



CYN CONNECTION

JANUARY 2025

INSIGHTS AND UPDATES ON

Supporting Families and Strengthening Communities

A Note from Our Executive Director, Gail Weil



As we step into 2025, it's important to reflect on the progress we made together over the past year. In 2024, CYN Counseling Center expanded its services, reaching more schools and families across Lake County and beyond.

We added to our team and continued to provide accessible, high-quality mental health care to those who need it most. These successes wouldn't be possible without the hard work of our staff and the unwavering support of our community.

Looking ahead, we are focused on continuing to grow and improve. This year, we plan to expand our school-based therapy programs and strengthen initiatives that directly impact children, families, and individuals in our community.

As we embrace the opportunities of the new year, I encourage each of you to prioritize your mental health. Whether it's setting realistic goals, practicing self-care, or reaching out for support, small steps can make a big difference in your overall well-being.

Thank you for supporting us! Here's to a brighter year ahead.

In this newsletter:

New staff, mental health resources, program updates, and more. Keep reading!

Add to your calendar:

1. Lake County Joy Summit: January 25
2. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, January 20



Meet our new staff!

HUNTER NELSON, LCSW

Hunter Nelson is a licensed clinical social worker with experience in case management, adoption, quality assurance, and therapy. She focuses on helping individuals, couples, and families work through challenges with practical tools and support. Using a mix of clinical approaches and mindfulness, Hunter provides a space where clients can address issues like anxiety, depression, and relationship dynamics.

Outside of work, Hunter values spending time with her family and understands the importance of balancing time for others with time for yourself.



Start Small: Making Mental Health Goals Stick in the New Year

ADVICE FROM OUR THERAPISTS

As the new year begins, many of us feel motivated to set big, transformative goals. While ambition is great, starting small can often lead to greater success—especially when it comes to mental health.

Here are three simple tips to keep in mind as you set your goals for 2025:

- 1. Be Realistic:** Keep it manageable! Instead of a broad "be less stressed" goal, aim for something more specific like "take 10 minutes every morning to breathe deeply and reset." You'll be surprised how quickly those little moments add up.
- 2. Manage Stress and Anxiety:** Create a routine that includes self-care and relaxation—think exercise, hobbies, or just a cup of tea. And remember, you're allowed to say "no" to things that don't align with your goals or mental health.
- 3. Foster Emotional Wellness:** Have regular family check-ins to talk about how everyone is feeling. Simple traditions like weekly game nights or shared walks can do wonders for emotional connections and stress reduction.

Remember, mental health is a journey, not a destination. Small changes can add up to significant progress over time. If you're not sure where to start, consider reaching out to a professional for support—we're here to help!

Call us at (847) 548-6000 for info about our services.

Self-care is not a luxury; it's a necessity.





JANUARY IS NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH

CYN's Therapeutic Mentoring Program offers free, personalized support for Lake County residents aged 11–17, helping them overcome challenges and build skills for a brighter future. Using the Transition to Independence Process (TIP) framework, mentors meet weekly for 1–3 hours, tailoring activities like sports, crafts, or farm visits to each youth's goals.

Sessions focus on life transitions such as wellness, education, career exploration, and relationships, while also providing tools to make informed decisions about substance use and overall well-being.

The program promotes academic success, self-esteem, and healthy relationships while reducing risky behaviors and building resilience, independence, and confidence in youth.

[Read more on our website](#)

Insight from a Mentee

"Before I started with CYN's mentoring program, I didn't really know how to handle everything I was dealing with. School was stressful, and I felt like I didn't have anyone to talk to about it. My mentor helped me see things differently. We'd work on stuff I cared about, like basketball or art, and use it to figure out ways to deal with stress and set goals. Now I'm doing better in school and feeling more confident about my future. Having someone there to guide me made all the difference."

Click below to support us!

HERE'S WHAT WE'RE DOING IN LAKE COUNTY AND BEYOND.

Join CYN and other community partners for the 1st Annual Joy Summit on Saturday, January 25 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Zion-Benton Township High School. This event is all about bringing joy and wellness to our community during the chilly months, especially for those affected by seasonal challenges. Let's build a happier, healthier Lake County!

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