

CATHOLIC CHARITIES PREVENTION NEWSLETTER

May 2020

Hello everyone! We would like to introduce ourselves. Our names are Kelly West and Mary Minahan. We are the Substance Abuse Prevention Educators in Columbia County. Our job is to go to different area schools and teach children about the importance of staying drug free. In order for children to make those healthy choices in their lives, they need to be equipped with lots of different skills. We work with our students to help them identify and manage their emotions, set goals, make good decisions, develop healthy friendships, learn to communicate effectively and resist peer pressure. We are excited to be bringing you this newsletter that we hope can provide you with some insight and ideas to help engage with your child and keep them on track to living a healthy life. In this issue we will discuss 3 important steps every parent can take to decrease the risk of their child using drugs or alcohol. Enjoy!



"Treatment without prevention is simply unsustainable"

- Bill Gates



Steps for Parents

- 1.) Talk
- 2.) Create a safe space
- 3.) Be aware

Kelly West
Prevention Educator
kwest@cathcharcg.org
518-828-8660 Ext. 130

Mary Minahan
Prevention Educator
Mminahan@cathcharcg.org
518-828-8660 Ext. 130

Signs and Symptoms

- New group of friends
- Loss of interest in activities, hobbies or sports
- Drop in grades
- Avoiding family
- Change in appetite or weight
- Laziness
- Slurred speech
- Red eyes
- Watery eyes
- Larger or smaller than usual pupils
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Shaking hands or feet
- Excessive sweating



1.) Talk

Talk with your child frequently about drugs and alcohol. This shouldn't be a taboo topic. Your goal is to make your child feel comfortable and knowledgeable. You want them to feel comfortable coming to you with questions or concerns. Ask your child their thoughts on the issue. Ask them what their experiences have been so far. Are their friends supportive of them or do they pressure them? It should be a conversation not a lecture. Talk with them about the dangers of drug and alcohol use and why they should remain drug free. Talk about peer pressure and practice ways to handle it. It will be easier for your child to say no, walk away or make an excuse to get out of a dangerous situation if this is something they have thought about or practiced ahead of time.

2.) Create a Safe Space

Oftentimes children first experiment with drugs and alcohol at their home or a friends home. It is important to limit their access. If possible alcohol and medication should be locked up. It is always a good idea to keep a chart with levels of different alcohol and number of pills in each bottle. This will tip you off if someone is gaining access. Get to know your child's friends and their friend's family. Make sure everyone is aware of your rules and expectations of your child.

3.) Be Aware

In addition to talking to your child and creating a safe space, it is important to be aware of warning signs and symptoms. Changes in behavior or physical changes could be a sign of early use. The chart to the left shows signs and symptoms to look for. Having one of these signs or symptoms does not mean your child is using drugs. They are just good indicators to dig a little deeper and figure out if something is going on. You know your child better than anyone. If you think something is up it is important to talk and be there for them.