

thriving

Inside the Heart of KVC:

*Find out why KVC is
a great place to work*

New Research:
LGBTQIA+ Youth
Mental Health &
How You Can Help

*The Importance
of Fostering and
Adopting Teens*

KVC Hospitals
Celebrates 30 Years
of Life-Saving Treatment

Want More in Life?

Here's a way to experience the joy of parenthood and help children

Over 400,000 U.S. children are in crisis due to child abuse, neglect or other family challenges. The need for new foster and adoptive parents is greater than ever.

Whether you are single or married, own or rent your home, have children already or don't, work full-time or stay home, you may qualify. We provide free training, 24/7 support, and monthly reimbursement to meet the child's needs.

We offer **FREE** training classes and support you every step of the way.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO



Dear Friends,

Since you're reading this, KVC's mission to enrich the lives of children and families probably resonates deeply with you. You're likely passionate about strengthening families in crisis so they can remain safely together. You believe every child deserves to be safe and to grow up in a loving family. And you dream of the day when stigma about mental health is replaced by compassion, and every child, young person and adult can easily access the mental health treatment they need.

Many people are thinking about important topics like these: how to care for our neighbors, how to create a better world, and how to cultivate joy, meaning and wellbeing in our own lives.

On matters like this, we've found that the KVC Health Systems family is unique. We are not only a nonprofit with a great mission of helping children and families; we are also a caring employer that supports hundreds of people to create a rewarding career and their best life. It's unusual for us to dedicate *Thriving's* cover story to what it's like to work at KVC Health Systems. But given the Great Resignation happening nationwide, we feel there's no better time to give you a look inside the heart of KVC (pg. 6). If you are seeking a new career with flexibility, work/life balance, caring coworkers, and an inspiring purpose, you might find a KVC opportunity that matches your own values, hopes, and dreams.

In this issue of *Thriving*, you'll read stories of how our KVC team helps children and families connect to the hope and help they need:

- In **Hope's Story** (pg. 10), you'll read how our KVC Hospitals team helped a girl who tried to end her life multiple times. She's now thriving.
- In **A Moving Family Reunification Story** (pg. 11), you'll learn how a couple safely reunified with their children after foster care and now help other families in that situation.
- And in **Student Gets Help to Achieve His College Dreams** (pg. 16), you'll see how we're helping a high school student in foster care get the academic and therapeutic support to create a bright future.

Thank you for believing in and supporting KVC's mission. Every day, we help people experience the power of being connected to other people and to a greater purpose. We'd love to do the same for you.

Sincerely



Jason Hooper
President and CEO



6 A Look Inside the Heart of KVC

Find Out Why KVC Is a Great Place to Work

The Great Resignation has led to a hiring crisis for companies nationwide. If you, like millions of people, are looking for an inspiring mission, a sense of purpose, more flexibility, and caring coworkers, KVC Health Systems might be more than your favorite nonprofit to support; it might also be your next employer. See how a KVC career changes people's lives, starting with yours.

Strengthening Families

11 A Moving Family Reunification Story

Ashley and Sean's substance use challenges led to their children being removed from their home and put in foster care. But a positive relationship with the foster parents caring for their children and the KVC workers advocating for them led to a safe family reunification. Ashley is now a substance use registered nurse helping others in a similar situation and both parents are thankful for their second chance.

18 How to Create an Emotion Regulation Plan with Your Child

Most of us have situations, people, smells, locations, etc. that can trigger intense emotions like anger, sadness, or excitement. One of the best ways to help a child — and help yourself — is to sit down and create an Emotion Regulation Plan. Learn how to identify the safe people, safe places and safe activities that will help your child cope.

Creating Families

12 Black Children Are Overrepresented in Foster Care: Here's How We Can Address This Disparity

Nationally, Black children are 14% of the total child population, but they make up 23% of children in foster care. KVC is working to address this through safely preventing the need for foster care and encouraging more Black adults to consider becoming foster parents. Learn why being placed with a family that shares a child's racial and cultural heritage can increase placement stability and reduce children's time in foster care.

13 Meet Children Who Need a Forever Family

BreAnna, Taniya, Lexi and A'Jaun are children who each need adoptive families to provide them with safety, a sense of belonging and unconditional love.

21 The Importance of Fostering and Adopting Teens

Teens don't outgrow the need for a loving family. Many adults who first considered foster parenting with babies and young children in mind, have since expanded their perspective and opened their homes to older youth who need loving families. Find out what a life-changing difference this makes for a young person.



News & Events

17 30 Years of Hope, Healing, and Life-Changing Treatment

KVC Hospitals Kansas City is commemorating 30 years of providing compassionate psychiatric treatment to youth to help them heal.

20 People on the Move

See our leaders across the country who were recently hired, promoted or recognized for their accomplishments

22 At 2021 Celebration, KVC Health Systems Honored Heroes, Thanked Supporters, and Shared Its Impact

Every October, KVC hosts a celebration to thank supporters and report on its positive impact in the lives of children and families. This year, the KVC Hero Award went to Dr. Anh Vinh, Medical Director of KVC Hospitals, and KVC's essential frontline team members nationwide. See other individuals and organizations who won awards and read highlights from the 2021 Impact Report.

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Fall 2021/Winter 2022

Health

10 Hope's Story: How a Teen Girl Who Felt Suicidal Received Life-Saving Treatment

Hope is a 15-year-old girl who experienced depression and tried to end her life in multiple ways. But when she came to KVC Hospitals, she received comprehensive medical and psychiatric treatment. Ultimately, therapy that helped rebuild the connection between Hope and her mother was key to finding support at home and achieving mental health wellness.

