

## Note From the CEO

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As many of you are aware, TN Voices merged with Nurture the Next in January, and I am excited to share that we are already experiencing the positive impact of this partnership. With our expanded reach, we are better positioned than ever to serve children and families across Tennessee. The synergy between our teams is enhancing the depth and breadth of the services we provide and reinforced our shared vision of creating lasting, positive change, and we are energized by the possibilities that lie ahead.

In addition to this exciting merger, I am honored to announce that TN Voices has been recognized as a Top Workplace in the USA by USA TODAY. This prestigious award celebrates organizations that prioritize a people-centered culture and foster an environment where employees feel valued and heard. The recognition is based entirely on feedback from our dedicated team members, and I couldn't be prouder of the work they do each and every day. This award is a direct reflection of the passion, commitment, and spirit of collaboration that define our organization.

As we move forward, we are more committed than ever to fostering a culture where every voice is heard, every team member is supported, and our mission continues to thrive. Thank you for your ongoing partnership and support in making TN Voices a Top Workplace. Together, we will continue to make a profound impact on the lives of those who need us most.

With gratitude,  
Rikki Harris



## Evidence-Based Home Visiting (EBHV)



Nurture the Next has a long history of providing Evidence-Based Home Visiting (EBHV) services, and through our merger with TN Voices, these proven programs are now available directly to the families you serve. Our integration promotes a more seamless connection to support, helping families with young children access parenting guidance and community resources earlier - when they need it the most.

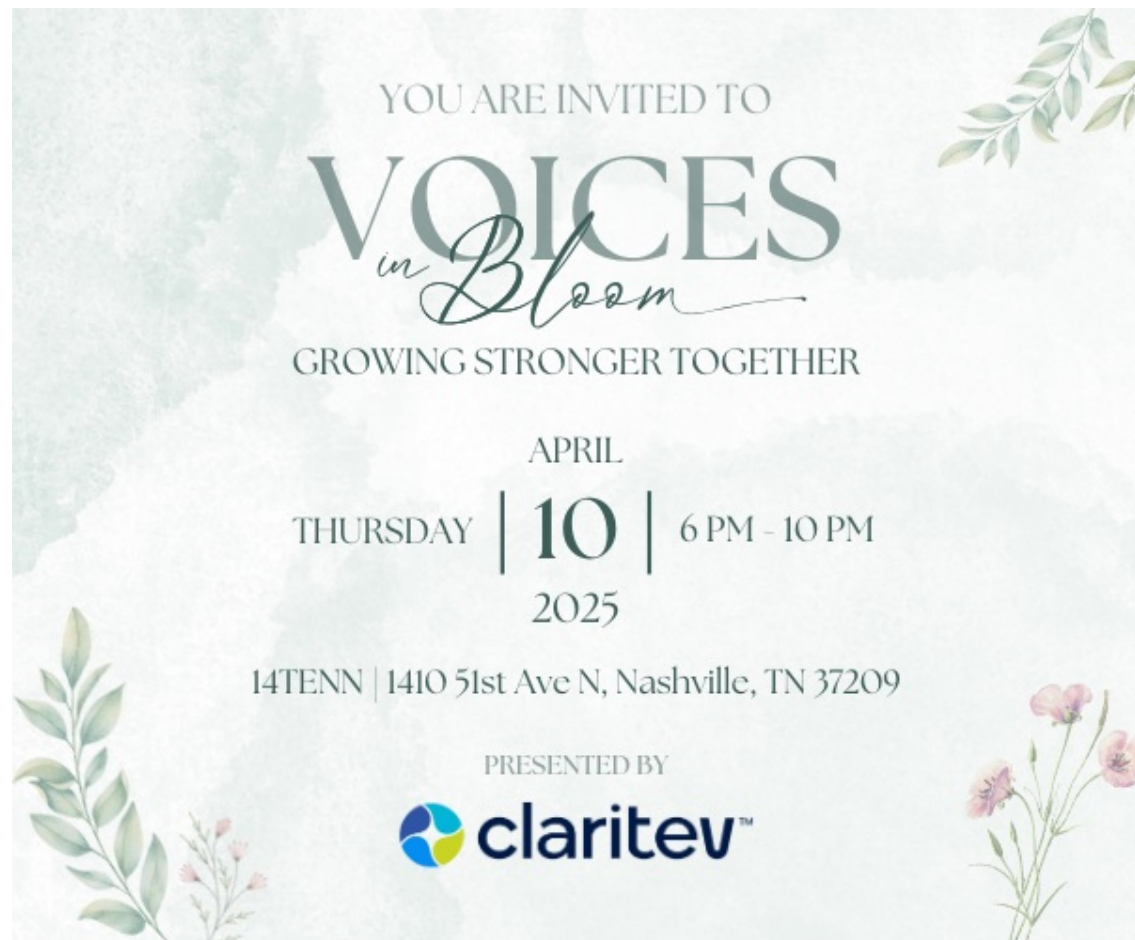
Through **Healthy Families Tennessee** or **Parents as Teachers**, both nationally recognized EBHV models, our teams of Family Support Specialists (FSSs) and Parent Educators (PEs), respectively, offer families personalized home visits that focus on:

