



PARENT AND FAMILY NEWSLETTER



Welcome to the Middletown 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 ALLIANCE?

The Middletown 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/alliance



@Middletownalliance



Middletown Alliance page

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS ISSUE:



Dangers of Third Hand Smoke



Social Media and Online Safety



Helping Your Child with Peer Pressure



Marijuana and Lung Health

UPDATE

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

**NEXT MIDDLETOWN ALLIANCE MEETING:
Saturday, September 21st**



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DANGERS OF THIRD HAND SMOKE



Thirdhand smoke is the chemical residue that is left behind on clothes, skin, furniture, walls, and other surfaces after someone smokes. Thirdhand smoke is also known as “tobacco smoke residue” or “stale tobacco smoke”. The mixture of pollutants in thirdhand smoke is toxic to humans, especially children.

- Thirdhand smoke can't be eliminated by airing out rooms, opening windows, using fans or air conditioners, or confining smoking to only certain areas of a home. Traditional household cleaning often cannot effectively remove thirdhand smoke from many surfaces.
- Electronic cigarettes/vapes heat up a liquid that contains nicotine and other chemicals, becoming clouds of tiny aerosols. These clouds act like secondhand smoke, sticking to surfaces and household objects. They become thirdhand residue that exposes people to toxic chemicals.
- Aerosols from vaping act similarly to aerosols and gases from tobacco smoking. They move through the air, can spread to other rooms, and collect in dust. They also like to stick to surfaces and household objects, creating thirdhand residue and exposing people to the chemicals. These vaping aerosols can interact with other chemicals in the air to form new cancer-causing substances.



- Thirdhand smoke poses a potential health hazard to nonsmokers — especially children. Substances in thirdhand smoke are known to be hazardous to health. People are exposed to the chemicals in thirdhand smoke when they touch contaminated surfaces or breathe in the gases that thirdhand smoke may release.
- Infants and young children are at greater risk for exposure to thirdhand smoke than adults due to activities such as crawling and putting non-food items in their mouths. They also tend to spend more time indoors.
- Research has clearly shown that secondhand smoke causes many health problems, including cancer, heart disease and respiratory illness. Research has shown that indoor smoking raises the risk of exposure to harmful chemicals, and that ventilation and cleaning cannot adequately eliminate these hazards.
- The only way to protect nonsmokers, especially young children, from the dangers of thirdhand smoke is to remove all forms of smoking from indoor areas, including inside vehicles.



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Conversations about Social Media and Online Safety



Parents have a critical role in supporting the social and emotional development of their children. But other adults also play a key role in protecting children from unhealthy media use or risky exposure. A successful approach includes caregivers, pediatricians, teachers, coaches, and other trusted adults in a child's life.

The SAMHSA-funded National Center of Excellence on Social Media and Youth Mental Health provides information and educational resources for youth, parents, educators, and others who help youth navigate social media. The Center of Excellence has developed a number of resources that provide timely guidance for youth on how to use digital media and manage their presence online.



STRATEGIES FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS



1. Build a family media plan.
2. Balance time with and without devices.
3. Talk about social media.
4. Set a good example.
5. Optimize your family's online experience.

LET'S CHAT! Parents and caregivers can engage in conversations with their children related to digital technology and social media use.





Conversations about Social Media and Online Safety

These resources encourage parents and caregivers to have open and collaborative communication about their child's online use and family expectations because children are more likely to follow rules when they have the opportunity to provide input and discuss their concerns about online safety. And close relationships between parents and their children are associated with fewer online risk-taking behaviors in children.

Normalize Having Boundaries: Talk about ways to prevent technology from crowding out healthy behaviors, such as sleep, and quality time with family, using developmentally appropriate language to help limit device and online platform use.

Pick Good Content: Ensure children are engaging with age-appropriate content with appropriate parental monitoring of media use, given the plethora of content available online.

Teach Non-screen Ways to Manage Emotions and Boredom: Devices are often used to manage stress or boredom, and finding appropriate alternatives is important to help limit online media use.

Parents Should Talk About Their Own Media Use: "I sometimes have a hard time not checking my phone or feeling the need to respond to texts or emails. I'm working on how to be better about my own boundaries. Let's help each other find a good balance."