14 New Research: LGBTQIA+ Youth Mental Health & How You Can Help

Youth who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning often face rejection, hurtful comments or bullying. A shocking 42% of LGBTQ youth considered suicide in the last year, and 70% of LGBTQ youth reported poor mental health throughout most of the pandemic. Find out how you can help youth feel accepted and loved.



16 Student Gets Help to Achieve His Dreams

When Jack's mom suddenly passed away, he entered foster care. Both his grief and his changing life circumstances led to challenges in school. Thankfully, by participating in the First Star KVC West Virginia Academy that combines academic help, therapy and wraparound support, Jack is now doing well and pursuing his dream of being a college math professor.



Pictured on the cover are Nicole Deere-Andersen, HR Manager, and Ashley Brown, President, both of KVC Nebraska.

KVC MISSION:

To enrich and enhance the lives of children and families by providing medical and behavioral healthcare, social services and education.

Inside the Heart of KVC:

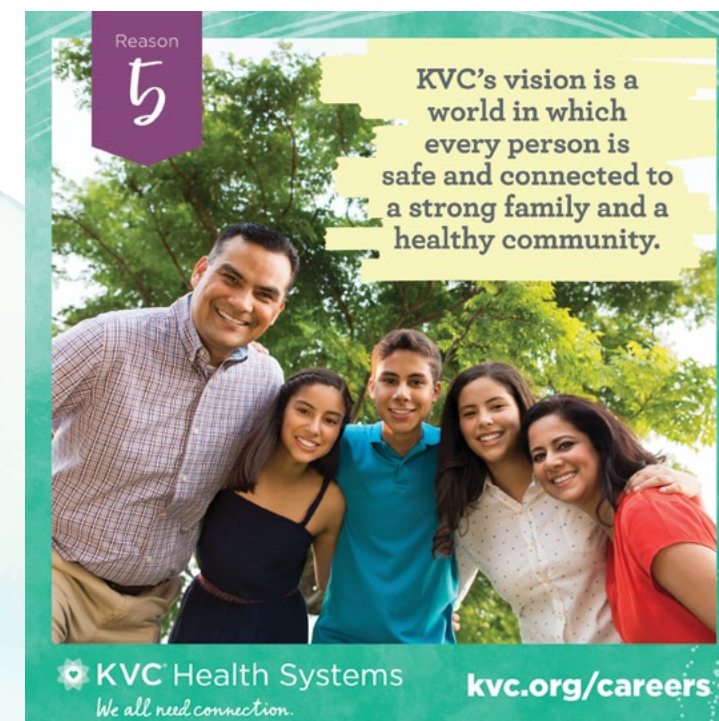
Find out why KVC is a great place to work

As we continue to navigate through the pandemic, employers are seeing the effects of the “Great Resignation” which has led to a nationwide hiring crisis. People are realizing they want to explore their options or discover new career paths altogether. A big reason people are leaving their jobs is to find something with purpose and meaning. They want a job where they can find work/life balance, management that cares, a diverse culture, and an inspiring mission to feel good about. At KVC, that’s exactly what you’ll find. If you love KVC’s mission of helping children and families, you or someone you know might also love a KVC career.

Positive Impact and Leadership

KVC is built on mission. We envision a future where every person is safe and connected to a strong family and a healthy community. For more than 50 years, we have provided heart-centered service to children and families in need, becoming a national leader in mental wellbeing, child welfare, and community health and wellness.

We have **positively impacted the lives of over 300,000 people** through in-home family support, foster care, adoption, behavioral healthcare, and children’s psychiatric hospitals. We serve children and families from 35 locations in five states: Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Kentucky, and West Virginia.



Many of KVC’s senior leaders have been with the organization for 10, 20, or 30 years. KVC leaders are dedicated to unifying KVC’s mission and values, with a commitment to leading a strengths-based organization, which produces a positive KVC culture nationwide. At KVC, we have one of the most dedicated and passionate groups of professionals in the social work and mental health fields. Together, we create a tight-knit and inclusive culture that helps everyone do their best work.

Diverse Perspectives Drive KVC

At KVC, we recognize the essential need to recruit individuals who mirror the diverse population we serve. Social workers play a vital role in the lives of the children and families we help. Their services provide support and protection for children and strengthen families, all while remaining respectful of the backgrounds, values and needs of the people they serve.

“It’s rewarding to work at KVC because there’s no better feeling than working with a family and being able to help them navigate difficult situations. One thing that I do want to see more of is diversity in our staff. The field of social work is predominantly women, but I think it is important for men to be involved in social work. New people are going to bring new skill sets, which is important [when serving] all different types of people.”

Dalton Shump,
KVC Permanency Case Manager



KVC is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in everything from our hiring practices to the way we deliver care. Our commitment is grounded in the diverse representation of the children, adults, and families we serve. The changing demographics of

our country impacts organizations in the human welfare service area and dictates the need to make diversity and inclusion a priority.

continued on page 8

Inside the Heart of KVC
continued from page 7

One of our values is, **“Diverse perspectives are key to our progress.”** By putting DEI in the foreground, we are having important conversations that spark innovation and healthy change in KVC culture. Our local DEI councils each meet and discuss urgent and strategic needs and initiatives on a regular basis to ensure that their commitment to DEI efforts stays a top priority at KVC. In September, KVC Kentucky held its first Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Retreat (pictured below).



