

Reaching Teens Summit 2026

February 26 & 27 | Duluth, GA

HOSTED BY



Thursday, Feb. 26

- 8:00 AM Breakfast & Networking
- 9:00 AM Welcome from our CEO
- 9:30 AM Keynote with Dr. Ken Ginsburg
- 12:30 PM Lunch
- 1:30 PM Breakout Sessions
- 4:00 PM Networking Power Hour

Friday, Feb. 27

- 8:00 AM Breakfast & Networking
- 9:00 AM Opening Remarks from Youth
- 9:30 AM EmpowerMENT Youth Panel
- 10:15 AM Breakout Sessions
- 12:30 PM Closing Remarks

THURSDAY SESSIONS

7 C's of Resiliency: Applying the Framework in Real Life

Jenny Paveglio, MSW, LCSW, Reaching Teens Trainer
Wellroot Family Services

Explore the essential building blocks of resilience using Reaching Teens Chapter 2: The 7 Cs model. This interdisciplinary framework highlights key assets and conditions needed for healthy development and resilience. Participants will learn how the 7 Cs supports positive behaviors through intentional interactions, trauma-sensitive practices, and a shared language across disciplines to strengthen youth development and relationships.

Chat & Chew: A Teen Talk Table Experience

LaDonna Collins, Child & Family Well-being Dir.
Georgia CASA
Tiffany Fason, Assoc. Executive Dir.
GUIDE Inc.

Ever wish you could hear directly from youth about their experiences and perspectives? Now's your chance! Think speed networking, but at each table, teen experts share fresh insights on topics you've been curious about. This session is for adult attendees only: rotate through tables, ask questions, and explore thought-provoking topics curated by statewide youth professionals.

De-escalation & Practice: Strengthening Your Response Skills

Robyn Smith, Reaching Teens Trainer
Wellroot Family Services

An interactive session designed to equip participants with practical strategies of de-escalation when working with teens. Learn the roots of escalation, how to recognize early warning signs, and effective techniques to help young people navigate intense emotions. Practicing these skills creates a safe, supportive environment that fosters trust and helps youth return to a state of calm and control.

Finding Balance after Trauma: The Trauma Resiliency Model®

Molly Abrokwah, LMFT, CCM, Lead Clinical Trainer
Amerigroup

The Trauma Resiliency Model (TRM)® is a body-centered, neuroscience-informed approach that helps individuals restore balance in mind and body. Designed for clinicians and practitioners, TRM teaches 10 somatic skills that support clients in processing overwhelming experiences and reconnecting with their natural capacity for well-being. TRM explores the biology of fear, threat, and the natural defensive responses that occur when faced with danger.

Fostering Belonging in Student Ministry

Robyn Smith, Reaching Teens Trainer

Wellroot Family Services

Teens today increasingly feel isolated, lacking strong social connections and meaning in their lives. While research shows faith practices can enhance well-being, religion's influence can be complex. Faith communities can use the Reaching Teens approach to foster belonging for all teens, building strength and resilience that supports adolescents as they navigate life's challenges.

Navigating Change: Child Advocacy in a Shifting Child Welfare Landscape

Melissa Carter, Clinical Prof. of Law & Exec. Dir.

Barton Child Law & Policy Center – Emory University School of Law

This session will provide attendees with an up-to-date overview of the current state of child welfare, highlighting the potential for recent changes in federal policy and funding to reshape services for children and families. Participants will explore shifts in national priorities and examine how these trends impact child advocacy to support better outcomes in this evolving landscape.

QPR: A Suicide Prevention Training

Amira Abdulhafid, Program Dir., Suicide Prevention

GUIDE, Inc.

QPR stands for Question, Persuade, and Refer — the 3 simple steps anyone can learn to help save a life from suicide. Just as people trained in CPR and the Heimlich Maneuver help save thousands of lives each year, people trained in QPR learn how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to question, persuade, and refer someone to help.

Reaching Teens Toolkit: A Guide to Implementation

Jill Alexander, Reaching Teens Mgr.

Wellroot Family Services

Get an in-depth look at the Reaching Teens toolkit and implementation model, which are designed to strengthen engagement with adolescents through trauma-informed, resilience-building strategies. Participants will explore the online toolkit, its AI tools for access, and learn steps for successful implementation, staff training, and sustainability. The session emphasizes practical integration into organizational practice to create lasting impact.

Strengthening Youth Mental Health with a Youth-Centered Approach

Dimple Desai, Senior Policy Analyst II

Voices for Georgia's Children

This presentation highlights Free Your Feels, a youth mental health advocacy campaign that prioritizes strategies for elevating youth voice. Community-based providers, professionals, supporters, and related stakeholders will learn how centering youth voice can lead to more meaningful, culturally relevant, and impactful programming and outcomes.

Teaching Youth to Take Charge of Their Health Care

Quondalynn Rainey, Health Care Transition Program Mgr.

Georgia Department of Public Health

This session equips adults with practical strategies to help teens become confident, independent participants in their own health care. Attendees will learn ways to teach youth how to manage appointments, understand medications, communicate with providers, and build the self advocacy skills needed for a successful transition to adult care.

The Power of HOPE for Better Health & Wellbeing

Christina Lennon, Chief Strategy & Innovation Officer

Wellroot Family Services

Discover the HOPE (Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences) framework and its four building blocks—relationships, safe environments, social engagement, and emotional growth. Learn practical strategies to integrate HOPE principles into programs that foster resilience and well-being for children and families.

