



PARENT AND FAMILY NEWSLETTER



Welcome to the Middletown Municipal Alliance Parent and Family Newsletter!

Purpose: Family members are valuable partners in our shared mission of helping our youth thrive and succeed. It's not always easy to navigate the current drug and alcohol trends or have difficult conversations with loved ones. This newsletter will include Alliance information as well as varying topics, tips, and resources about substance use, mental health, and other at-risk behaviors.



WHO IS THE MIDDLETOWN MUNICIPAL ALLIANCE?

The Middletown Municipal Alliance is a community-based volunteer organization. Through education and awareness, The Alliance works to prevent substance use disorders, underage drinking, alcohol use disorders, vaping, and other at-risk behaviors. The Alliance aims to eliminate the stigma of mental health disorder and substance use disorders through the events and programs they implement.

CONNECT WITH US!



Scan the QR code to visit our website or go to:
www.middletownnj.org/municipalalliance



@Middletownmunicipalalliance



Middletown Municipal Alliance page

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS ISSUE:

- What are the Effects of Youth Vaping?
- Conversations about Drugs and Alcohol
- Helping Children and Teens Manage Stress
- Goal Setting: The 5 Principles

NEXT MIDDLETOWN MUNICIPAL ALLIANCE QUARTERLY MEETING:

Saturday, June 15th

The Alliance meets in person on a quarterly basis on the third Saturday of the month from 8:30-9:30 AM at the Training Room in Town Hall (1 Kings Highway).



READ
MORE

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF YOUTH VAPING?

Brain development continues until about age 25, and nicotine exposure can harm the developing brain. Also, youth use of nicotine can lead to nicotine addiction and may increase the risk for future addiction to other substances.

For more information, visit [CDC.gov/Vaping](https://www.cdc.gov/Vaping)



E-cigarettes typically contain nicotine, as well as other harmful and potentially harmful chemicals.

- Nicotine exposure during adolescence can harm the parts of the brain that control attention, learning, mood, and impulse control.
- Youth might vape to deal with stress or anxiety, creating a cycle of nicotine dependence. But nicotine addiction can also be a source of stress.
- Some youth who use e-cigarettes or cigarettes also report symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- Nicotine withdrawal symptoms include irritability, restlessness, feeling anxious or depressed, trouble sleeping, problems concentrating, and craving nicotine.

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT DRUGS AND ALCOHOL— 5 GOALS



1

Show you disprove of underage drinking and other drug misuse. Over 80% of young people ages 10–18 say their parents are the leading influence on their decision whether to drink.

2

Show you care about your child's health, wellness, and success. Young people are more likely to listen when they know you're on their side. Reinforce why you don't want your child to drink or use other drugs—because you want your child to be happy and safe.

3

Show you're a good source of information about alcohol and other drugs. You want your child to make informed decisions about alcohol and other drugs with reliable information about its dangers. You don't want your child to learn about alcohol and other drugs from unreliable sources.

4

Show you're paying attention and disprove of risky behaviors. Show you're aware of what your child is up to, as young people are more likely to drink or use other drugs if they think no one will notice. Do this in a subtle way, without prying.

5

Build your child's skills and strategies for avoiding drinking and drug use. Even if you don't think your child wants to drink or try other drugs, peer pressure is a powerful thing. Having a plan to avoid alcohol and drug use can help children make better choices. Talk with your child about what they would do if faced with a decision about alcohol and drugs or practice how they'll say "no thanks."



Helping Children and Teens Manage Stress



Sleep well: Sleep is essential for physical and emotional well-being. Experts recommend 9–12 hours of sleep a night for kids ages 6–12-years old. Teens need 8–10 hours a night. Sleep needs to be a priority to keep stress in check. To protect shut-eye, limit screen use at night and avoid keeping devices in the bedroom.

Exercise: Physical activity is an essential stress reliever for people of all ages. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends at least 60 minutes a day of activity for children ages 6 to 17.

Talk it out: Talking about stressful situations with a trusted adult can help kids and teens put things in perspective and find solutions.

Get outside: Spending time in nature is an effective way to relieve stress and improve overall well-being.

Make time for fun...and quiet: Just like adults, kids and teens need time to do what brings them joy, whether that's unstructured time to play with building bricks or uninterrupted hours to practice music or art. Also, while some children thrive staying busy, others need more down time. Find a healthy balance between favorite activities and free time.

Write about it: Expressing oneself in writing can help reduce mental distress and improve well-being. Writing about positive feelings, such as the things you're grateful for or proud of, can ease symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Learn mindfulness: Teens who learn mindfulness experience significantly less mental distress than teens who did not. Visit our Alliance website for mindfulness tools!

Caregivers have an important part to play, by adopting their own healthy habits and helping children and teens find stress-managing strategies. Some ways caregivers can take action:

Model healthy coping: Caregivers can talk with children about how they've thought about and dealt with their own stressful situations.

Let kids be problem-solvers: It's natural to want to fix your child's problems. But when you swoop in to solve every little issue, children don't have a chance to learn healthy coping skills. Let your children try to solve their low-stakes problems on their own, and they'll gain confidence that they can deal with stressors and setbacks.

Promote media literacy: Today's kids spend a lot of time online. Caregivers can help by teaching their children to be savvy digital consumers, and by limiting screen time.

Combat negative thinking: Children and teens can easily fall into the trap of negative thinking. When children use negative self-talk, don't just disagree. Ask them to really think about whether what they say is true, or remind them of times they worked hard and improved. Learning to frame things positively will help them develop resilience to stress.



GOAL SETTING: THE 5 PRINCIPLES



- 1 Commitment**– Goal performance is strongest when people are committed and when goals are difficult. When we are less committed to goals, especially more challenging goals, we increase the likelihood of giving up.
- 2 Clarity**– Specific goals put you on a direct course. When a goal is vague, it has limited motivational value. Goal clarity is positively related to overall motivation. Set clear goals that can be measured.
- 3 Challenging**– Goals must be challenging, yet attainable. We are motivated by achievement and the anticipation of achievement. If we know a goal is challenging, yet believe we can accomplish it, we are more likely to be motivated to meet our goal.
- 4 Task Complexity**– Overly complex goals that lie out of our skill level may become overwhelming and negatively impact morale, productivity, and motivation.
- 5 Feedback**– Goal setting is more effective in the presence of immediate feedback. Feedback, including internal feedback, helps to determine the degree to which a goal is being met and how you are progressing.

MIDDLETOWN MUNICIPAL ALLIANCE CONTACT INFO:



Chairperson Kim Kratz:
kkratz@middletownnj.org



Coordinator Erika McKee:
emckee@middletownnj.org



732-615-2277

OVERDOSE STATS:

During March and April 2024, there were
3 Narcan deployments in Middletown.

YTD: 5 deployments / 3 saves

IF YOU HAVE UNWANTED, UNUSED, OR EXPIRED MEDICATION (NO NEEDLES OR SYRINGES):

Anonymously drop off in the "Project Medicine Drop Box" in the lobby of the Middletown Township Police Station.

Address: Middletown Township Police Department,
1 Kings Highway Middletown, NJ 07733

JUNE: MEN'S HEALTH MONTH

Men are more likely than women to drink excessively. Excessive drinking is associated with significant risks to men's health and safety.

Visit our website or scan the QR code to learn more!

