



RECOVERY, AWARENESS & PREVENTION

Recovery

As September draws to a close, our community marks the end of its month-long observance of National Recovery Month. First established in 1989 by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Recovery Month acknowledges individuals in recovery from addiction and honors those who have lost their lives to the disease of addiction. This year, to address our nation's mental health and overdose crisis, SAMHSA launched initiatives that increase access to prevention, celebrate the proud recovery community, and applaud the dedication of mental health service providers who help make recovery possible.

The Northport-East Northport Community Drug and Alcohol Task Force would like to again thank all of our community partners — the businesses, organizations, and individuals — who acknowledged Recovery Month by proudly displaying purple flags, ribbons and lights in their windows and in our parks and streets. We feel certain that, as a community, we can harness the energy of Recovery Month and continue our efforts to raise awareness about alcohol and drug abuse and promote evidence-based prevention strategies.

Awareness

Studies show that the earlier an individual starts smoking, drinking or using other drugs, the greater the likelihood of developing addiction. 9 out of 10 people who abuse or are addicted to nicotine, alcohol or other drugs began using these substances before they were 18. Children who began using addictive substances before age 15 are nearly 7 times likelier to develop a substance problem than those who delay first use until age 21 or older. Every year that substance use is delayed during the period of adolescent brain development, the risk of addiction and substance abuse decreases.

Recognize some possible warning signs of teen alcohol and drug abuse such as:

- Sudden or extreme change in friends, eating habits, sleeping patterns, physical appearance, or school performance
- Irresponsible behavior, poor judgment, and general lack of interest Withdrawing from the family
- The presence of medicine containers, or drug paraphernalia in your child's room

If you suspect or know that your teen is experimenting with or misusing alcohol and drugs:

- Talk to your child. Casual drug use can turn into excessive use or addiction and cause accidents, legal trouble, and health problems.
- Encourage honesty. Speak calmly and express that you are coming from a place of concern.
- Focus on the behavior, not the person. Emphasize that alcohol and drug use is dangerous, but that doesn't mean your teen is a bad person.
- Check in regularly. Know your teen's whereabouts, and ask questions when he or she returns home.
- Get professional help. If you think your child is involved in significant alcohol or drug use, contact a doctor, counselor or other health care provider for h

Prevention

It's never too soon to start talking to your teen about alcohol and drug abuse. The conversations you have today can help your teen make healthy choices in the future.

- Avoid lectures and instead, listen to your child's opinions and questions about drugs.
- Discuss reasons not to use alcohol and drugs. Emphasize how drugs and alcohol use can affect the things that are important to your child — such as their health, friendships, and school accomplishments.
- Talk about media messages. Social media, television programs, movies, and songs can glamorize or trivialize drug use.
- Discuss ways to resist peer pressure.
- Be ready to discuss your own alcohol and drug use. Think about how you'll respond if your teen asks about your own use. If you chose not to use drugs, explain why. If you did use drugs, share what the experience taught you.

Consider other strategies to prevent teen drug abuse:

- Know your teen's activities and pay attention to their whereabouts. Find out what adult-supervised activities your child is interested in and encourage him or her to get involved.
- Establish expectations and consequences. Explain your family rules, such as leaving a party where alcohol and drug use occur and not riding in a car with a driver who's under the influence.
- Know your teen's friends. If your child's friends use drugs, the pressure to conform can be strong.
- Keep track of prescription drugs. Take an inventory of all prescription and over-the-counter medications in your home.
- Set a good example. If you drink, do so in moderation. Use prescription drugs as directed and don't use illicit drugs.

This fall, the Northport-East Northport Community Drug and Alcohol Task Force will continue to engage our youth, parents, and community partners in events and programs to further promote Recovery, Awareness, and Prevention.

Color Run: Saturday, October 22 at the Northport Middle School

Help us kick off Recovery, Awareness, Prevention Week (RAP) as you run or walk the Color Run course and get splashed with color! Top it off with yard games, photo booths, and dancing. Visit ndatf.org to register.

1LIFE:

Students in grades 9-12 are invited to join 1LIFE, our Youth Coalition. Focused on tackling real-life issues, 1LIFE members are dedicated to making our community a healthier, safer place. For more information on 1LIFE, visit our website at ndatf.org.

(References: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (samhsa.gov); National Child Traumatic Stress Network (nctsn.org); Mayo Clinic (mayoclinic.org))

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