

October

Upcoming Events

- National Bullying Prevention Month
- World Teacher Day 10/5
- National Depression Screening Day 10/8
- National Coming Out Day 10/11
- **SAP Consortium 10/8**
Visit CHC website to register! - www.thechc.org

Center for Humanistic Change

3400 Bath Pike / Suite 306
Bethlehem, PA 18017
610-443-1595
www.thechc.org

For more information contact:
Wendy Texter / SAP Manager
wtexter@thechc.org

CHC Student Assistance Program Team

Sahar Giacobbe: Sr. Liaison
sgiacobbe@thechc.org

Cathy Blair: Liaison
cblair@thechc.org

Kathy Brand: Liaison
kbrand@thechc.org

Chrissy Confer: Liaison
cconfer@thechc.org

Erin Moore: Liaison
emoore@thechc.org

Moriah Rogers: Liaison
mrogers@thechc.org

Nancy Salomon: Liaison
nsalomon@thechc.org

Jackie Vogel: Liaison
jvogel@thechc.org

Stephanie Dorney:
SAP Commonwealth Trainer
sdorney@thechc.org



Ketamine use among young people has increased significantly in recent years, raising concerns among addiction and healthcare professionals. While ketamine has legitimate medical uses, recreational use can lead to serious physical and mental health consequences.

Ketamine is a dissociative drug that can create dream-like sensations, distort time, and make users feel detached from their bodies. Because its effects are relatively short-lived and the drug can be inexpensive, some young people may view it as a safer alternative to other substances. It is

not risk-free, and repeated use can lead to addiction and serious health problems.

Serious Physical Effects

One of the most concerning consequences of frequent ketamine use is damage to the bladder and urinary system. Ketamine is processed through urine and can cause severe inflammation of the bladder.

Early symptoms may resemble a urinary tract infection and can include:

- Frequent or painful urination
- Blood in the urine
- Bladder or abdominal pain
- Loss of bladder control

With continued use, bladder damage can become severe and, in some cases, permanent. Some individuals have required major surgery to repair or reconstruct their bladder. Ketamine can also contribute to memory problems, confusion, hallucinations, and other mental health concerns.

Why Do Young People Keep Using?

For some young people, ketamine begins as a social or recreational drug but becomes a way to cope with anxiety, depression, trauma, grief, or emotional distress. The temporary feeling of escape can reinforce continued use—even as negative consequences increase.

This can create a difficult cycle: the drug may seem to provide relief from emotional pain while ultimately creating additional physical, emotional, and social problems.

Prevention and Early Intervention Matter

Parents, educators, and other caring adults should be aware of changing drug trends and understand that addiction is more complicated than simply telling someone to “stop.”

Warning signs such as changes in behavior, declining school performance, withdrawal from activities, memory problems, or unexplained urinary symptoms should not be ignored.

Most importantly, young people struggling with substance use need support rather than shame. Early intervention, mental health support, substance-use treatment, and open communication can make a significant difference.

The best prevention starts with understanding why young people use substances—and making sure they have healthier ways to cope, connect, and ask for help.



How to Work Well With Your Child's Teacher

Tips for building collaboration and navigating disagreements

It is important establish a strong relationship with your child's teacher, especially if your child has a learning disorder.

Reach out at the beginning of the school year and introduce yourself. Tell them about your child's strengths, challenges, and any specific goals they are working toward. As the year goes on, keep the teacher informed of any significant events in your child's life that could impact their schoolwork or behavior, but also, feel free to ask the teacher about how your child is doing, even if you don't have immediate concerns. This proactive approach can catch potential issues early.

Before meeting with your child's teacher, it's helpful to write down key points you want to discuss. Establish clear action items and then set a date to check back in on them. Try to approach conflict or disagreements in the spirit of concern for your child, rather than placing blame. Emphasize that you want to work with the teacher to find solutions and frame your concerns in a positive light. If your child is older, consider inviting them to join in discussions with teachers to express their own thoughts and concerns. Help them practice and prepare for conversations when necessary.

