



What's SAPpening

School Name

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

December 2017

December is:

- National Impaired Driving Prevention Month
- National Influenza Vaccination Week (Dec. 3-9)
- National Hand washing Awareness Week (Dec. 3-9)
- World AIDS Day (Dec. 1)
- Special Education Day (Dec. 2)
- International Day of Persons with Disabilities (Dec. 3)
- Human Rights Day (Dec. 10)

National Drug & Alcohol Facts Week

January 22-28, 2018

It's time to start planning your events! During the fourth week of January, schools and organizations across the country and around the world will take part in *National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week* (NDAFW). Sponsored by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, the observance is designed to counteract the myths about drugs and alcohol that teens get from the internet, social media, TV, movies, music, or from friends. NDAFW links teens to science-based facts to **SHATTER THE MYTHS®** about drugs and to learn about drug use and addiction.

More than 270 schools already have promoted their activities for NDAFW on the NIDA website. Here are some ideas for middle school and high school programs:

- announce drug facts in the morning/afternoon
- organize scavenger hunts
- create drug-free murals
- show multi-media presentations
- submit SHATTER THE MYTHS photos/videos
- book guest speakers
- try the National Drug and Alcohol Challenge
- set up a brown bag lunch presentation for parents/community members
- hold a poster campaign/contest
- view power point presentations
- listen to a live chat with scientists on National Drug and Alcohol Chat Day (Jan. 22)
- arrange candle light vigils
- provide resource tables (**ask your SAP Liaison!**)



To assist organizers, NIDA has several themed toolkits for events on a variety of topics from alcohol to tobacco to prescription drugs. There's also a general toolkit in Spanish. Schools can order **free** materials to support their events and download free lesson plans (grades 5-12). For more information, visit NIDA at <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/teachers>.

Although NDAFW is geared towards older

students, elementary schools can focus on learning how to say no to cigarettes, knowing the difference between candy and medicine, and understanding that alcohol and sports don't mix. Here are a few sites to help elementary teachers create events:

- The National Crime Prevention Council has lesson plans and activities for grades K-5 on peer pressure, alcohol, and tobacco at this website: <http://www.npc.org/topics/by-audience/law-enforcement/teaching-children/activities-and-lesson-plans>.
- The National Drug Council of the Cayman Islands created Drug Awareness & Prevention Education for Early Elementary, which focuses on healthy habits and provides a health pledge for students to sign. The workbook is at <http://www.ndc.ky/file/resource/resource/Yr-6-Early-Elementary-Drug-Awareness-Prevention-Workbook.pdf>.
- Another resource for this age group is McGruff's Elementary Drug Prevention Activity Book for grades K-4. Although printed in the 1990s, it has great activities for each grade and tips for using the materials—all reproducible. This book is at <http://www.npc.org/resources/files/pdf/drug-abuse/elementary-drug-prevention-part1.pdf>.

To promote your school's events or find out more about NDAFW, visit <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/national-drug-alcohol-facts-week>. The site has a plethora of information.

(Source: <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/national-drug-alcohol-facts-week>)