Why KVC?

KVC employees feel like the work they do is important because of the mission at KVC. Employees find that working at KVC is much more than a job. They find supportive colleagues, a nurturing workplace, personal and professional growth, and a strong sense of connection. They have come to understand how to best serve children and families by finding their own purpose and passion for the work they do every single day.

KVC is also intentionally focusing on creating a positive, supportive workplace where each person can do their best work. All team members take the Gallup Q12 employee engagement survey twice per year and discuss the results locally. In the last two years, the percentage of engaged employees has grown by 18%. This has strengthened the culture, resulting in employee retention and greater stability for children and families served.

“Leadership genuinely listens to what I have to say and cares about me as a person. KVC is a place that recognizes my worth and capabilities, when I sometimes struggle to see it myself.”

Travis Chandler,
Foster Care Specialist at KVC Nebraska



“I have strengthened my skills and deepened my personal and professional connections. KVC has given me the chance to grow in my career by becoming a trainer, getting a license in drug and alcohol counseling and advocating for me as a person.”

Haley Stroud,
Intensive In-Home Clinician at KVC Nebraska



“I’ve always liked to talk to all kinds of people and interact with them. I’m learning more and more every day working in behavioral healthcare. I thank Niles for this great opportunity that has been given to me. KVC is a great family.”

Luis Munoz Rentas,
Maintenance Team, KVC Niles



“While KVC Nebraska is a part of a much larger health system, our caring, compassionate, close-knit family keeps me committed and engaged. What also keeps me at KVC is the people. The people I have the privilege of working with and the people we serve. This work is hard. We bear witness to hard things, and we enter people’s lives often at some of the hardest times. It’s the day-to-day experience I have of compassion, hope, trust and stability that keeps me showing up!”

Ashley Brown,
President of KVC Nebraska



KVC Benefits:

- Inspiring mission — make your career meaningful!
- Competitive pay and benefits package
- Flexible on-site, hybrid, and work-from-home jobs
- KVC pays 76% of medical insurance costs for employees
- Medical plans as low as \$6/mo. and free dental insurance
- Generous parental leave policy
- 2.5% retirement savings match
- Generous combination of paid time off and holidays
- A positive, supportive culture where employee opinions count
- Commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Fun including meals, parties, and casual get-togethers
- Ongoing training and learning opportunities
- AND MUCH MORE!

Join the KVC Team:

We’re looking for highly caring, skilled professionals from a diverse range of backgrounds at all levels. We have open positions in Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Kentucky, and West Virginia to help provide in-home family support, behavioral healthcare, foster care, adoption, and children’s psychiatric treatment.

To find out more about KVC careers, visit **www.kvc.org/careers**.

There are career opportunities for people of different skills and backgrounds:

If you are early in your career, consider:	Mental/Behavioral Health Technician Intake Coordinator Youth Care Transporter Maintenance Worker
If you are experienced in your field, consider:	Social Worker Case Manager Community Resource Specialist Foster Parent Trainer
If you have specialized credentials or expertise, consider:	Therapist Nurse Accounting Manager Psychologist

Hear What Others Are Saying:

Hear what others are saying about KVC. For more reviews, check out reviews on Indeed and Glassdoor:



Indeed



Glassdoor

These anonymous reviews were posted on KVC’s Indeed and Glassdoor pages recently:

“Leadership is committed to making KVC a great place to work. They put in the hard work to listen to employees and make changes based on our feedback. They are committed to providing the technology necessary to meet the ever-changing needs of behavioral healthcare. If you want to work for an organization that is family-oriented and makes a difference in the lives of families, then KVC is the place for you.”

“There are not a lot of jobs out there where all the work you do every day is to benefit the lives of children and families. Is it challenging? Of course. You are working with individuals that are experiencing difficult times. The great news is that you are surrounded by leadership and peers that are also passionate about the work. You support each other. You celebrate each other’s wins. You support each other when there are losses. The hardest and most enjoyable part of the job is making a difference that matters.”

Hope's Story:

Teen Who Attempted Suicide Gets Life-Saving Help at KVC Hospitals

KVC Hospitals is a nonprofit that provides psychiatric treatment for children and teens ages 6 to 18 who are struggling with depression, anxiety, the impacts of trauma, thoughts of suicide, and other mental and behavioral health challenges. This story is from Janny Sivilay, a therapist at KVC Hospitals Kansas City.

Hope (name changed) is a 15-year-old girl who experienced severe depression and attempted to end her life in multiple ways.

When she came to KVC Hospitals, Hope received a full medical, clinical, and nursing assessment. She also received intensive psychiatric care and medication management; individual, family and group therapy sessions; case coordination; 24/7 support from our skilled nursing staff; and innovative treatment and education to teach her about her brain's health and how to regulate her emotions.

Hope didn't communicate her suicidal thoughts to her mother because, based on how she had dismissed her suicidal thoughts, she didn't feel she was a safe person. Similarly, her mother had a difficult time connecting with her daughter and felt that Hope's suicide attempts were an attempt to get attention. But Hope was not seeking attention; she truly felt alone. Many of us adults miss that in kids because we don't realize kids can feel as bad as they do.

I spent many hours in therapy trying to help Hope and her mother understand that they both really cared about each other. Once I saw them start to see this bridge of caring that existed between them, I got goosebumps.

As we prepared for discharge, I acknowledged that it would be a bit scary for them to trust themselves and each other. But they had gained the skills to navigate the future. Hope's safety plan included her regular outpatient care as well as an intensive outpatient treatment program.

