

What's **SAP**pening

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE CENTER FOR HUMANISTIC CHANGE STUDENT ASSISTANT PROGRAM LIAISONS

April / 2020



Upcoming Events:

- Alcohol Awareness Month
- National Autism Awareness Month
- National Humor Month
- National Poetry Month
- Stress Awareness Month
- Peanut Butter and Jelly Day — April 2
- School Librarian Day — April 4
- National Public Health Week — April 6-12
- Zoo Lover's Day — April 8
- Siblings Day — April 10
- Grilled Cheese Sandwich Day — April 12
- Earth Day — April 22
- Arbor Day — April 24
- World Penguin Day — April 25

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Heroin and other opioids are ravaging communities across the U.S. Deaths from Heroin increased 328% between 2010 and 2015, and drug deaths from Fentanyl and other synthetic opioids are now seeing a sharp rise as well. Fentanyl is 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine. Fentanyl is also being added to marijuana and other street drugs. More Americans die from drug overdoses than in car crashes, and this increasing trend is driven by Rx painkillers.

What Are Opioids?

Opioids are a natural or synthetic, illicit or otherwise which act on the body's opioid receptors and all carry similarly high risks of dependency, addiction and overdose.

Heroin is the most commonly known opioid, and as an illicit drug, it poses additional risks beyond simply being a powerful drug.

But opioids also include common prescription pain relievers, such as OxyContin, Percocet and Vicodin. If misused or abused, these drugs can cause severe harm.

Complicating the landscape even more is Fentanyl and other synthetic opioids. These can be used on their own or be unknowingly mixed into heroin or pills. Deaths from Fentanyl and other synthetic opioids rose 72% in just one year.

What happens when someone is addicted to opioids?

Opioids can create brain changes that lead to addiction. A person addicted develops an overpowering urge, or craving, for the drug. The person also experiences a loss of control and painful withdrawal symptoms, making it more difficult to refuse the drug, even when use becomes harmful. Most people who are addicted to opioids cannot taper off without help.

One of the outcomes of the current opioid epidemic is an increased rate of intravenous (IV) drug use. Nearly half of young people who inject heroin start by misusing prescription (Rx) pain medicine which are opioids.

Safeguard & Dispose of Your Medications

Step 1: Monitor — Would you know if some of your pills were missing? Start by taking note of how many pills are in each of your prescription bottles, and keep track of refills. This goes for your own medicine, as well as for your kids and other members of the household. If your child has been prescribed a medicine, be sure you control the medicine, and monitor dosages and refills. You need to be especially vigilant with



Opioids

medicines that are known to be addictive and commonly abused by teens, such as opioids, benzodiazepines and stimulants.

Step 2: Secure — Secure your prescriptions the same way you would other valuables in your home, like jewelry or cash. Take prescription medicine out of the medicine cabinet and secure them in a place only you know about. If possible, keep all medicines, both prescription and over-the-counter, in a safe place, such as a locked cabinet your child cannot access.

Step 3: Dispose — Safely disposing of expired or unused medicine is a critical step in helping to protect your family and home, and decrease the opportunity for your kids or their friends to abuse your medicine. You can do this by participating in a safe drug disposal program — either a drug take-back day in your community, a drug deactivation bag, or a drug mail-back program. To find a take-back location or event near you, visit the American Medicine Chest Challenge or the DEA website.

If none of these options are available to you, unused medicine can be disposed of at home as a last resort. Mix the medicine with an undesirable substance, such as used coffee grounds or kitty litter, and discard. Do not flush medicine down the drain or toilet. To help prevent unauthorized refills, remove any personal, identifiable information from prescription bottles or pill packages before you throw them away.

The good news, in 2019, drug overdose deaths declined a bit, but that doesn't mean the crisis has been lessened. We are saving more lives through the availability and use of naloxone.

Help & Hope by TEXT

Call or text to learn evidence-based skills and strategies to help you better communicate with your child and motivate them to change behavior or get the help and treatment they need.

