event, “Creating a Conversation about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Building Resiliency,” featuring speaker, Tonier “Neen” Cain-Muldrow, a trauma survivor and internationally-recognized Trauma Informed Care Expert. The event, held in collaboration with the Talbot County Health Department, Talbot County Public Schools, and Talbot Goes Purple, educated the public about the impact of trauma on the brain and building resilience.

The evening began with the audience viewing the award-winning documentary, “Healing Neen,” which describes the devastating impact of childhood abuse Ms. Cain-Muldrow experienced as well as her emergence from drug addiction, incarceration and homelessness.

After viewing the documentary Ms. Cain-Muldrow spoke about her work, which has focused on heightening awareness of the characteristics and effects of trauma and improving the performance of service providers, businesses, government agencies, and others who interact with trauma victims and survivors.

The evening concluded with Naketta Lowery, an ACEs Master Trainer from the Family

Tree, who provided an overview of the brain science of trauma and how through safe, stable and nurturing families, relationships and environments ACEs can be mitigated so that children can grow into healthy, resilient, and productive adults of our community.

One community program that helps to support families and children, by helping to mitigate the impact of ACEs, is Healthy Families Mid-Shore.

This program is a nationally accredited, evidence-based, intensive home visiting program providing family support and child development information to first time parents with children prenatal through age five in Kent, Queen Anne’s, Talbot, and Caroline Counties. Healthy Families works with families with very young children to build parenting efficacy, reduce

parental stress, and build a strong bond between parent and child.

We hope this event, will be the first in a series of community education events that will continue the conversation about how untreated trauma affects individuals and society at-large, including mental health problems, addiction, homelessness and incarceration; thus building a healing community in Talbot County.

If you would like to join our mailing list to find out more about upcoming ACE’s events, please contact Cheryl Younker at 410-770-5369.



Pictured left to right are Dr. Kelly Griffith, Superintendent, Talbot County Public Schools; Naketta Lowery, Training & Technical Assistance Coordinator, The Family Tree; Tonier Cain-Muldrow, Advocate, Author and Speaker on trauma, incarceration and recovery; Linda Webb, Director, Talbot County Department of Social Services; and Dr. Fredia Wadley, Health Officer, Talbot County Health Department.

# Highlights

# START



Upcoming Events

**November**

 **1st Annual "Thanks For Giving" Appreciation Event for Resource Parents**  
**11/3/18 12-3pm**  
**St. Mark's UM Church, Easton**

**December**

 **Foster Care Holiday Party**  
**12/1/18 12-3pm**  
**Easton Fire House**

**January**

 **Nurturing Program**  
Parent Education Program  
1/9/19– 3/27/19 5:30pm  
215 Bay St. Suite 1, Easton  
For more information contact  
Lindsay Newcomb, 410-770-5750

 **Empower Me Trainer Refresher**  
1/28/19 9-11am Breakfast Provided  
Talbot County DSS  
For More information contact  
Paris Quillet 410-770-5870

**February**

 **Empower Me Community Presentation**  
2/28/19 6-8pm Light Dinner Provided  
Talbot County Public Library  
Children and Adult Presentations available  
For More information contact  
Paris Quillet 410-770-5870

 **The New Generation PRIDE Training**  
Resource Parent Training Session  
11/3/18– 11/17/18  
Kent County DSS  
For more information contact  
410-810-7659

A quick update regarding our plan to implement a new practice model that may be used when working with families who have a parent whose substance use is determined to be a risk factor for the child's safety. This model is called Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams (START). START is a Child Protective Services Program for families with parental substance abuse and child abuse / neglect that helps parents achieve sobriety and keeps children with their parents when it is possible and safe. START is an integrated intervention that pairs a social worker with a family mentor to work collaboratively with the family providing peer support, intensive treatment and child welfare services. The program's goal is to keep children safe and with their families when appropriate. START is recognized on the California Evidence Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare. START is comprised of 7 strategies which include:

-  Collaboration between child welfare, substance abuse treatment and the courts.
-  Early identification of families needing substance use disorder treatment.
-  Timely access to assessment and treatment services.
-  Increased management of recovery services.
-  Family Centered Treatment.
-  Intensive oversight and intervention.
-  Cross System Responsiveness.