Aim to keep an open line of communication with your child's teacher, even when things are going well. Sharing positive feedback and praise for a teacher's efforts will only strength the relationship and make them feel appreciated. Remember that both you and the teacher share a common goal: supporting your child's growth and well-being.

School Success Kit for Kids With ADHD

Simple tools and strategies to help children with ADHD stay organized, focused, and successful at school.

Starting a new school year can be challenging for children with ADHD. These strategies can help them manage time, stay focused, complete homework, and build confidence.

Stay Organized: Use a school calendar to track assignments and due dates. Color-coding can help prioritize tasks. A digital calendar with reminders can also keep students—and parents—on track.

Have Backups: Keep extra supplies and frequently lost items on hand to prevent last-minute stress and delays.

Choose the Right Seat: Sitting near the front of the classroom can reduce distractions and make it easier for teachers to provide support when needed.

Create a Homework Routine: Set up a quiet, organized workspace and establish a consistent schedule. Encourage short movement breaks and provide healthy snacks.

Manage Time: Timers can help children understand how long assignments take and remind them when it is time to move on. Breaking larger assignments into smaller tasks can also make them more manageable.

Use Concentration Aids: White noise, calming music, or a fan may help reduce distractions during homework. Recording or dictation tools can also help students review instructions or information they missed.

Save and Back Up Work: Encourage students to use programs that automatically save and back up their work, such as Google Docs, to prevent lost assignments.

Get Moving: Regular physical activity can support focus and attention. Encourage children to participate in activities they enjoy, such as sports, hiking, dance, or gymnastics.

Communicate With Teachers: Let teachers know how your child learns best and discuss strategies that may help. If appropriate, address accommodations through an IEP or other school support plan.

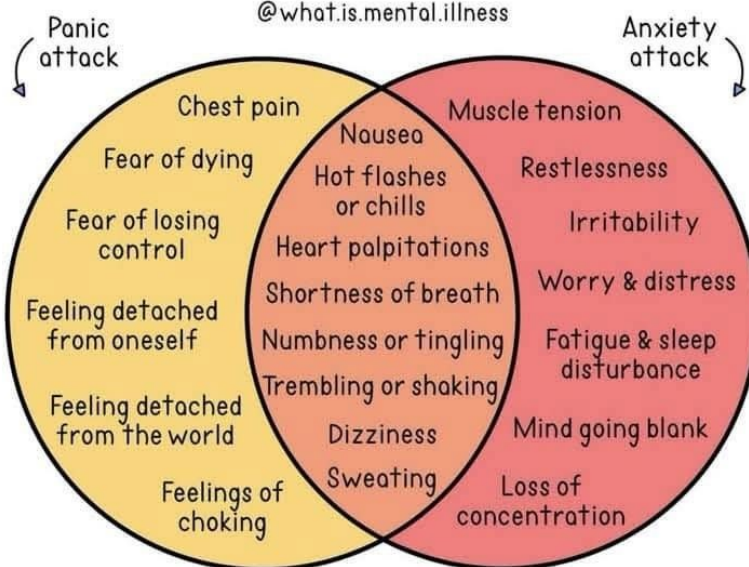
Encourage Self-Advocacy: Help children learn to communicate their needs and talk with teachers when they need assistance. Building these skills early can increase confidence and independence.

Start Fresh: Past struggles do not have to define the new school year. Talk with your child about concerns or anxieties and work together to create a positive plan for moving forward.

With the right tools, structure, and support, children with ADHD can develop the skills and confidence they need to succeed at school.

Panic attack vs anxiety attack

@what.is.mental.illness





THE RED ZONE

Very High Energy • Intense Emotions
Out of Control • Need Help ♥

It's okay to
need help.
You are not
your feelings.



WHAT IS THE RED ZONE?