Seasonal Doldrums Affect All



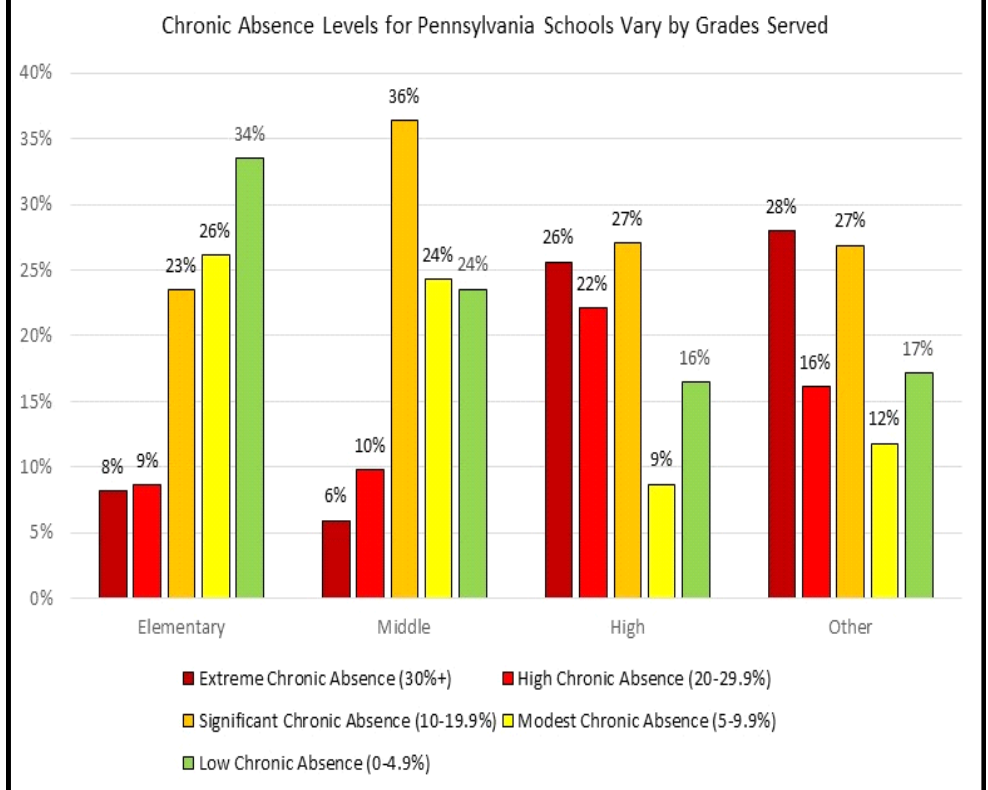
'Tis the season for holiday cheer, gift exchanges, and family get-togethers. Unfortunately, these festivities are not a joyful time for everyone. Sadness, stress, and depression can affect adults, teens, and children. A survey conducted by the American Psychological Association found that 61% percent of participants were stressed, 68% felt fatigued, and 36% reported sadness during the holidays. This time of year can be difficult for those dealing with family conflicts, divorce, loneliness, and mental health issues. While many may hope for a "Hallmark movie" celebration, those expectations are unrealistic for the majority of people. Social media can add to the blues when friends post their "perfect Christmas" photos. For students, there is a drastic change in their busy routines when school lets out. To top it off, the colder, darker days can lead to SAD (seasonal affective disorder). Symptoms include depressed feelings, lack of interest in activities, low energy/sluggishness, sleep difficulties, headaches, change in appetite or weight, agitation, difficulty concentrating, hopeless/worthless/guilty feelings, and thoughts of death or suicide.

If you experience these warning signs, try leaning on a close friend, volunteer for a charity or cause, or talk to a doctor. If you notice these symptoms with your students, make a referral to the SAP team. There is help available.

(Source: <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2006/12/holiday-stress.pdf>, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/12/17/holiday-depression_n_6326906.html, <http://www.health.com/health/gallery/0,,20550695,00.html#learn-to-grieve-0>, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/wired-success/201011/why-people-get-depressed-christmas>, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/wired-success/201011/why-people-get-depressed-christmas>, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/wired-success/201011/why-people-get-depressed-christmas>)

Absenteeism Rates

With the holidays, more students will be absent from the classroom for family trips, some longer than the typical 10-day break. According to the new Pennsylvania law, truancy is defined as three or more days of unexcused absences. Many schools are dealing with students who fall into this category. A recently released analysis of public school attendance (2013-14) found that almost 10,000 public schools across the United States (11% of the survey total) reported that 30% or higher of their students were chronically absent. Another 10,000 schools fall in the 20-to-29% range. According to the study, conducted by *Attendance Works* and the *Everyone Graduates Center*, more than seven million students nationwide are academically at risk



"Show the world it is okay to be not okay. There is no perfect. Mental illness is not weakness, it deserves nurturing and treatment."



notalone.nami.org



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