We have had an initial kick-off meeting to learn more about the practice model and have begun to thin about how best to implement START within Talbot County. One of first steps in implementing START is to partner with the Health Department to hire a full time family peer mentor, who will provide peer support to the family as they help them navigate the road to recovery. We are also beginning to think about how we could develop a governance structure and steering committee that would help to ensure cross-systems buy-in, guide the implementation process, address critical functions (i.e. quality and effective service delivery, barrier-busting, garner resources) to ensure our successful implementation. For additional information regarding START, please contact Shari Blades, Assistant Director, at 410-770-4848.



MDThink has gone live with the Long Term Care (LTC) portion of the Eligibility and Enrollment (E&E) part of the program. TCDSS is currently only working LTC cases in the new system. The program allows workers and clerical staff to scan directly into cases and it automatically sends letters and notices. Nursing homes are able to enter the applications for their residents directly into the system without completing paper applications. E&E comes equipped with many bells and whistles. Caseworkers can now search SDAT, marriage certificates, and many other websites directly from a drop down menu. Once all necessary information and verifications are gathered and entered, the system automatically determines eligibility. The best part of the switch over to MDThink was the level of support received. TCDSS workers were provided with three and a half days of onsite assistance. The changeover from CARES went far better than anyone could have imagined.

## Secondary Traumatic Stress

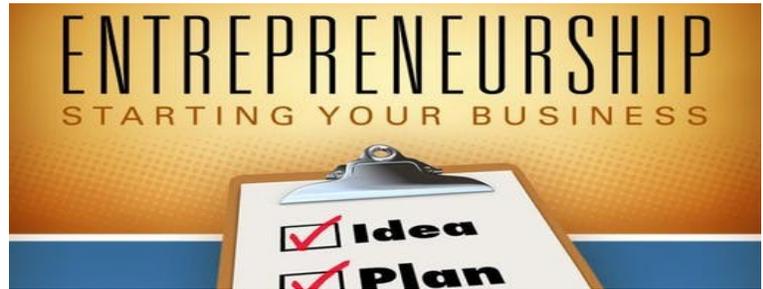
Compassion fatigue, or secondary traumatic stress disorder, is an occupational hazard when working with traumatized clients. It is a set of observable reactions to working with people who have been traumatized and mirrors the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Osofsky, Putnam & Lederman, 2008; Figley, 1995). Many types of professionals, such as physicians, psychotherapists, human service workers and emergency workers, are vulnerable to developing this type of stress. Being exposed to traumatic and troubling events, sometimes on a daily basis, influences one's personal and professional lives. Staff acquire different ways to cope – some are adaptive, others are not. STS can decrease staff functioning and create challenges in the working environment. Addressing compassion fatigue needs to occur at both the individual and organizational levels.

Talbot County Department of Social Services will be taking part in a secondary traumatic stress initiative entitled Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC). This initiative will be led by the Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS), Social Services Administration (SSA), and The University of Maryland School of Social Work the Institute for Innovation & Implementation (The Institute). The Breakthrough Series Collaborative has been used in health care, business and human services settings with much success. BSC is a unique quality improvement collaboration that will enable the agency to make changes in our practices, policies, and environments in order to respond to staff trauma and to promote staff wellness. The goals of the collaborative include:

- Increase the competency of staff to respond to secondary traumatic stress and vicarious trauma
- Increase the capacity of the agency to plan and implement improvements that promote staff wellness and resiliency
- Reduce the risk of exposure to situation and events that result in secondary traumatic stress and vicarious trauma.
- IT is grounded in a change framework that is used to target assessment and change strategies over time.

Our Adult Services team will take the lead in this Secondary Traumatic Stress initiative. This Secondary Traumatic Stress initiative aligns nicely with Adult Services' Purposeful Progress & Integration (PPI) practice model regarding building resilience to trauma and building a recovery environment.