- **Strengthening parent-child relationships - Promoting secure attachment and responsive caregiving**
- **Supporting child development - Encouraging cognitive, social-emotional, and physical growth**
- **Improving maternal and child health - Providing education on prenatal care, safe sleep, nutrition, and overall well-being**
- **Enhancing school readiness - Helping children develop early literacy, language, and social skills**
- **Promoting positive parenting practices - Offering guidance on discipline, routines, and child safety**
- **Reducing risks of child abuse and neglect - Connecting families with resources and support systems**
- **Increasing family stability - Assisting with housing, employment, and access to community services**
- **Encouraging early intervention - Identifying and addressing developmental delays and behavioral concerns**
- **Empowering families with knowledge and resources - Providing information on child development and access to needed services**

EBHV programs are designed as **long-term interventions**, providing ongoing support to families **from pregnancy through early childhood**. Unlike short-term assistance programs, EBHV focuses on building lasting relationships with families, offering consistent guidance, education, and resources over several years. This extended engagement allows home visitors to support parents through key developmental milestones, reinforce positive parenting practices, and help families navigate challenges as they arise. By working with families over time, our **EBHV programs foster stability, promote healthy child development, and create a strong foundation for lifelong success.**

We proudly offer EBHV services in **23 counties across Tennessee**: Anderson, Bledsoe, Bradley, Claiborne, Coffee, Davidson, Fentress, Grundy, Hamilton, Marion, McMinn, Meigs, Monroe, Polk, Roane, Rhea, Rutherford, Scott, Sequatchie, Sumner, Union, Williamson, and Wilson.

For more information about these programs or to make a referral, contact Tara Gordon at [tara.gordon@tnvoices.org](mailto:tara.gordon@tnvoices.org) or [make a referral here](#).



**RSVP Now!**

Take a look at last year's event!



## Regional Site Visits







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## Day on the Hill Highlights





On Tuesday, February 11, approximately 20 advocates gathered at our state Capitol building for our 2nd Annual Day on the Hill. This was our first Day on the Hill as a merged organization, and it was a resounding success! Our team held 17 meetings with state legislators, where we shared details about our merger and highlighted the scope of our work across Tennessee. We hope that by sharing the lived experiences of our team and those we serve, we can inspire a focus on a healthy future for children, families and adults in Tennessee.

Rikki Harris and Kristen Davis led an insightful lunch conversation for our partners, with special remarks about our state's mental health and substance abuse services by Commissioner Marie Williams. Governor Bill Lee also took a moment to meet with our team and take a photo. A sincere thank you to everyone who took the time to attend Day on the Hill and to those who participated in Digital Advocacy Day. This important work wouldn't be possible without such a dedicated team!

## Ushering in Spring with an Improved Mindset

Written by: Brianna Grant, LCSW, RPT-S™

Clinical Director, TN Voices

The term "Spring Cleaning" has a symbolic meaning often in reference to a time of year to reset by "clearing out the cobwebs" or cleaning, often referring to our homes. It can mean a fresh start or making way for the new. What if we also look at "spring cleaning" as a time to clear out the cobwebs of the mind and reset our thinking for a fresh start mentally and emotionally?

One way of resetting and "spring cleaning" mentally and emotionally can be through improving our mindset. Mindset is a lens through which we see the world and it greatly influences our thoughts, feelings and behaviors, ultimately shaping our life outcomes. A positive mindset can foster resilience and provide the will to overcome challenges, while a negative one can hinder our growth and lead to self-doubt.

Over 30 years ago, Carol Dweck, a professor of psychology at Stanford University, began to study students' attitudes about failure. This research along with advances in neuroscience have demonstrated that our brains are more malleable than we previously believed. The way that we see the world, others and ourselves is not fixed, and we can change our way of thinking. Our beliefs and thoughts significantly impact our approach to challenges, our mental health and our overall well-being. Changing our thoughts, our mindset, can change how we feel and ultimately change our behaviors.

Our mindset and the ability to feel content in our decisions and our life as well as overcoming fears and doubts that hinder our growth may be the key to happiness!

