

Community Institute for Psychotherapy

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2025-2026 News & Notes



2026 February News and Notes

Raising Healthy Families Community Education Series

By Robin Joy Berenson, PhD, LMFT

The most important thing a parent can give a child is not certainty, but the experience of being understood.

— D. W. Winnicott



Greetings!

A new year begins at a time when our country—and our world—feel increasingly divided. Many families are carrying a quiet weight: uncertainty, anxiety, and a sense that kindness, curiosity, and thoughtful dialogue can feel harder to find. Our children and teens are growing up in the middle of this climate, often absorbing emotional and relational tensions long before they have the language to make sense of them.

Don't be afraid to forgo or update even time-honored traditions when appropriate. Instead of a large formal dinner, plan a potluck brunch. Consider family plans. Activities that were fun for young children may not be as enjoyable for teens.

Parents today are being asked to navigate rapidly shifting emotional, social, and cultural landscapes. Children's needs evolve as they grow, and parenting must continually adapt in response. What supported a child yesterday may no longer meet the needs of an adolescent today. It can feel overwhelming to know how to respond, when to intervene, or how to stay connected when conversations become charged, frightening, or shut down. We want to remind families that help is available—and that early, thoughtful, relationship-centered intervention can make a profound difference in long-term emotional wellbeing.

At CIP, our psychodynamic approach emphasizes understanding the inner lives of children, teens, and parents alike. We believe that behavior has meaning, that emotional struggles emerge within relational contexts, and that healing occurs through curiosity, attunement, and connection. Supporting families means helping parents

think more deeply about what may be happening beneath the surface—developmentally, emotionally, and relationally—so they can respond with greater clarity, compassion, and effectiveness.

With this in mind, we are honored to once again offer our annual **Raising Healthy Families Community Education Series**. Each year, we bring together experienced clinicians and educators to explore issues of child development, family relationships, and emotional health through a lens that values reflection, understanding, and the power of relationship.

This year's series focuses on parenting teens in particularly challenging times. Topics include helping young people resist extremist and polarizing ideologies, opening meaningful conversations about stigma and suicide, and understanding how parents can support children and teens who may be struggling emotionally or psychologically. Throughout the series, we emphasize helping parents stay emotionally present, maintain connection, and create spaces where difficult feelings and conversations can be held safely and thoughtfully.

We warmly invite parents, caregivers, and community members to join us. **These programs are offered free of charge with registration**, as part of CIP's commitment to accessible, preventative support for families. We hope you will join us in learning, reflecting, and strengthening the emotional foundations that help families grow and thrive—even in uncertain times.

We hope you enjoy this monthly newsletter and will pass it along to family, friends, and colleagues who may also enjoy it. In the meantime, please let us hear from you with questions and comments. Contact: Robin Joy Berenson, Executive and Clinical Director, at 415-459-5999 #100 or email: rjberenson@cipmarin.org.

Sincerely,



Robin Joy Berenson, PhD, LMFT
Executive and Clinical Director



2026 Raising Healthy Families Community Educational Series

Co-hosted each year with the Marin County Office of Education, ***Raising Healthy Families*** programs provide the latest information by Bay Area experts on key issues facing families today. Taking place over four evenings in March, these hybrid events are free and open to the public.

Parenting Teens in a Time of Risk: Understanding Development, Spotting Red Flags, and Responding to Substance Use

Presented by Dylan Kersh, LMFT & Gary Federoff, M.S., LMFT, CADC II

When: March 2, 2026, from 6 pm – 8 pm

Where: Marin County Office of Education, 1111 Las Gallinas Ave. San Rafael, CA & ZOOM

Starting the Conversation: Suicide, Stigma, and Support

Presented by Elisa Stern, M.A., M.Res. & Amelia Moser, M.A.

When: March 12, 2026, from 6 pm – 8 pm

Where: ZOOM ONLY

Call of the Wild: Helping Teens to Resist Extremist Political Ideologies

Presented by Mark Edwards, MFT

When: March 16, 2026, from 6 pm – 8 pm

Where: Marin County Office of Education, 1111 Las Gallinas Ave. San Rafael, CA & ZOOM

Emotional Suffering in Children & Teens: What Parents Should Know and When to Act

Presented by Cheryl K. Best, PhD

When: March 30, 2026, from 6 pm – 8 pm

Where: Marin County Office of Education, 1111 Las Gallinas Ave. San Rafael, CA & ZOOM

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Thank you to our generous 2025 sponsors!