Trauma-Sensitive Yoga (TSY): An Introduction

Vira Salzburn, Director of Impact

The Mediation Center of the Coastal Empire, Inc.

Get an introduction to the principles of trauma-sensitive yoga and how it can support nervous system regulation, safety, and choice. Participants will learn what TSY is, explore key considerations for practicing and facilitating trauma-sensitive yoga, and engage in gentle, accessible TSY exercises. The session emphasizes invitational language, autonomy, and body awareness, offering participants practical tools they can use for their own well-being and adapt for supportive, trauma-aware environments.

FRIDAY SESSIONS

Community Resiliency Model (CRM)[®]

Sharon Brewer, Certified CRM[®] Trainer

Wellroot Family Services

Community Resiliency Model training teaches simple mental wellness skills that can be readily learned and practiced, enhancing the ability to withstand stress. Participants learn to understand the biology of their reactions to stress and trauma and learn skills to track sensations connected to their well-being or resilience. CRM has been shown to help relieve stress and anxiety across a wide range of populations, including professionals, parents, caregivers, children, first responders, educators, and community aid workers.

EmpowerMent Youth Panel

Kyra Stoute, Youth Advocate

EmpowerMent

Gain valuable insights from the perspective of those who matter most — youth. This dynamic panel features young individuals who have benefited from organizations championing the foundational

practices of Reaching Teens. This session offers an opportunity for youth-serving professionals to learn directly from the voices of teens, deepening their understanding of the strategies that truly resonate and empower.

Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC): An Introduction

Vira Salzburn, Dir. of Impact

The Mediation Center of the Coastal Empire, Inc.

Learn the core concepts and benefits of mindfulness and self-compassion and how they support emotional resilience, stress reduction, and sustainable care for self and others. This session includes brief exercises participants can use in daily life and integrate into their work, organizations, and communities from the MSC program developed by Dr. Kristin Neff and Dr. Christopher Germer.

Motivational Interviewing 101: Foundations for Meaningful Change

Betsy Wylie, LCSW, Mgr. of Training

Wellroot Family Services

This session introduces the fundamentals of Motivational Interviewing (MI), a proven approach to help adolescents make healthier choices. This session covers what MI is, the Stages of Change framework, and key principles you can apply in real-world conversations with teens.

Protecting Georgia's Youth: A Practical Training on Teen Human Trafficking

Allison Ahrens, Advocate & Education Coord.

Bridging Hope

Using real human trafficking scenarios, data, and trauma-informed approaches, participants will learn how traffickers target young people, the signs a teen may be at risk, and the steps required to intervene safely. The session also highlights evidence-based prevention programs, reporting responsibilities under Georgia law, and how to collaborate with local partners. Providers will walk away with tools they can use immediately to support the youth they serve.

Redefining Discipline Through Restorative Practice

Robyn Smith, Reaching Teens Trainer

Wellroot Family Services

Traditional punishment or zero-tolerance policies often lead to increased reactivity in young people. In this session, participants will learn core principles of restorative practices that use a strength-based, trauma-sensitive approach. This collaborative process helps teens recognize the impact of their actions, take responsibility for their choices and work toward repairing relationships. Participants will leave with practical strategies and ideas for implementation.

Reframing Language as a Practiced Skill

Jenny Pavelgio, MSW, LCSW, Reaching Teens Trainer

Wellroot Family Services

This session explores how shifting to a strength-based philosophy transforms the way we think about and interact with adolescents. Attendees will learn to challenge harmful myths, share accurate truths about adolescence, and reframe behaviors of youth who have experienced trauma or marginalization. Practical strategies will be offered to recognize and elevate strengths, avoid labels, and advocate for positive cultural change in families, schools, and communities.

Relational Communication: Strategies for Connection

Jenny Paveglio MSW, LCSW, Reaching Teens Trainer

Wellroot Family Services

In this interactive, reflective session, participants will explore the Heart, Belly, Head, Hands framework for building authentic, healing-centered relationships with adolescents. Through guided practice and discussion, attendees will learn to listen deeply, reflect a young person's story, communicate concern in ways that strengthen connection, and use practical strategies to support youth through challenges while fostering safety, trust, and resilience.

Stronger Together: No Glue Required

GUIDE, Inc.

Engage in a variety of interactive team-building activities that promote communication, trust, problem-solving, and other essential skills, allowing participants to learn first and then reflect as facilitators. The session emphasizes low-cost, easy-to-replicate activities that can be adapted for different group sizes, settings and developmental needs to strengthen group connection and collaboration.

The Bridge Between Us

Marquis Hill, Author & Youth Mental Health Advocate

Explore the power of connection between generations. Participants will be challenged to slow down, pour back into themselves, and show up fully for the youth they serve.

The Youth Prevention Network: Navigating Risk & Building Resilience

Phylicia Hancle, Youth Program Dir.

CWC Alliance

This session highlights the Youth Prevention Network as a youth-centered prevention model that equips young people with practical tools to manage pressure, build resilience, and make healthier choices. Designed for youth and youth-serving adults, the session explores how skill-building, mental wellness, decision-making, and youth advocacy work together to strengthen substance misuse prevention.