

**Granite Academy Presents**  
**Parent/Guardian Workshop Series**  
**2023 - 2024**

**Week of October 9, 2023 4:30 - 5:30 DMH - Everything you need to know about what they can do for you and your child**

The Department of Mental Health is a state run agency. DMH's mission is "to support adults with persistent mental illness and children with serious mental illness or severe emotional disturbance and their families, provide early and ongoing treatment, and participate in research into the causes of mental illness". This workshop is designed to help parents/guardians and other caregivers learn more about what DMH has to offer, have a strong understanding of who may be eligible, know how to apply and understand the options as to what happens when your child turns 18 and may need to transfer to adult services. Plenty of time will be included for Q&A.

Tyra Jackson HSC A/B has been a DMH worker for many years. She works with children and teens and specializes in working with transition age youth and their families.

**Tuesday November 14, 2023 4:30 - 5:30 MRC - Everything you need to know about what they can do for you and your child**

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) is a state run agency. MRC's mission is "to promote equality, empowerment and independence of individuals with disabilities. These goals are achieved through enhancing and encouraging personal choice and the right to succeed or fail in the pursuit of independence and employment in the community." This workshop is designed to help parents/guardians and other caregivers learn more about what MRC has to offer, have a strong understanding of who may be eligible, know how to apply and understand the options of what is available for your child while still enrolled in school vs the options available once he/she/they have finished high school. Plenty of time will be included for Q&A.

Elaina Cardullo has been an MRC caseworker for more than 10 years. She works with individuals with many areas of need including Autism, mental health challenges and physical challenges. Elaina focuses on helping the client find meaningful work that best meets their interests and their abilities.

**Tuesday January 23, 2024 4:30 - 5:30 How to Help Your Anxious Teen**

Does your child have a hard time coping with anxiety in an expected and effective way? Do they respond to anxiety with anger? Withdrawal? Sadness?

Everyone gets anxious. Your teen will continue to confront situations that make them anxious. *No one can offer your adolescent an anxiety free life.* That cannot be the goal. This workshop will help parents understand the ways most of us cope with anxiety. It will also explain the ways in which your teen copes with anxiety that are not effective. Finally it will help parents to gain insight into how to teach your teen more effective ways of coping with anxiety.

Lynne Mitchell is a licensed independent social worker (LICSW) with more than 35 years of experience working with students and their families. Following 10 years as a clinician working on the adolescent inpatient unit at Bradley

hospital she worked as a consultant to schools throughout eastern Massachusetts specializing in supporting individuals on the autism spectrum. Lynne has been actively involved in AANE (Asperger/Autism Network) since the late 1990s as an adjunct trainer, consultant and member of the board of directors. It was in her role as consultant that she began her career at Granite Academy in 2009 and moved on to the role of clinical director in 2016. She brings this extensive history of working with adolescents, particularly in the school setting, to her work at Granite Academy and to this workshop.

**Week of February 12, 2024 4:30 - 5:30 How to Get the Most From Individual Therapy for Your Adolescent**

Many parents get a recommendation that their adolescent participate in individual therapy. This workshop will help parents figure out how to select a therapist who will best meet your child's needs. Among the questions answered during this presentation are: What kinds of therapy are there? How do I find a therapist who will meet my teen's needs? What questions should I ask the therapist when initially selecting the right person and also during the time my child is working with them? How can I support the work the therapist is doing with my teen? How do I know if the therapy is helping my teen? Michelle will save plenty of time for questions and answers during this presentation.

Michelle Hoffman is a Licensed Family Therapist (LMFT) who has been at Granite Academy for 4 years. Prior to that, she worked as an In Home Therapist, where she specialized in children who were at high risk for suicide, those coming home from residential placements, and families with multiple children with mental illness. Michelle's background includes extensive training in suicidality as well as adoption trauma. Michelle utilizes many modalities including sensorimotor tools, DBT, and experiential therapy to support safety and emotional regulation.

**Week of March 4, 2024 4:30 - 5:30 How to Support My Adolescent's Identity: Parenting the Teen whose Identity Includes Being LGBTQ+**

All teenagers everywhere are faced with the job of figuring out who they are. There are many facets to all people. This presentation will explore ways that parents can support their child when identifying as LGBTQ+ is one part of who they are. Adolescents are also figuring out what it means to be a child, a sibling, a friend, a student, an athlete, a musician, a romantic partner etc. How can a parent best support this aspect of who their child is as well as all of the other parts that make them the individual they are?

Vicki Klupchak is a licensed independent clinical social worker (LICSW) who has worked for Justice Resource Institute since 2014 and has been working at Granite Academy since 2017. Vicki specializes in working with LGBTQ+ individuals and created Granite Academy's LGBTQ+ and Ally student group, Sexuality and Gender Alliance (SAGA) in 2018. Since the creation of this clinical group, approximately half of the student body at Granite Academy have requested to join the student group and participate in SAGA weekly, learning about LGBTQ+ communities, having a safe space to talk about their experiences, navigating ways in which to be an ally to the community, and celebrating LGBTQ+ identities.

**Tuesday April 9, 2024 4:30 - 5:30 Communication and the Autism Spectrum**

Does it ever feel like you are speaking a different language than your teen on the autism spectrum? Are you frustrated that such an intelligent person seems to struggle when communicating with others?

This presentation will offer an understanding of how many people on the autism spectrum take in information, why they need things to be so predictable and stable, why they are so anxious so

often and why they struggle to understand someone else's point of view. Ideas will be shared with parents/guardians and other caregivers about how to best communicate with your teen so that they understand you and also how to support your teen in being able to independently communicate with others. The information in this presentation is also applicable to individuals who do not have an ASD diagnosis but have a similar profile. There will be ample opportunities for questions during this presentation.

Lynne Mitchell is a licensed independent social worker (LICSW) with more than 35 years of experience working with students and their families. Following 10 years as a clinician working on the adolescent inpatient unit at Bradley hospital she worked as a consultant to schools throughout eastern Massachusetts specializing in supporting individuals on the autism spectrum. Lynne has been actively involved in AANE (Asperger/Autism Network) since the late 1990s as an adjunct trainer, consultant and member of the board of directors. It was in her role as consultant that she began her career at Granite Academy in 2009 and moved on to the role of clinical director in 2016. She brings this extensive history of working with adolescents, particularly in the school setting, to her work at Granite Academy and to this workshop.

Week of May 6, 2024 TBD

All dates and times are subject to change.