



What's SA Ppening

Brought to you by the Center For Humanistic Change Student Assistance Program Liaisons

April 2018

April is:

- Alcohol Awareness Month
- National Child Abuse



Prevention Month

- National Autism Awareness Month
- National Youth Sports Safety Month
- Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month
- National Distracted



Driving Awareness Month

- Week of the Young Child (**April 16-20**)
- World Immunization Week (**April 24-30**)
- World Health Day (**April 7**)



Vaping: The Good, The Bad, The Ugly

Many schools across Lehigh County are experiencing issues with vaping, the most commonly used form of tobacco for middle and high schoolers. While cigarette-smoking rates among teens have declined significantly over the last few decades, e-cigarettes have emerged as the substitute. Critics insist that the flavored liquids (mint, fruit, chocolate, etc.) for the devices are luring adolescents to the habit, at an age when nicotine is detrimental for their brain development.

Still, vaping with e-cigarettes is less harmful than traditional smoking products and may help smokers quit, concludes a recent report by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, a panel of public health experts. By switching to electronic devices, smokers can reduce exposure to deadly tar, dangerous chemicals, and other carcinogens. **However, the committee did NOT declare that e-cigarettes are safe**, noting the lack of long-term scientific studies. Vaping with devices that contain nicotine can be addictive and may prompt teenagers to try regular cigarettes. The panel also cited proof that in addition to nicotine, most e-cigarettes contain and emit potentially toxic ingredients. Researchers at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health found unsafe levels of chemicals like lead and arsenic in e-cigarette vapors. A study of adolescents, conducted at the University of California, San Francisco, discovered the same cancer-causing chemicals in e-cigarette users as people who smoked traditional cigarettes. A newly published New York University School of Medicine report indicates that vaping may put users at a "higher risk" of cancer and heart disease. In addition, researchers at the University of Rochester Medical Centre learned that exposure to commonly used e-cigarette flavoring chemicals and liquids can cause significant inflammation of one type of white blood cell. Many flavoring compounds are toxic, with cinnamon, vanilla, and buttery flavors among the worst. Most have **not** been tested for safety when inhaled with an e-cigarette. The study also determined that mixing flavors is much worse than using just one. When inhaled through e-cigarette vapor, diacetyl (a chemical responsible for butter flavoring) causes "popcorn lung"--a scarring of the tiny air sacs in the lungs resulting in the thickening and narrowing of airways. "Popcorn lung" is a serious disease with coughing, wheezing, and shortness of breath, similar to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

While the U.S. Surgeon General concluded that e-cigarette use among youth is a public health concern, most agree that more, and better, research is needed to clarify whether vaping devices reduce or induce harm. (Sources: <http://nationalacademies.org/hmd/Reports/2018/public-health-consequences-of-e-cigarettes.aspx>. Tsai, James, MD and others. "Reasons for Electronic Cigarette Use among Middle and High School Students." www.cdc.gov. February 16, 2018. Kaplan, Sheila. "Vaping Can Be Addictive and May Lure Teenagers to Smoking, Science Panel Concludes." www.nytimes.com. January 23, 2018; Fingas, Jon. "Study Says E-cigarettes Increase Risk of

'Second Victims' of Opioid Crisis

The number of pediatric intensive care unit (PICU) admissions for opioid overdoses **doubled** between 2004 and 2015, found a recent study by researchers from the University of Chicago Medicine. The majority of these patients were ages 12-17, but a third of patients were **younger than six years old**. "Prescription drug poisonings are the leading cause of injury-related deaths in the nation," stated Dr. Jason Kane, lead author of the report. The medical community is concerned with the progressive rise in hospitalizations for this population, which contrasts with adult admissions that seem to have plateaued. (Source: Carlton, Kat. "New Research: Additional Measures Needed to Curb



PASAP Award Winners

Congratulations to the Bethlehem elementary SAP teams on winning the Pennsylvania Association of Student Assistance Professionals (PASAP) Distinguished Elementary SAP Team of the Year Award! These teams support research-based prevention programs and foster positive connections with students, parents, and the community. E-SAP/MTSS District Coach Regina Blizzard accepted the award at PASAP's convention in State College on February 25.

The Aftermath of School Shootings

At 10:00 am on March 14, thousands of students across the nation walked out of their schools to demand stricter gun laws and to show solidarity for the 17 students killed in Parkland, FL, in February. Some released balloons while others held moments of silence or read aloud the names of the victims. A few schools held assemblies to discuss school safety and the value of being kind to one another. "We should never go to school in fear of our lives," said a tearful Columbine High School sophomore. "Enough is enough." A 15-year-old high school student in Oregon said that she and her friends talk about where they could hide if gunfire erupted in their school. "I would say I think about the possibility of a shooting in my life regularly," she noted.

Following a school violence event, it's natural for children to worry about their school and their safety. Dr. Alec L. Miller, a child psychologist with New York's Montefiore Medical Center/Albert Einstein College of Medicine, suggests encouraging "kids to talk about what's upsetting to them." To guide parents and counselors through these difficult discussions, the National Mental Health Association offers the following suggestions:

- ◆ **Encourage children to talk about their concerns and to express their feelings.** Some may be hesitant to initiate this conversation, so you may want to prompt them by asking if they feel safe at school.
- ◆ **Talk honestly about your own feelings regarding school violence.** It's important for children to recognize they are not dealing with their fears alone.
- ◆ **Validate children's feelings.** Do not minimize a child's concerns. Let him/her know that serious school violence is not common, which is why these incidents attract so much media attention. Stress that schools are safe places.
- ◆ **Empower children to take action regarding school safety.** Encourage them to report specific incidents (such as bullying, threats, or talk of suicide) and to develop problem solving and conflict resolution skills.
- ◆ **Discuss the safety procedures that are in place at schools.** Explain why visitors sign in at the main office or certain doors remain locked during the school day. Help your child understand that such precautions are in place to ensure his or her safety and stress the importance of following school rules and policies.
- ◆ **Create safety plans.** Help identify which adults (a friendly secretary or trusted teacher) your child can talk to if he/she feels threatened at school. Also ensure that your child knows how to reach you (or another family member or friend) in case of a crisis during the school day.
- ◆ **Recognize behavior that may indicate your child is concerned about returning to school.** Younger children may react to a school incident by not wanting to attend school or participate in activities. Teens and adolescents may minimize their concerns outwardly, but may become argumentative, withdrawn, or allow their school performance to decline.
- ◆ **Keep the dialogue going.** Make school safety a common topic in family discussions rather than just a response to an immediate crisis.
- ◆ **Seek help when necessary.** If you are worried about a child's reaction or concerned about his/her behavior or emotions, contact a mental health professional at school or at your community mental health center.

(Sources: Bacon, John and Hayes, Christal. "We Deserve Better": Students Nationwide Walk Out in Massive Protest Over Gun Violence." *www.usatoday.com*. March 14, 2018. Yee, Vivian and Blinder, Alan. National School Walkout: Thousands Protest Against Gun Violence Across the U.S.")



RIDE & RALLY 2018

(Heroin Opioid Prevention Education)

Alburtis Park & Fire Company

Saturday, April 21st

Registration at 10:00 am/Ride noon-1:30 pm





Parent Resource Corner



genderspectrum

Online facilitated discussion groups for pre-teens and teens who are transgender, non-binary, or gender expansive. Support groups and information for parents. Connections to Spanish speakers and resources. Register at <https://www.genderspectrum.org/groups/>.

Thank you to our newsletter sponsor—the Lehigh County Department of Human Services, Drug and Alcohol Division!

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