The Red Zone is when your emotions are very intense. You might feel out of control, overwhelmed, or unsafe.



Your body is in overdrive.

It's a sign that you need to stop, get support, and use strategies to feel safe again.



HOW I MIGHT FEEL

- Angry
- Terrified
- Panicked
- Overwhelmed
- Yelling or screaming
- Out of control
- Crying hard
- Wanting to hurt myself or others



WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

- Heart beating fast
- Breathing hard
- Tense muscles
- Red or hot face
- Pacing or restless
- Hitting, kicking, or throwing things
- Can't think clearly
- Unable to calm down on my own



TOOLS THAT CAN HELP ME GET BACK TO GREEN ♥

TAKE SPACE



Step away to a safe, quiet space.

TAKE DEEP BREATHS



Breathe in for 4, hold for 4, breathe out for 6.

USE A CALMING TOOL



Listen to music, use a fidget, or squeeze something.

COUNT OR GROUND MYSELF

5-4-3-2-1

Name 5 things you see, 4 you feel, 3 you hear, 2 you smell, 1 you taste.

WRITE IT OUT



Write down how you feel. Get it out.

ASK FOR HELP



Talk to a trusted adult or someone who can help.



It's not weak to ask for help.



REMEMBER:

The Red Zone doesn't last forever.
You can get back to Green.
One small step at a time.



You are strong.
You've got this.



NEURODIVERSE CLASSROOM CHECKLIST

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR CREATING AN INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- ☐ Flexible seating options (e.g., wobble stools, floor cushions, standing desks)
- ☐ Quiet zones or sensory retreat spaces
- ☐ Minimal visual clutter on walls and bulletin boards
- ☐ Alternative workspace areas for individual work
- ☐ Noise-reducing headphones or ear defenders available

EMOTIONAL & SOCIAL SUPPORT

- ☐ A designated safe space for emotional regulation
- ☐ Offer emotion check ins and coping strategies
- ☐ Use personalised social stories
- ☐ Clear and consistent rules with positive reinforcement
- ☐ Use positive reinforcement strategies (e.g., reward systems, verbal praise, token boards)
- ☐ Model and teach conflict resolution skills (e.g., role-playing, guided problem-solving)
- ☐ Provide structured social opportunities (e.g., lunchtime clubs)

SENSORY ADJUSTMENTS

- ☐ Access to fidget tools or stress relievers (e.g., putty, chewable necklaces)
- ☐ Visual schedules and classroom expectations clearly displayed
- ☐ Choice of low-stimulation and high-stimulation areas
- ☐ Permission for movement breaks
- ☐ Consideration of smells (avoid strong scents)

COMMUNICATION & INSTRUCTION

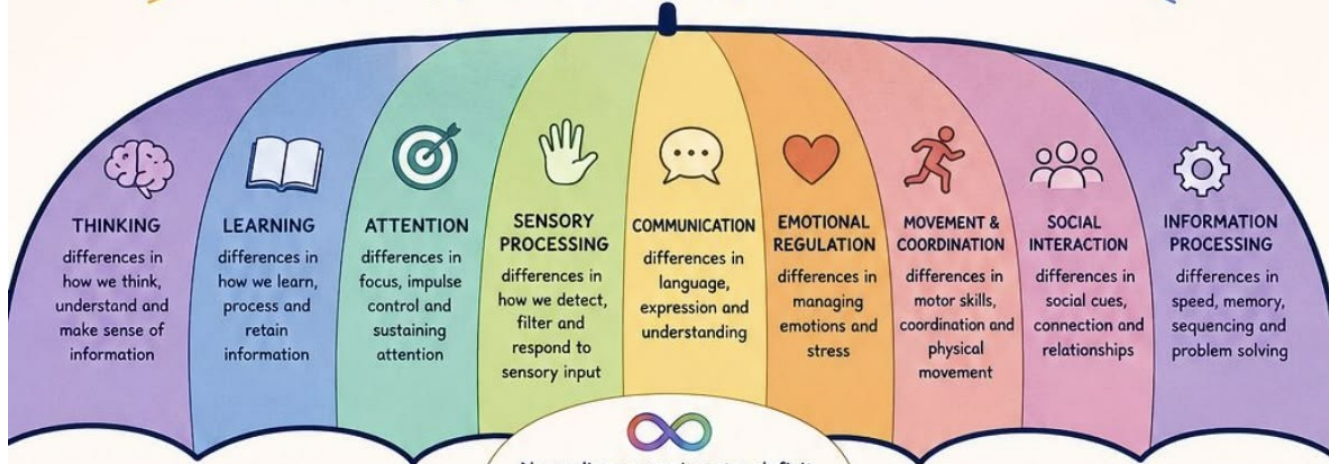
- ☐ Visual supports (e.g., written instructions, diagrams, picture cues)
- ☐ Step-by-step breakdown of complex tasks
- ☐ Advance warning for transitions or schedule changes
- ☐ Countdown clocks for time management