<https://drugfree.org/> or text: JOIN to 55753

Nonbinary student sues over misuse of pronouns

A 15-year-old named Roe, who identifies as nonbinary filed a federal lawsuit against a local area school district, alleging that the student was “repeatedly tormented and abused” by being referred to with the wrong pronouns and name. The lawsuit, claims the district subjected the student, to discrimination because of Roe’s gender identity. The lawsuit also claims that the student has an individual education plan for their mental health challenges, but the defendants failed to fully implement the IEP and, by harassing and discriminating against Roe, worsened the student’s gender dysphoria.

Gender dysphoria is defined by the American Psychiatric Association as a conflict between a person’s physical or assigned gender and the gender with which he/she/they identify. “Defendants actually exacerbated Roe’s gender dysphoria, and caused Roe severe regression and severe emotional distress, on account of defendants’ discriminatory and harassing conduct,” the lawsuits states. “Roe felt humiliated and worthless.”

People are nonbinary if their gender identity is not strictly male or female.

The student tried to indicate that “they” and “their” pronouns are preferred along with the student’s preferred name, but the misgendering continued, the lawsuit states.

Roe is requesting that the school district adopt, post and disseminate a nondiscrimination and anti-harassment policy that provides that gender dysphoria is a covered disability protected from discrimination and allows students to be treated consistent with their gender identity, including using gender-appropriate facilities and referred to by preferred pronouns and names.

They are also requesting to be compensated for any damages, such as self-harm and emotional distress.



Gaming and Technology

Did you know that children with untreated ADHD are having gaming addictions? Gambling and or gaming addictions have the same effect on the brain as a drug or alcohol addiction. It is that rush of dopamine to the brain that hooks them with the anticipation of the win. We are seeing kids as early as 8-9 with some level of gambling addiction spending thousands of their parents money on their games without the parents even knowing it at first. Boys tend to start earlier than girls, but it is a problem for both. Kids with poor coping skills are more susceptible. Teens and people in their 20s have the highest rate of gambling problems.

According to the Pennsylvania Youth Survey, one in three students (36.0%) have gambled in their lifetime and nearly one in ten (9.9%) have gambled in the past month.

Research findings suggest that youth who are experiencing problem gambling are at an in-

creased risk for substance use, health issues, and mental health issues to include suicidal behavior (60% with suicidal ideation and 20% with attempts). These statistics underscore the importance of increased awareness of and action to address problem gambling.

In casino gambling the most popular game is the EMG (electronic gaming machine) known as the slot machine. It is so popular and highly addictive due to its rapid speed of play. You can place an EMG bet every six seconds. This is similar to drugs, in that quick-acting substances that are taken frequently (such as cigarettes) tend to be the most addictive. Similarly, in gaming the rewards are ten times faster because of the technology. Online gaming can be considered a gateway drug. It is a reward driven drug that kids can get early in life.

We know that the brain changes significantly from addiction. If they start gambling early (around 12) they are more likely to have a gambling problem since their brain isn’t fully developed. This generation tends to be more reward driven, doing something over and over again and are less patient. Technology is producing more polyaddictive addictions, waiting is not in their persona.

Bottom line: Screen time related problem behaviors overlap with ATOD risk factors. Thus, addressing gambling behaviors is addressing ATOD prevention.

Loot boxes have been appearing in all the top games like Fortnite, Call of Duty, etc. Between 2010 and 2019, loot boxes have increased in appearance from 4% of the top games to 71%. It’s basically a “mystery box” that can be found during gameplay or purchased with real money. You can think of it as a comparison to the roulette wheel, where you are wagering something that you have in your hand of value now on the uncertain hope of getting something of greater value later. Some countries have mandated the regulation of them, like warning labels on cigarette boxes, and some have even banned them altogether. Loot boxes are grooming children to normalize gambling activity so they end up growing up thinking there is nothing wrong with pressing buttons and spending money on something that’s not real. This is why students need to start learning earlier in their life what problem gambling is and how to make better choices in life and understand risk.



Stacked Deck is a gambling prevention, evidenced-based program. It is the only program that is proven to actually change students behavior, decreasing both gambling and problem gambling. It helps educate about the various facets of gambling, including its role in today’s culture, how the principles of chance are important when playing these games, and how to recognize the signs of problem gambling.

To schedule the **Stacked Deck Program** contact us at: wtexter@thechc.org

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