Our goal is to start "small", with implementing small tests of change within the Adult Services unit and then to spread our successes across the agency.



The Mid-Shore region launched the Public Assistance to Entrepreneurship (PA2E) program in the Fall of 2017. The program aims to help individuals currently receiving Food Supplement Program assistance (also known as SNAP benefits or food stamps) build the skills and resources needed to launch their plans to become entrepreneurs. The program has just launched its third cohort of participants. Talbot County has had three participants and two program graduates to date. Currently another Talbot resident has begun the Fall 2018 cohort hoping to launch a business based in graphic design, making the fourth Talbot resident to participate in the program.



**State officials recognize three Eastern Shore entrepreneurs for their completion of the Public Assistance to Entrepreneurship program. From left are Steven H. Benden of the Maryland Department of Human Services, Ira Nichols, Talisha Dodd, Clark Kennard and Joanne King of the Dorchester County Department of Social Services.**

Talisha Dodd, X-Perts Cleaning Service, was a graduate of the first cohort and began her business in June 2018. In a recent interview, Talisha shares that she has five residential clients and is actively seeking additional clients. She stated that her biggest hurdles have been managing her time with maintaining fulltime employment and prioritizing growing her company. Talisha also shares that she really needs help with advertising. Her ultimate goal will be to establish ongoing contracts and to enter the commercial cleaning world.

For now, she finds great joy in cleaning with the elderly. When asked about her experience in the program, Talisha shared, "The program really motivated me to do what I've always wanted to do. I've always loved to clean; it truly makes me feel like I have accomplished something - made something better!"

**If you are interested in supporting X-Perts Cleaning Service, please contact Talisha Dodd at 410-463-4836.**

# From the Director's Desk.....



The Social Services business is one of response.....to reported concerns, to stakeholder input and to community needs. What if we could take ten steps back? What if we could help children, families and vulnerable adults improve overall health and well-being outcomes by preventing the development of problems in the first place and eliminating, or vastly reducing the need for our services altogether? Our current strategic plan includes a focus on prevention with the goal of doing exactly that – building resilience (our ability to “bounce back” from adverse experiences) on the individual, family and community levels.

We are committed to implementing preventive strategies wherever possible and to building capacity in existing effective prevention programs in Talbot County. For example, we are expanding our Nurturing Parenting Program (NPP) through specialized facilitator training to deliver this preventive educational program to specific groups identified as in need in Talbot County. These include parents of adolescents, parents in recovery and non-English speaking parents. NPP has demonstrated results in preventing the occurrence or recurrence of child abuse and neglect by helping parents build positive and effective parenting skills and reduce the use of corporal punishment. The multi-week curriculum includes a family meal and child care to make participation as easy as possible. TCDSS is supporting The Primary Project in Talbot County Public Schools as another prevention strategy. The Primary Project, provided by Channel Marker, increases the chances for success of young elementary school-aged children identified as having early school adjustment difficulties. Weekly play sessions help students adjust to school; gain confidence and social skills; and focus on learning, thereby preventing bigger adjustment problems. Another example of our prevention focus is the partnership between TCDSS and the Queen Anne’s County and Talbot County Health Departments to build Healthy Families capacity in Talbot County. Healthy Families provides intensive family support services and child development information to parents with children, prenatal through age five, who are at risk for child abuse and neglect. Through funding provided by the MD Department of Human Services, an additional home visitor will be added in Talbot County so more families and children can be served. All of these programs take a prevention approach to service delivery with the goal of building resilience and improving well-being outcomes.

And, there’s more.....much more! In partnership with the Talbot County Health Department and Talbot County Public Schools, Talbot County Department of Social Services hosted the first in a series of community education forums on improving health and well-being outcomes and building resilience. On September 13, Tonier Cain Muldrow talked with an audience of several hundred about Adverse Childhood Experiences. You’ll read more about that evening in this edition of Highlights. We plan to host additional forums in the future, educating the community about the importance of prevention and moving toward building that prevention focus county-wide.