Hope is doing well now. She feels safe communicating and using her outpatient resources rather than harming herself. She feels like she has a support system again. Her mother said she is very grateful to the KVC Hospitals team for helping Hope on her journey to mental health wellness.



Listen to KVC Hospitals therapist Janny Sivilay tell this story at kvchospitals.org/hope.

Learn more about KVC Hospitals' children's psychiatric treatment or support our mission at www.kvchospitals.org.

A Moving Family

Reunification Story

All families go through tough times. When parents face adversity and toxic stress due to traumatic experiences, they may be unable to care for their children. In some cases, a court decision is made to remove the children from the home and place them with a relative, familiar caregiver or foster family while the parents receive support from caring professionals, giving them time to work on skills to safely reunify with their children.

Ashley and Sean found themselves experiencing hurdle after hurdle and began to have problems with substance use. As a result, their children had to enter foster care. While working toward a safe reunification, they formed a wonderful bond with the foster parents who were looking after their children. After recovering, they were able to safely reunite with their children, and they remain very close with the foster parents, describing their relationship as "One family under two houses."

Since reunifying, they've celebrated a wedding, new jobs and a new baby boy! Ashley and Sean are active in KVC support groups for other parents going through what they did and have given several motivational community presentations on how to overcome hardship. Ashley is now a Substance Use Registered Nurse (RN). "I give back what was given to me," she said. Sean has enjoyed working at the same place for more than five years now. They are thankful for the good life they have now and feel grateful for the second chance to be present, caring parents.



See a video of Ashley and Sean telling their story and see other family reunification stories at kvckansas.org/reunify.



KVC Health Systems President and CEO Jason Hooper recognized Ashley and Sean with an award a few years ago for their hard work in safely reunifying their family after foster care.

Black Children Are Overrepresented in Foster Care.

Here's How We Can Address This Disparity

Nationwide, Black youth are overrepresented in foster care. In 2018, Black children represented 14% of the total child population but 23% of all kids in foster care. In comparison, white youth represent 50% of the nation's child population and 44% of its foster care population. Additionally, Black children spend longer on average in foster care than white children.

When finding loving homes for youth when they must enter foster care due to safety concerns, ensuring that their cultural needs are met is essential to their wellbeing. This can be accomplished by keeping youth in the same community when entering out-of-home care and recruiting foster parents and kinship caregivers who reflect their values and identity.

This is not to say that Black children shouldn't be placed into the homes of caring, compassionate caregivers of other races. Rather, Black families tend to be more attuned to the struggles Black children face. Placing them with parents who share their racial background and culture helps to alleviate their trauma. Also, research shows that keeping children connected to their community of origin can also help build a sense of personal pride and can provide an environment that leads Black youth toward academic success.

Addressing the Disparity

To find ways to provide the best homes for youth in care, we've recently launched a public awareness campaign to assist with our efforts to recruit Black foster and kinship care providers in Kansas. KVC hopes to expand the awareness campaign to other states soon.

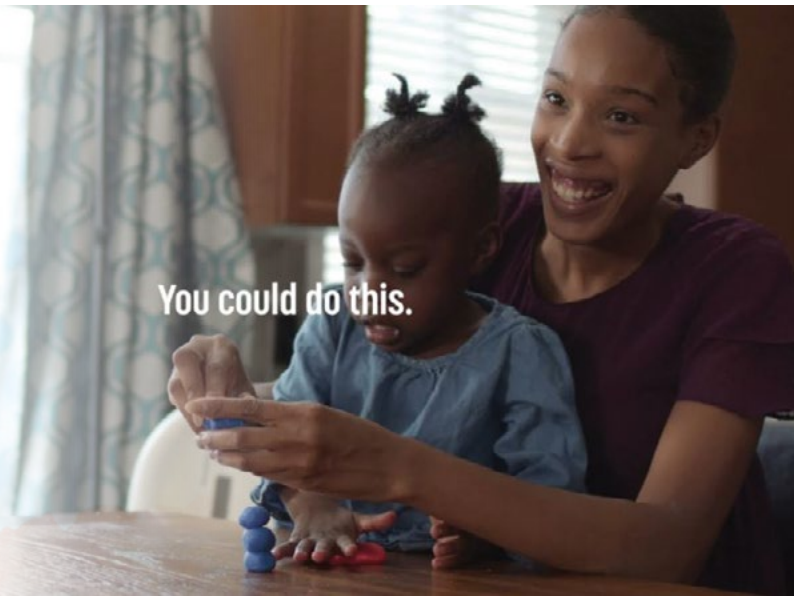
Foster families of all kinds are needed, but with this outreach, we are working to address a disparity between the percentage of Black kids in care and the percentage of Black foster families. Child welfare systems work to preserve a child's cultural heritage and family connections when possible as this can increase

placement stability, help heal trauma, and reduce children's time in foster care. Teena Wilkie, a KVC foster parent who is biracial, said, "I fostered two boys who were mixed race. I think the thing that they liked about it is that they could easily say that we were their mom and dad and nobody was questioning that." She also said that being able to understand how they feel when other kids treat them differently is also a big benefit.

Become a Foster Parent

People from all types of backgrounds are needed to become foster or adoptive parents. You can be single or married, work full-time or part-time, or own or rent your home. LGBTQIA+ people or couples are welcome.

Learn more and sign up for the next free foster/adoptive parent training class near you at www.kvc.org/foster.