FLEXIBILITY

- ☐ Multiple ways to complete tasks (written, verbal, creative projects)
- ☐ Individualised learning plans when needed
- ☐ Open discussions about neurodiversity to foster a supportive classroom

NEURODIVERGENT

An umbrella term for natural variations in how brains work, process, and experience the world. ❤️



Neurodivergence is not a deficit.
It's a different, not less.

DEVELOPMENTAL NEURODIVERGENCE

Usually present from childhood.



Autism Spectrum Disorder
Differences in social interaction, communication, interests, sensory processing and routines.



ADHD
Differences in attention, hyperactivity, impulsivity, energy regulation and executive functioning.



Dyslexia
Affects reading, spelling, writing, memory and language processing.



Dyspraxia (DCD)
Affects coordination, planning, motor skills and sometimes speech and sensory processing.



Dyscalculia
Affects understanding of numbers, maths concepts, patterns and time.



Dysgraphia
Affects handwriting, writing fluency and organising thoughts on paper.



Tourette Syndrome
Involves motor and vocal tics.



Auditory Processing Disorder (APD)
Difficulty processing and interpreting sounds despite normal hearing.



Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD)
Differences in responding to sensory input such as sound, light, touch, taste or movement.

COGNITIVE OR INTELLECTUAL DIFFERENCES



Intellectual Disability
Differences in intellectual functioning and adaptive skills.



Giftedness & Twice-Exceptionality (2e)
Includes people who are exceptionally gifted and also have neurodivergent traits (e.g., autistic, ADHD, dyslexic).

MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

More debated, but many in the neurodiversity community include long-term mental health conditions as they involve enduring neurological differences.



Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)



Bipolar Disorder



Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)



Anxiety Disorders

NEUROLOGICAL CONDITIONS

Some people also include:



Epilepsy



Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)



Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS)



Other neurological conditions

IMPORTANT IDEAS WITHIN NEURODIVERSITY



Natural variation
Differences in brains are a natural part of human diversity.



Not simply 'defects'
Focus on strengths, differences and support – not 'fixing'.



Strengths & challenges
Everyone has both. Differences can include unique abilities, perspectives and talents.



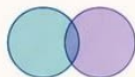
Environment matters
Support, understanding, inclusion, education and reduced stigma make a huge difference.

COMMON SHARED EXPERIENCES

- ✓ Sensory overwhelm
- ✓ Burnout
- ✓ Masking / camouflaging
- ✓ Executive functioning difficulties
- ✓ Social misunderstanding
- ✓ Emotional intensity
- ✓ Different communication styles
- ✓ Hyperfocus or deep interests
- ✓ Difficulty fitting into rigid systems

NEURODIVERGENCE IS OFTEN OVERLAPPING

Many people are multiply neurodivergent. For example:



Many more combinations are possible!

Neurodivergence is about recognising and respecting differences, removing barriers, and creating a world where everyone can thrive. ❤️