Whether we are stuck in a rut or a natural pessimist, here are 5 simple tips to help us improve our mindset and as a result, change our life our the better.

### 5 Ways to Improve Your Mindset

#### 1. Set Your Priorities

Every Sunday, take a few minutes to write down your priorities for the week ahead. Having a clear list of tasks to achieve will set intentions and you will feel a sense of accomplishment when each task is completed.

#### 2. Make a Gratitude List

Write down 3 things you are grateful for each day. This can be gratitude for simple things such as the nice weather, a delicious meal or the comfy shoes you have on. Or you can list greater gratitude's such as your health, your family or your pet. Intentionally writing down things you are grateful for will help you to notice even more of them which can

change your mindset and improve how you are feeling.

### 3. Challenge Negative Thoughts

Often negative thoughts can be old patterns of thinking. We can get stuck in these patterns! Notice your negative thoughts as they come up and take a moment to assess their truth. Ask yourself, “Why do I believe this in the first place?” or “Is this thought a negative belief or is it a fact that is true?” Being optimistic all the time is impossible; however challenging negative thoughts and working towards a positive mindset will help you tackle them along the way.

### 4. Create a “Feel Good” Box

Create a box or container where you place birthday cards, letters from friends or family, pictures of peaceful places or loved ones, that picture a child drew for you, or affirmation statements. We all have rough days or more challenging seasons in life. This “Feel Good” box will be a resource to reach for and we can re-read those birthday wishes, remember a trip with loved ones, smile at the drawing someone gave you or read a positive affirmation. These will serve as a reminder that not all days are bad and there is always tomorrow!

### 5. Move Your Body or Spend Time Outside

Getting fresh air or intentionally moving our body can work wonders on how we feel. Our minds and bodies need fresh air. Being outside, even for a short walk or sitting on the porch, allows us to get Vitamin D via sunlight. Vitamin D provides many benefits to the body, including supporting brain function and mental health.

Changing our mindset takes intentional effort, but the payoff of thinking and feeling more positive is well worth it! How will you usher in spring this year?

#### References & Resources:

- Dweck, C. S. (n.d.). *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. Ballantine Books, 2008
  - [Exploring a Growth Mindset](#), Stanford Graduate School of Business [video; 6:21 min]
  - Stories: VA Washington DC Health Care. (2023, January 31). *Combating Seasonal Affective Disorder*. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. <https://www.va.gov/washington-dc-health-care/stories>
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Have you thought of a career in Mental Health?  
Check out our open positions at [TN Voices](#).

## Foundation Support



The strategic union of TN Voices and Nurture the Next has garnered substantial support from several highly esteemed foundations. These gifts show the need for our collaborative effort to improve and expand mental health and family services in our state.

Thank you to the Frist Foundation, Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, The Healing Trust, Joe C. Davis Foundation, HCA Foundation, and the Memorial Foundation. Together, these foundations are not only supporting us joining together as one organization but are also laying the groundwork for a stronger, more resilient support system for the community. Their combined efforts are a testament to the power of collaboration in driving positive change.

# Program Highlight: Behavioral Health Safety Net Program

## Ensuring Access to Behavioral Health Care for Uninsured/Underinsured Tennesseans

Did you know that TN Voices provides same-week access to psychotherapy, psychiatric evaluations, medication management, and family support at no cost for UNINSURED or UNDERINSURED Tennesseans facing behavioral health challenges?

The Behavioral Health Safety Net Program of TN Voices addresses the urgent and growing need for accessible and affordable mental health services for both children and adults who otherwise would not have access to high quality services. This program eliminates barriers to treatment for those who often need it most.

### Why the Program is Important?

Access to mental health services is a growing concern, especially for children and adults who are uninsured or underinsured. In Tennessee, recent data indicates more than 38% of adults reported symptoms of anxiety or depression (Belmont.edu), yet many of these individuals struggle to get the care they need due to financial limitations. According to the University of Memphis, approximately 20% of children in Tennessee have a mental health disorder. Children are especially vulnerable to the long-term effects of untreated behavioral health issues, which can impact their academic performance, social development, and overall well-being. By providing fast, no-cost access to care, the Behavioral Health Safety Net Program of TN Voices ensures that these individuals are not left behind. The program helps prevent the escalation of behavioral health issues, offering timely intervention that can improve long-term outcomes for children and adults alike. For families facing financial stress, the program is a lifeline, offering peace of mind knowing that their loved ones can receive the care they deserve.