You could do this.

Meet Children Who Need a

Forever Family

We're honored to play a role in matching children with loving adoptive families in Kansas, Nebraska, Kentucky and West Virginia. Due to our role as a lead foster care agency in Kansas, we're able to share photos and videos of Kansas children like those below at <http://adoption.kvc.org>. To inquire, please call (888) 655-5500 or email adoptionspecialist@kvc.org. To see children near you who need adoptive families, visit www.AdoptUSKids.org.



BREANNA (14)

Watch my video online!

BreAnna is a happy and healthy 13-year-old who loves baking, camping and being with friends. When she grows up, she wants to be a super star! She needs a family that will love her unconditionally and support her in all areas of her life.



TANIYA (15)

Watch my video online!

Taniya is a bright, charismatic young girl who's great at singing, dancing, and reading. She has a magnetic personality, and others love to be around her. She deserves a family who will give her plenty of structure, guidance, and love.

LEXI (15)

Watch my video online!

Lexi has been waiting years to be adopted by a loving forever family. She is energetic, full of joy and is always cheering people up. In her free time, she likes reading and painting. When she grows up, she wants to be a foster parent or a nurse.



A'JAUN (12)

Watch my video online!

A'Jaun is caring, helpful, does well in school and enjoys music and spending time outside. He deserves a loving family that will commit to him and give him lots of support and guidance.



New Research:

LGBTQIA+ Youth Mental Health & How You Can Help



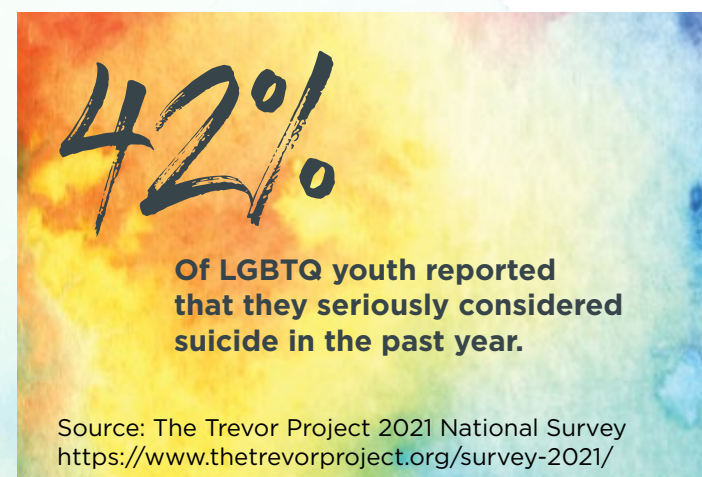
2021: A Year of Added Trauma

According to The Trevor Project's National Survey on LGBTQ Mental Health 2021, 42% of LGBTQ youth considered suicide in the last year. LGBTQ youth of color are especially at risk with the prevalence of racism coupled with discrimination based on their gender identity or sexual orientation. According to the report, youth of color attempted suicide at higher rates, and half of all LGBTQ youth of color reported experiencing discrimination in the past year.

The COVID-19 pandemic also laid bare the disparities faced by marginalized groups. In addition to trying to protect themselves from the virus, **70% of LGBTQ youth reported poor mental health throughout most of the pandemic**, and many also reported food and housing insecurity.

Two out of three youth reported that they were living in households that didn't support or accept them. This rejection and lack of support in combination with pandemic uncertainties created a nearly unbearable weight of additional trauma, pain and fear for many youth.

See The Trevor Project's full report at bit.ly/3BzKLUZ.



We all want to be loved, accepted and supported by our families and communities. But sadly, for many LGBTQIA+ youth who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer or questioning, that is not their reality. KVC Hospitals President, Bobby Eklofe, discussed this in a recent interview. "A lot of families still reject their youth based on their sexual orientation and gender identity," Eklofe said. And, in the larger society, LGBTQIA+ youth are more likely to face mistreatment and discrimination. Visit youtu.be/5lvpDsyWfZo to watch the full interview.

For a child or teen, rejection from loved ones is traumatic and can negatively impact their brain development, mental health and long-term well-being. "This rejection can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness and damage their sense of self-worth," Eklofe explains.

Youth can easily become overwhelmed by these emotions. They feel like they are drowning in them — like strong waves are crashing over their body and they can't swim out. Eventually, they might stop trying to swim against the waves, which can lead to tragic outcomes like self-harm or suicide attempts. When a child feels like they are drowning, it can be impossible to see what's over the water and the rejection, fear and loneliness may seem too difficult to overcome.

How You Can Help

Here are some meaningful ways you can show your support for LGBTQIA+ youth:

- Check-in with them regularly to ask how they're doing. Be a supportive listener and keep conversations open, honest and judgment-free.
- Create safe, inclusive and affirming spaces for LGBTQIA+ youth where they can freely express themselves and build supportive relationships.
- Use a transgender or gender non-conforming youth's chosen name and pronouns. This simple action can help **reduce their risk of suicide by 50%!** Additionally, those who are able to change their name and/or gender marker on legal documents (i.e., driver's licenses and birth certificates) reported lower suicide attempt rates.
- If a youth is struggling, help connect them to services, such as an assessment with a doctor or professional counseling. The Trevor Project found that 48% of LGBTQ youth want more access to mental health services, but most of them experience barriers to access.
- Be aware of warning signs that a child may be struggling with their mental health. Learn about warning signs to watch for at kvchospitals.org/lgbtqia.