Each of these activities involves partnerships, which are critical to achieving the prevention focus I’ve described. It is only through strong, effective relationships that such work can be successful. And, coincidentally, the quality of relationships influences resilience – high quality relationships promote resilience. This is true for the individual as well as for the community. We are fortunate to have these strong relationships in Talbot County, and these relationships will help us move the work of prevention into the future.



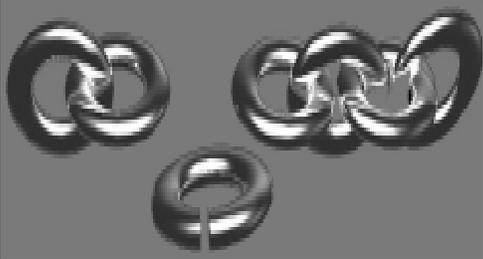
## TCDSS Staff brings Idea for MVA and Child Support Enforcement Partnership

TCDSS is also on the lookout for new and innovative ways to better meet the needs of the agency’s customers. Non-Custodial Parent Employment Program Coordinator, Emily Joiner did just that as she was visiting the local MVA with a customer and noticed ads running on the monitor. She returned to the agency with an idea for Child Support Awareness month that would allow court ordered parents an opportunity to resolve their Driver’s License issues suspended for delinquent child support payments. This idea was forwarded to Child Support Administration.

As a result, during the month of August Child Support Administration formed a partnership with Motor Vehicle Administration to run an ad in MVA locations statewide inviting delinquent payers to contact Department of Human Services or visit their local office to resolve their suspended Driver’s License. The Child Support Affiliate worked together with Jarnice Johnson, Deputy Executive Director of Programs to develop the payment requirement to insure consistency statewide.

This initiative resulted in collections statewide of \$420,310.50 and reinstated 1,019 Driver’s Licenses. Talbot County collected \$6922.50 of this total and reinstated 20 Driver’s Licenses.

Based on the success, CSA is looking for the next great idea!



## the missing link

Dear Missing Link,

I am worried about a child, but I don't know if the situation is serious enough to be considered abuse or neglect. How do I know if I should make a report?

Sincerely,  
Concerned Citizen

Dear Concerned Citizen,

Anyone who has concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child should make a report to the Department of Social Services. It is then the responsibility of the Department to determine whether the reported information is sufficient to become involved. This alleviates the burden of determining what is abuse or neglect from the referral source. Additionally, there are a variety of services, aside from a traditional CPS investigation, that could be available to the family depending on their situation and the reporter's concerns.

If you have information to report please call 410-770-4848 and request to make a report. If it is after business hours and a report needs to be made please contact the Maryland State Police, Easton Barracks at 410-822-3101

Sincerely,  
Missing Link

Dear Missing Link,

I don't have a computer and most employers use online applications. What do I do? Do you have resources to help?

Sincerely,  
Job Seeker

Dear Job Seeker,

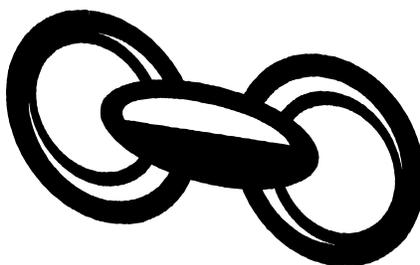
TCDSS's Resource Room is available Mon. - Fri. from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. You may come in during those hours and use the computers in the TCDSS Resource Room.

The American Job Center also has computers that can be used for job applications Mon. - Fri. between the hours of 8:00 am - 4:30 pm. They are located at 301 Bay St. Suite 301, Easton, MD.

The Talbot County Library is also available Mon. & Thurs. 9:00 am - 8:00 pm, Tues. & Wed. 9:00 am - 6:00 pm, and Fri. & Sat. from 9:00 am - 5:00 pm.

It is free of charge to use the computers at these facilities. At the library you need to have a library card to use the computers.

Sincerely,  
Missing Link



## Highlights from Talbot DSS Talbot County Department of Social Services

Linda Webb, Director  
Paris Quillet, Editor  
Amy Steward, Contributor

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