### Benefits of the Behavioral Health Safety Net Program:

#### 1. Reducing Health Disparities

Uninsured and underinsured individuals often face disparities in health care access. The Behavioral Health Safety Net helps level the playing field, ensuring that everyone—regardless of their insurance status—can receive high quality behavioral health care. Services are offered face-to-face at one of our clinics, or virtually to eliminate transportation barriers. This is particularly important for rural and underserved communities, where mental health services may be

located too far away to access.

## **2. Improved Mental Health Outcomes**

By providing fast, no-cost access to care, the program helps individuals manage and recover from mental health conditions before they worsen. Early intervention has been proven to significantly improve mental health outcomes, leading to fewer emergency interventions, hospitalizations, and long-term health complications.

## **5. Reducing the Burden on Emergency Care**

When individuals are unable to access mental health services, they often turn to emergency rooms, urgent care, or crisis services, which are not designed to provide longer-term care. By improving access to behavioral health services, the program can reduce the strain on emergency care facilities, allowing them to focus on acute medical needs.

## **6. Reducing Stigma Around Mental Health Care**

The Behavioral Health Safety Net Program can reduce the stigma surrounding mental health by making care more accessible and normalizing conversations around mental health challenges. By ensuring that no one who is eligible is turned away because of their insurance status, the program reinforces the idea that everyone deserves mental health care.

The Behavioral Health Safety Net Program of TN Voices is a vital initiative in a state where mental health care is in high demand but can seem out of reach for many. Tennessee Voices is proud to be part of this important initiative, making a lasting difference in the lives of those who need it most.

### **Call to ACTION**

Please share this information with your family, friends, and colleagues so that everyone is aware that help is available. This program should not be a 'hidden gem'—it should be shouted from the rooftops so that everyone in our state knows assistance is accessible.

There is HELP, there is HOPE at TN Voices!

For additional information, questions or referrals, please call (615) 269-7751 ext 0.

[Visit our Website](#)

\*Funding for the Behavioral Health Safety Net is provided through the TN Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

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## **8 Ways to Manage Anxiety and Stress**

At some point, anxiety and stress affect everyone. They can present differently in different people, and the level of anxiety one experiences can vary, but there are ways to manage anxiety, even if it feels out of control. Some coping strategies include:

### **1. Keep physically active.**

Focusing on your body and not your mind may help relieve your anxiety. Low impact exercises like walking can often help people to reduce stress and manage anxiety symptoms.

### **2. Use relaxation techniques.**

Deep breathing techniques, visualization, meditation, and yoga are examples of relaxation techniques that can ease anxiety.

### **3. Make sleep a priority.**

Do what you can to make sure you're getting enough sleep to feel rested. Sleep can give you the energy to cope with difficult feelings and experiences.

### **4. Schedule Worry Time**

Anxiety can make it really hard to stop worrying. You might have worries you can't control. It can be helpful to try different ways of addressing these worries. Set aside a specific time to focus on your worries – so you can reassure yourself you haven't forgotten to think about them. Some people find it helps to set a timer.

### **5. Grounding techniques**

Grounding techniques such as journaling and the 333 rule can often help to calm immediate feelings of anxiety. The 333 rule involves naming three things you can see, three sounds you can hear, and interacting with three things you can touch.

### **6. Journaling**

Writing down what's making you anxious gets it out of your head and can make it less daunting. Reading your thoughts and feelings can help you take stock of your emotions in the immediate moment. This can also help you better understand the situations and events that cause anxiety.

### **7. Question your thought pattern**

Unhelpful thoughts can take root in your mind and distort the severity of the situation. One way is to challenge your fears, ask if they are 100% true, and see where you can regain control. Make a conscience effort to replace negative thoughts with positive ones.

### **8. Distract yourself**

At times, it may be most helpful to simply redirect yourself to focus on something other than your anxiety. You may want to reach out to others, do some work around your home, or engage in an enjoyable activity or hobby.

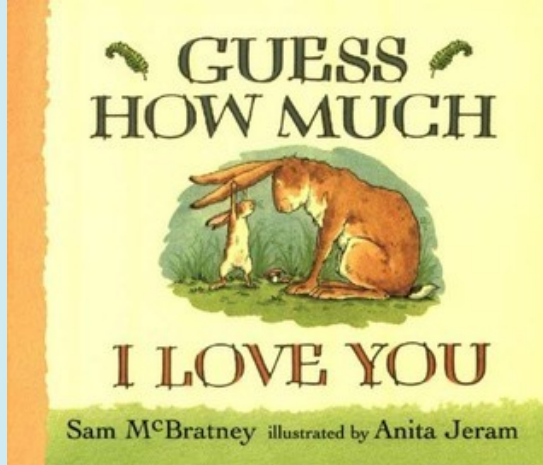


[View Fact Sheet](#)

## Online Library Resources

**Guess How Much I Love You By Sam McBratney**

In "*Guess How Much I Love You*," Sam McBratney tells a heartwarming story about the unconditional love between a parent and a child. This beloved children's book has captured the hearts



of readers of all ages since its publication in 1994. With its charming illustrations by Anita Jeram, the book has become a classic that celebrates the boundless affection we have for our loved ones.