How KVC Is Helping LGBTQIA+ Youth

KVC advocates for the LGBTQIA+ community and we believe every child and person deserves love, acceptance and support. We understand the importance of inclusivity and work to create education and awareness for communities about how they can be compassionate and engaging with all people, and especially those who are more at risk. **We all need connection** and we partner with our communities to give every person access to resources and opportunities for wellness and happiness. At the heart of our work, we are here to provide support and compassion for every person and we are here to listen to their stories and help them heal.

Visit kvchospitals.org/lgbtqia to learn more about LGBTQIA+ youth mental health as well as resources providing free support for anyone who may be struggling with their mental health.



KVC recently partnered with news stations nationwide to launch a **You Are Not Alone** campaign providing mental health tips on a wide range of topics.

Watch them all at youtu.be/YYjZzupysjQ.

LGBTQIA+ Suicide Prevention Resources



KVC Hospitals
Local children's mental health treatment
913-890-7468
www.kvchospitals.org/lgbtq



National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
Free 24/7 confidential support
1-800-273-8255



The Trevor Project
TrevorLifeline: 1-866-488-7386
TrevorText: Text START to 678-678
TrevorChat: www.thetrevorproject.org



The LGBT National Hotline
Peer-support and local resources for all ages
1-888-843-4564



Trans Lifeline
Support for transgender people by transgender people
1-877-565-8860



Crisis Text Line
Text HOME to 741741 to talk with a trained counselor for free, 24/7



KVC Hospitals
Children's Psychiatric Treatment
We all need connection.

Walter Swoope,
KVC West Virginia
Donor Relations
Manager and
First Star Academy
facilitator, shared
this story. Client
name was changed
to ensure privacy.

Student Gets Help to Achieve His College Dreams

I first met Jack when our First Star Academy was just starting up. First Star KVC West Virginia Academy is an immersive academic, college prep, opioid/drug education and mentorship program that helps high school students in foster care achieve their dreams.

Jack was living in a KVC-supported relative kinship foster home after his mom suddenly passed away. He had the support and security of living with a relative but was still really struggling to cope with all the sudden changes in his life.

A few days after we met, Jack transferred from his foster home to a group home for intensive bereavement intervention. Since he moved to the group home, he moved high schools too.

While the group home was teaching Jack how to understand and cope with his grief, he encountered more challenges. Jack is academically gifted but his grief and limited access to technology caused him to fall behind in school.

At this point, Jack wasn't with a KVC foster family anymore, but his new case management team allowed KVC staff to continue communicating with him. We supplied Jack with a laptop and included him in our virtual First Star Academy workshops. In addition to educational help, the First Star program includes therapy, care management, and other supports. The program is proven successful as 98% of First Star students graduate high school and 90% enroll in higher education.



Now, Jack is back in KVC's care and just started his junior year of high school. He has a huge passion for math and dreams of becoming a college math professor. To help Jack make connections and give him unique opportunities to expand his dream, we introduced him to Dr. Michael Schroeder, Director of Undergraduate Studies at Marshall University.



Walter Swoope

Dr. Schroeder and Jack spent an hour discussing math careers and Dr. Schroeder even offered to help Jack find advanced study opportunities and invited Jack to visit the Marshall campus. **After their conversation, Jack told us he felt excited and motivated to reach for his dreams and hope for his future!**

Learn more about First Star KVC West Virginia Academy at kvcwv.org/first-star.

30 YEARS OF
KVC HOSPITALS
KANSAS CITY

Hope, Healing, and
Life-Changing Treatment

This year, KVC Hospitals Kansas City is commemorating 30 years of serving children and families throughout Kansas and Missouri with children's psychiatric treatment. When a child or teen is struggling with depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, or another mental illness, their family turns to KVC for hope. Serving more than 28,000 admissions, KVC has saved thousands of lives and healed thousands of families.

With a 48-bed children's psychiatric hospital and 48-bed residential treatment program, this treatment center was KVC's first step in creating a full continuum of care for children who are struggling to achieve wellness and deserve compassionate, safe spaces for healing. KVC began integrating behavioral health treatment with the child welfare system 30 years ago, serving as a safety net for youth who are most vulnerable and most at risk. KVC recognized that the trauma youth experienced needed to be addressed immediately with therapeutic care or there would be more detrimental long-term impacts to their health and wellbeing.

Our team of psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists, nurses and other medical professionals integrate physical and mental health to treat and heal the whole person, keeping each child's unique life experiences in mind so that the therapeutic approach best fits each child's needs. Our goal is to help children stabilize and to equip them with the tools needed to return home as soon as safely possible to continue receiving treatment in an outpatient setting where they are surrounded by families, friends and other support systems.

With proven expertise and the generosity of private donors, KVC has been able to expand the reach of these services by opening a children's psychiatric residential treatment facility in Hays, KS and a children's psychiatric hospital in Wichita, KS. We are extremely grateful to the donors who have helped make this work possible and effective with positive outcomes for children. Without the support of our donors, it would be impossible to fund these treatment programs that are so critically needed in our communities.



Visit kvchospitals.org/disorders to learn about the most common mental health conditions and disorders found in children. Learn about different types of disorders, the signs and symptoms, and what you can do to support a child who is struggling with:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Suicidal thoughts
- Self-harm
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Obsessive compulsive disorder
- And more

Each page also shares about different organizations families can turn to for free information, support and guidance.

