

## Celebrated/Observed in April:

Alcohol Awareness Month  
Child Abuse Prevention Month  
Community Service Month  
Sexual Assault Awareness & Prevention Month  
National Autism Awareness Month  
April 15th GLSEN Day of Silence  
April 30th National Prescription Take Back Day



## ***Got drugs? Participate in National Prescription Drug Take Back Day.***

**WHY?** Every day, 2,500 kids abuse prescription drugs for the first time. Over 75% of people who abuse prescription pain killers, indicate they got them from friends or relatives.

**HOW?** Turn in your unused or expired medication for safe disposal on **Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup> from 10am-2pm.**

**WHERE?** Locations of drop off sites in Lehigh County can be found at: [www.thehc.org](http://www.thehc.org) → CHC Home page → Notes & News.

## ***Alcohol:***

When we think of alcohol, many of us think of an occasional beverage consumed at parties and family gathers. Most adults recognize the altering effects of alcohol, but how many of us think of alcohol as a toxin being ingested?

Alcohol is actually ethanol, also commonly called ethyl alcohol or drinking alcohol, and is produced by the fermentation of sugars and yeasts. It is a neurotoxic psychoactive drug and one of the oldest recreational drugs used by humans. It can cause alcohol intoxication when consumed in sufficient quantity. When someone is "intoxicated" it is because that person has ingested a toxin, alcohol.

Alcohol is the most frequently used drug by teenagers in the United States. Statistics show that about half of middle school and high school students drink alcohol on a monthly basis and 14% of teens have been intoxicated at least once in the past year. Nearly 8% of teens who drink say that they drink at least five of more alcoholic drinks in a row which is considered binge drinking ([www.medicinenet.com](http://www.medicinenet.com)).

Just a few of the many dangers of teen alcohol use include:

- Alcohol decreases teens' ability to concentrate
- The teenage brain that has been exposed to alcohol is at risk for being smaller in certain parts
- Male teens who drink heavily tend to complete fewer years of education compared to male teens who do not
- The younger a person is when they begin to drink, the more likely they are to develop a problem with alcohol
- Teens who drink are more likely to engage in sexual activity, have unprotected sex, have sex with a stranger, or be the victim or perpetrator of a sexual assault
- Excessive alcohol use can cause or mask other emotional problems like anxiety or depression.

And the list goes on...

As we discuss alcohol with teens, it is important to share that alcohol is a central nervous system depressant and a neurotoxin. The teenage brain is still developing so the adolescent years are not the time to be ingesting a neurotoxin!

Clear communication between adults (parents, teachers and other mentors) about the negative effects of alcohol has been found to significantly decrease teenage drinking. If you suspect a student is drinking, a SAP referral can be the start of assisting the student to get help in order to make better choices.

**Administrator Alert 2015-16:** Act 71 requires all school personnel in grades 6-12 to receive 4 hours of training in suicide awareness and prevention every five years. ***The full four hours does not need to be completed this year.*** The law requires each district to address this requirement in your Professional Development Plan this year.

## GLSEN's Day of Silence: April 15, 2016

The Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network's Day of Silence is a student-led national event that brings attention to anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying and harassment in schools. Students from middle school to college take a vow of silence in an effort to encourage schools and classmates to address the problem of anti-LGBT behavior. Their silence illustrates the silencing effect of bullying and harassment on LGBT students and those perceived to be LGBT.

In 1996, students at the University of Virginia organized the first Day of Silence in response to a class assignment on non-violent protests with over 150 students participating. In 1997, organizers took their effort national and nearly 100 colleges and universities participated. In 2001, GLSEN became the official organizational sponsor for the event.

The Day of Silence has reached students in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, as well as those as far away as New Zealand, Singapore and Russia. More than 10,000 students register their Day of Silence participation with GLSEN every year. Public figures such as Laverne Cox, Jim Parsons, RuPaul, Tyler Oakley, Kirsten Vangsness, Kristin Chenoweth, Billy Bean, Vicky Beeching, Steve Grand, Chely Wright, and many others have publicly supported students participating in the GLSEN Day of Silence.

The GLSEN 2013 National School Climate Survey found that nearly 9 out of 10 LGBT students report verbal, sexual or physical harassment at school and more than 30% report missing at least a day of school in the past month out of fear for their personal safety. Moreover, two of the top three reasons students said their peers were most often bullied at school were actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender expression, according to *From Teasing to Torment: School Climate in America*, a 2005 report by GLSEN and Harris Interactive. The Day of Silence helps bring us closer to making anti-LGBT bullying, harassment and name-calling unacceptable in U.S. schools. **For more information visit [www.dayofsilence.org](http://www.dayofsilence.org).**

### What makes a good SAP referral?

SAP referrals are made on a monthly, weekly and sometimes daily basis at schools across Lehigh County, but are we clear about what makes a good SAP referral? The referral procedure in the SAP process is the first of four steps. It is followed by team planning, interventions and recommendations, and finally, support and follow-up.

As outlined by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Commonwealth Student Assistance Program Interagency Committee at [www.pnsas.org](http://www.pnsas.org), anyone can refer a student to SAP when they are concerned about that student. Good practice includes making a referral for any of the following reasons:

- Any noticeable **change** in a student
- An obvious **change** in a student's grades or observable struggles in the classroom
- Issues that over time could impact a student's learning such as a **change** in family structure
- Disconnect from peers or family or **change** in friends
- Disruptive behaviors, social-emotional concerns, or **changes** in mood or behavior
- Physical **changes** such as deteriorating physical appearance or glassy, bloodshot eyes
- Don't wait until the student is in crisis!

Referrals should be observable behaviors, not opinions, and should be as specific as possible. Remember, this information is available to parents, if requested, and therefore should remain factual.



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