"Sharenting"—Thinking Before You Share Content Online: Parents can think about how to appropriately share content on social media that includes their children, including sharing their pictures. Discussing this with children teaches them about consent and privacy, which may help them be a more responsible social media user as a teen and into adulthood.

Teach Safety Skills: When kids are young, we talk to them about street safety, swimming safety, and other rules that come with exploring the world. There are also safety rules for the digital world.

Checking in on Unwanted Content: As you probably know, your social media platforms track your search and viewing patterns. They try to get to know you, and an algorithm decides what to put in your feed.

Parents can ask: "How is the algorithm working for you at this point? Is there content we don't want to see? Can we look at ways to reset your algorithm?" Another aspect of social media use is protecting our privacy. "Have we looked at the privacy settings on all of your accounts? How are things going with those settings?"

HELPING YOUR CHILD WITH PEER PRESSURE



1. Show you care about their health, wellness, wellbeing, and success.
2. Express your disapproval of underage drinking and other drug use.
3. Set clear expectations about substance use to discourage risky behaviors.
4. Tell them to never drink alcohol or use other drugs and drive or get in a car if the driver has been drinking or using other drugs.
5. Empower them with the skills and strategies they need to avoid substance use.
6. Reinforce you're a good source of information about alcohol and other drugs.

Practice different scenarios with your child so they feel prepared to respond in situations where alcohol or other drugs are present. Review the reasons underage drinking and other drug use are harmful and illegal. Provide an opportunity for them to ask questions and voice their opinions. Keep in mind that they may also be dealing with peer pressure or encouragement to use substances through social media.

How to Say "No"



- "No, thanks. I don't need that."
- "Nah, I'm good."
- "Nope—I'm not into that stuff."
- "I don't want to drink or do drugs."
- "I would get in so much trouble with my parents."

Peer pressure is a leading risk factor for underage drinking and other drug use, so it's important that kids be equipped with information and ways to say "no." As a parent or caregiver, you have the power to help your child understand the risks and dangers of drinking alcohol and using other drugs, as well as how to deal with offers from their friends or peers.

Peer Pressure at Different Ages



Peer pressure can come in different forms. It can be upfront, such as being offered alcohol or other drugs. Or it can be more subtle, such as observing risky behaviors. In both instances, your child has the option to say "no" or avoid the situation. The way kids see and handle peer pressure can change as they grow older, so it's important to know where your child is in their decision-making abilities and maturity. Starting between ages 10 and 12, kids may respond to peer pressure in ways that help them fit in and make friends. As they enter adolescence, their friend groups have a bigger influence on their decision-making. Because teens and young adults often spend time with their friends and peers without direct supervision, they can become more likely to give in to peer pressure.



SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

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It's important to note that there are other health concerns outside the lungs attributed to marijuana use that are not addressed here, including neurological and cognitive effects. Additionally, there are public health concerns associated with pediatric poisonings caused by accidental ingestion of edible marijuana products.



Smoking marijuana clearly damages the human lung. Research shows that smoking marijuana causes chronic bronchitis and marijuana smoke has been shown to injure the cell linings of the large airways, which could explain why smoking marijuana leads to symptoms such as chronic cough, phlegm production, wheeze, and acute bronchitis.

Smoking marijuana has also been linked to cases of air pockets in between both lungs and between the lungs and the chest wall, as well as large air bubbles in the lungs among young to middle-aged adults, mostly heavy smokers of marijuana.

MARIJUANA AND LUNG HEALTH

Smoking marijuana hurts the lungs' first line of defense against infection by killing cells that help remove dust and germs as well as causing more mucus to be formed.

Smoking marijuana can harm more than just the lungs and respiratory system—it can also affect the immune system and the body's ability to fight disease, especially for those whose immune systems are already weakened from immunosuppressive drugs or diseases.



 **AMERICAN
LUNG
ASSOCIATION**

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732-615-2277

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

WANT TO FOCUS ON DESTRESSING BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS?

Visit our website or
scan the QR code!



AUGUST IS OVERDOSE AWARENESS MONTH

August is Overdose Awareness Month! To view substance use and counseling resources, **Visit our website or scan the QR code to learn more!**