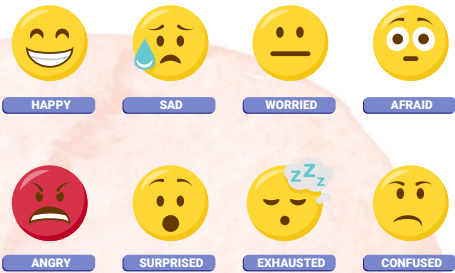
How to Create an Emotion Regulation Plan with Your Child



An Emotion Regulation Plan can be used by anyone who might experience intense emotions (so, it’s for all of us!). Sometimes when we feel emotions such as frustration, excitement, anger, or sadness, we do or say things we regret later. An Emotion Regulation Plan is a tool that helps us recognize the emotions we’re feeling, think about why we’re feeling them, and identify appropriate responses.

These plans can be especially helpful for kids as their brains are developing and learning skills that will help them well into adulthood. Being able to regulate emotions is key to having healthy interpersonal relationships, positive experiences at school and work, and a more peaceful life overall.

Feelings Chart



How to Create an Emotion Regulation Plan

Identifying and talking about emotions with a supportive adult who is calm and caring can be empowering for a child. To help your child create an Emotion Regulation Plan, start by downloading our free template at kvchospitals.org/ERtemplate then follow these three steps:

STEP 1:

Help your child identify three to five “triggers” they experience most often. A trigger is something that causes intense emotions. Triggers can be situations, people, smells, locations, etc. Write out what happens when they experience those triggers. What emotions do they feel? How does their body react?

STEP 2:

Next, identify coping skills—safe people, places, and activities—to help develop positive habits and tame the intense emotions. If we don’t take the time to identify these or don’t make an effort to use them, we might use unhealthy coping skills such as binge eating, using drugs or alcohol, or putting ourselves in unsafe situations.

- **Safe People:** These are individuals who make your child feel safe and listen when they need to talk. They may be family members, neighbors, friends or a school counselor. Make sure to write down phone numbers so they always know how to contact them.
- **Safe Places:** Think through places your child has available to them at most times. For example, you don’t want to list the zoo because it isn’t always open or accessible. List a place that is available, comforting and relaxing.
- **Safe Activities:** These are meant to distract your child and calm them down. Examples might be going for a walk, drawing pictures, kicking a soccer ball, reading a book, playing games, dancing, etc.

STEP 3:

Try the plan and evaluate if the plan worked. As your child experiences intense emotions, have them try out their coping skills. If one doesn’t help them, try another from the list. Keep going until they find something that works. Once your child is regulated, talk about what did and didn’t work. If they experience a trigger that isn’t listed on the plan and they’re likely to experience it again, add it to the plan. The plan is meant to work for each individual, so adapt it to work best for them.

My Self-Care Plan

Step 1: My Emotional Experience

Triggers		Recurring Emotional Experiences
1	➡	
2	➡	
3	➡	
4	➡	
5	➡	

Step 2: My Coping Skills

My Safe People

1. Name: _____	Phone: _____
2. Name: _____	Phone: _____
3. Name: _____	Phone: _____

My Safe Places

- _____
- _____
- _____

My Safe Activities

- _____
- _____
- _____

Step 3: Did it work?

Notes about my Self-Care Plan: _____

KVC Hospitals
Children's Psychiatric Treatment
We all need connection.
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Tips for Working Through This Process With Your Child

- Do this activity in a supportive and calm space with few distractions.
- Tell your child why you think this activity is important. Consider creating your own plan with them to model how it’s helpful.
- Let them do most of the talking. Offer suggestions if they ask.
- Do not minimize the emotions or experiences they identify. Respect their truth.
- If they pick coping skills that sound unrealistic, ask them to walk you through what that would look like. If they are resistant to feedback, don’t get into a power struggle. This is a learning experience for them and it will come with time.
- Provide breaks as needed. It can be a lot to process and breaks are rejuvenating.
- If they have a hard time identifying triggers or coping skills, that’s okay. It can take some time for them to understand themselves and what they need.
- It can be helpful to hang their plan up (possibly in their room or on the refrigerator), save a picture of it on their phone, or keep a copy in their backpack so they can refer to it whenever they need it.
- Educate them about all emotions to help them identify what they are feeling.

Start regulating today!

Download the free template at kvchospitals.org/ERtemplate.

People on the Move

PROMOTION



Michelle Lawrence
President
KVC Foundation, Olathe, KS
7 years with KVC

Michelle Lawrence has been named the first-ever President of the KVC Foundation, which is the philanthropic arm of the organization. The KVC Foundation seeks strategic investments and donations from federal and state agencies, private foundations, corporate foundations, and individuals to support medical and behavioral healthcare, social services and educational programs and initiatives that strengthen families and communities. Contributions benefit local KVC

services nationwide. In her previous role as Vice President of Development, Michelle successfully led multiple KVC capital campaigns and program expansion initiatives, securing more than \$20 million in her tenure to help open the KVC Institute for Health Systems Innovation; KVC Hospitals Wichita, a 54-bed acute children’s psychiatric treatment center; a renovated KVC Niles and more. Michelle has over 29 years of experience in healthcare, nonprofit resource development, child advocacy and community outreach.

PROMOTION



Jyotsna Adma, M.D.
Medical Director – Psychiatry Services
KVC Hospitals
14 years with KVC
As Medical Director of Psychiatry Services, Dr. Jyotsna Adma oversees child psychiatry at our youth inpatient hospitals and residential treatment centers in Kansas City, Wichita and Hays.