[Listen and Read Along Here!](#)

Search "*Guess How Much I Love You* " on this page to find the book.

[View more resources in our online library here!](#)

## Upcoming Trainings

**Effective Advocacy Training:** Would you like to build your confidence in your ability to advocate for yourself and your child? Our advocates are here to help! We will provide information and tips, as well as discuss some barriers we encounter. This training is FREE and virtual.

Contact Carolyn Lawson at [carolyn.lawson@tnvoices.org](mailto:carolyn.lawson@tnvoices.org) with questions.

**All Things Behavior:** FBA, BIP, Manifestation Meetings & More. This FREE virtual class is specifically designed for parents, caregivers, and professionals who want to understand key elements of behavior management in school settings.

4/15 (9 am-12 pm CT/ 12 pm -1 pm ET). Register [here](#) or contact Carolyn Lawson at [carolyn.lawson@tnvoices.org](mailto:carolyn.lawson@tnvoices.org) with questions.

**Darkness to Light Training:** Join us for an empowering Darkness to Light Training that will equip you with the knowledge and tools to prevent child abuse and create safer communities. This impactful training will guide you through recognizing, responding to, and reporting signs of abuse, while providing the confidence to take action and make a difference. Don't miss this opportunity to be a part of the solution— together, we can bring light where it's needed most.

4/9 (9 am-11:30 am CT/ 10 am -12:30 pm ET). Register [here](#). Use Discount Code: TNVOICES to bypass \$16 charge. The first 50 people to register get a Child Abuse Prevention Month swag bag!

**Empowering Families through the Special Education Process:** This class is designed to equip parents and professionals with the knowledge and tools to navigate the complexities of the education system successfully. It will guide you step by step through the IEP and 504 Plan processes in special education. By the end of this class, you will be empowered to advocate effectively for children's educational needs, ensuring they receive the personalized support and accommodations necessary for a successful learning journey. This class is FREE and virtual.

Contact Sabrina Moore at [sabrina.moore@tnvoices.org](mailto:sabrina.moore@tnvoices.org) with questions.

**Parent 2 Parent Advocacy Training:** Are you looking for support with your child's IEP, 504, mental health, child welfare, or juvenile court involvement? Our advocates

are here to help! We will walk you through the process and offer support and training. This is a FREE and virtual training. It can also be a step towards getting your certification as a Family Support Specialist.

4/15 & 4/16 (8 am – 4 pm CT/9 am – 5 pm ET). Register [here](#) or contact Jennifer Davis at [jennifer.davis@tnvoices.org](mailto:jennifer.davis@tnvoices.org) with questions.

**Family Driven IEP Training:** Could you benefit from learning new ideas on how to apply and promote a family drive approach that ensures family involvement during the evaluation, development, and implementation of the IEP? Then this FREE Family Driven IEP virtual training is for you!

4/29 (11 am-12 pm CT, 12 pm- 1 pm ET). Register [here](#) or contact Sabrina Moore at [sabrina.moore@tnvoices.org](mailto:sabrina.moore@tnvoices.org) with questions.

**Unlocking Potential- Using the Pyramid Model to Support Children with ADHD and Autism:**

This training will discuss how to take a needs-based approach to common behavioral challenges that can occur for children with ADHD or ASD. This training aims to give parents and educators tools to support the children in their care with practical strategies for preventing challenging behaviors, promoting positive ones, and responding to challenges when they occur.

3/28 (11 am- 12 pm CST/ 12 pm- 1 pm EST)

[Register Here!](#)

**Positive Solutions for Families Trainings:**

This is an evidence-based, parent-friendly workshop with seven sessions covering strategies promoting positive and effective parenting behaviors. Positive Solutions for Families is designed for parents, caregivers, and professionals supporting children ages 2 to 5 years. Sessions are scheduled to last 1.5 hours.

A variety of dates and times are available

**Nurturing Parenting:**

This evidence-based program builds protective factors in families that, when present, increase the health and well-being of children/teens and families. Classes also include the Darkness to Light presentation of child sexual abuse. Classes are offered monthly. They are virtual and are FREE. Contact Randall Sidwell at [randall.sidwell@tnvoices.org](mailto:randall.sidwell@tnvoices.org) with any questions.



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