PROMOTION



Amanda Everson, LMSW
Child Placing Agency Director
KVC Missouri, Kansas City, MO
6 years with KVC
Amanda helps recruit, train and support foster families to care for children. KVC Missouri is focused on treatment-level foster care in which families care for youth with higher needs.

PROMOTION



Beth Jaworski
Creative Director
KVC Health Systems, Olathe, KS
2 years with KVC
As Creative Director, Beth brings KVC’s brand to life across print, digital, video and more. She manages the KVC Health Systems website and social media and leads supporter communication.

NEW HIRE



Joleen Sams, MSN, APRN
Director of Nursing
KVC Hospitals Kansas City
Joleen coordinates all aspects of nursing at KVC Hospitals Kansas City, ensures high-quality patient care, and maintains compliance with regulatory bodies.

PROMOTION



Taylor Ziegler, RN
Director of Nursing
KVC Hospitals
7 years with KVC
As Director of Nursing at KVC Hospitals, Taylor oversees nursing and program services for each of KVC’s children’s psychiatric hospitals and residential treatment facilities.

Careers that change lives — starting with yours.

Join Our Team

KVC Health Systems
We all need connection.

kvc.org/careers

The Importance of Fostering and Adopting Teens



Teens don’t outgrow the need for a loving family. There are thousands of older children who still need to be fostered or adopted by loving families nationwide. Foster care can make a major positive impact on these older teens. Let’s look at why.

The numbers behind teen adoption and fostering

More than 15,000 18-year-olds will age out of foster care without finding an adoptive family. Approximately one in five children in U.S. foster care waiting to be adopted are teens, but only 5% of all children adopted in 2017 were 15–18 years old. These kids won’t have anyone to call about a flat tire, job interviews, first dates, and so much more. Fostering and/or adopting these kids into a loving family can impact their lives in a big, meaningful way. They also impact your life—helping you grow as a person and a parent in unexpected ways.

Teens’ futures are at risk — foster parents can make a difference!

Teens who age out of foster care without a permanent support system are at increased risk of homelessness, young parenthood, low educational attainment, and other issues. Youth who age out of foster care are less likely to graduate high school and earn a college education too.

For example, only half of youth who were once in foster care finish high school, and less than 3% graduate college. These devastating outcomes are often a result of emotional issues, difficulty achieving passing grades, and mental health challenges. However, committed foster parenting can help mitigate their risk status.

Foster Parents Adopt Teen Siblings from Foster Care

Kelsey and Jason Stock are KVC foster parents who are about to adopt teen siblings from foster care. In a recent TV news story, they discussed their fostering and adopting journey and highlighted the need to provide loving homes for youth in need, especially teens and sibling groups.



How You Can Help

In the foster care system nationwide, more foster parents are needed than ever before. If you’re interested, we’d love to answer any questions you may have and guide you through the process.

Learn more at www.kvc.org/foster.

At 2021 Celebration, KVC Health Systems

Honored Heroes, Thanked Supporters and Shared Its Impact

On October 21, KVC Health Systems hosted its 2021 Annual Celebration. KVC hosts this event every October to thank our generous supporters who have enabled us to strengthen families, prevent child abuse and neglect, and help people achieve mental health wellness.

60,088
people served and positively impacted by KVC this year



This year’s event was fully virtual and appeared on KVC’s YouTube channel. Participants heard from our President and CEO Jason Hooper, were inspired by the stories of people who’ve been helped by KVC and watched as KVC recognized our wonderful values-driven partners and heroes. We also unveiled our 2021 Impact Report, which you can view online at kvc.org/impact.



Due to the unprecedented circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic, we presented our annual Hero Award to **Dr. Anh Vinh and KVC’s essential frontline team members nationwide**. As Executive Medical Director of KVC Hospitals, Dr. Anh Vinh provided agency-wide COVID-19 guidance so children could still safely access critical mental health treatment during the pandemic. Our essential frontline workers courageously continued providing child welfare and mental health services to those in need.

19,972

Children & adults benefited from our in-home services, such as family therapy and behavioral healthcare

5,762
Foster caregivers trained or supported

3,311

Admissions treated at our psychiatric hospitals and residential treatment centers

We also honored several individuals, families, and organizations for demonstrating KVC’s values.

Values-Driven Partner Award Recipients:

The heart of our work is helping people.

- ▶ Ticket to Dream Foundation

Our character is built on authenticity & compassion.

- ▶ Vivid Home Group

Family connection drives our culture.

- ▶ Jonathan & Katie Stahl and Bobbie & Corey Friedemann, foster families

Collaboration fuels our improvement.

- ▶ FFTA West Virginia Chapter

Urgency and innovation mark our approach.

- ▶ Children’s Alliance Kentucky

Diverse perspectives are key to our progress.

- ▶ Joni Cooke, lead donor for Safe & Connected™ digital learning platform

Watch our Annual Celebration online at kvc.org/celebrate.

Read our 2021 Impact Report online at kvc.org/impact.





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This Year, Start a New Tradition Be a Holiday Hero!

**This holiday season, you can help
children and families near you!**

You can make the holidays bright by donating gifts for children in our child welfare or children's psychiatric treatment services. We're looking for individuals, community and faith-based organizations, and businesses of all sizes to be Holiday Heroes!

We need Holiday Heroes in:

Kansas | Missouri | Nebraska | Kentucky | West Virginia

Sign up at www.kvc.org/holidayhero



Please Recycle

