

# 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 and communities 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](http://www.middletownnj.org/alliance)



@Middletownalliance



Middletown Alliance page

### 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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## TOPICS COVERED IN THIS ISSUE:



**988 Lifeline**



**2023 National Youth Tobacco Survey**



**Underaged Drinking: Myth v. Fact**



**Tips for Teens: The Truth About Opioids**

**As of July 16, 2022, 988 is the nationwide 3-digit dialing code for crisis and suicide prevention. It replaced the 1-800 number that was previously used by the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.**

**When someone is experiencing a mental health crisis, they will be able to dial or text 988, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and will be connected to a mental health professional.**

**Once connected, an assessment will be conducted to determine if additional help is needed. If so, a response team will be dispatched. People can also visit [www.988lifeline.org/chat](http://www.988lifeline.org/chat) to chat with a caring counselor.**

## HOPE CAN HAPPEN

Suicide is not inevitable for anyone. By starting the conversation, providing support, and directing help to those who need it, we can prevent suicides and save lives.

## WE CAN ALL TAKE ACTION

Evidence shows that providing support services, talking about suicide, reducing access to means of self-harm, and following up with loved ones are just some of the actions we can all take to help others.

## CRISIS CENTERS ARE CRITICAL

By offering immediate counseling to everyone that may need it, local crisis centers provide invaluable support at critical times and connect individuals to local services.



## Services:

- Veterans, Service Members, and Their Loved Ones
  - Veterans, active service members, and their loved ones can reach the Veterans Crisis Line (VCL) 24/7/365 by texting 838255, chatting, or calling 988 and pressing 1.
- Spanish Speakers
  - 988 Lifeline voice, text, and chat options are offered in Spanish. To call a Spanish-speaking counselor, dial 988 and then press 2. To text with a Spanish-speaking counselor, text AYUDA to 988. To chat with a Spanish-speaking counselor, please start a chat in Spanish.
- LGBTQI+ Youth and Young Adults
  - LGBTQI+ people under 25 can access 24/7/365 LGBTQI+ support via 988 Chat or by Text by typing PRIDE. You will be asked if you want to opt-in to this support before you are connected to a counselor. People can also call 988 and press 3 to be connected to LGBTQI+ services.
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing People
  - Deaf and Hard of Hearing people have 24/7/365 access to 988 Videophone, which can be accessed by clicking on "ASL Now" on their site.





# 2023 National Youth Tobacco Survey Highlights



Tobacco product use during adolescence increases the risk for lifelong nicotine addiction and adverse health consequences. The CDC and the FDA analyzed data from the 2023 National Youth Tobacco Survey to assess tobacco product use patterns among U.S. middle school (grades 6–8) and high school (grades 9–12) students.

According to this survey, e-cigarettes were the most used tobacco product among middle and high school students in 2023 (7.7%), followed by cigarettes (1.6%), cigars (1.6%), nicotine pouches (1.5%), smokeless tobacco (1.2%), other oral nicotine products (1.2%), hookahs (1.1%), heated tobacco products (1.0%), and pipe tobacco (0.5%).



Among students reporting current e-cigarette use, 25.2% reported using e-cigarettes daily. Frequent use was reported by 34.7% of current e-cigarette users. Disposable e-cigarettes were the most commonly reported device type used (60.7%), followed by prefilled or refillable pods or cartridges (16.1%), and tanks or mod systems (modifiable devices allowing users to customize the substances in the device) (5.9%). Among students who currently used e-cigarettes, Elf Bar was the most commonly reported brand (56.7%), followed by Esco Bars (21.6%), Vuse (20.7%), JUUL (16.5%), and Mr. Fog (13.6%).

From 2022 to 2023, among high school students, statistically significant declines ( $p<0.05$ ) occurred in current use of any tobacco product (from 16.5% to 12.6%), e-cigarettes (from 14.1% to 10.0%), cigars (from 2.8% to 1.8%), and any combustible tobacco product (from 5.2% to 3.9%). Among middle school students, statistically significant increases ( $p<0.05$ ) occurred in current use of any tobacco product (from 4.5% to 6.6%) and multiple tobacco products (from 1.5% to 2.5%).

Reference: Birdsey J, Cornelius M, Jamal A, et al. Tobacco Product Use Among U.S. Middle and High School Students – National Youth Tobacco Survey, 2023. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2023;72:1173–1182. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7244a1>.



Interested in reading the survey? Scan the QR code or visit <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/wr/mm7244a1.htm>!



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# Underaged Drinking: Myth v. Fact



All of the other kids drink alcohol. You need to drink to fit in.



Most young people don't drink alcohol! Research shows that almost 85 percent of 12- to 20-year-olds haven't had a drink in the past month.



Drinking alcohol will make people like you.



There's nothing likable about stumbling around, passing out, or puking on yourself. Drinking alcohol can also make your breath smell bad.



Alcohol isn't as harmful as other drugs.



Your brain doesn't stop growing until age 25, and drinking can affect development. Alcohol increases your risk for diseases, cancer, accidents, and injuries.



You can sober up quickly by taking a cold shower or drinking coffee.



There's no magic cure to help you sober up. One drink can take at least an hour to leave your body and sometimes takes even longer. There's nothing you can do to make that happen quicker. You have to wait it out.



There's no reason to wait until you're 21 to drink.



When you're young, drinking alcohol can make learning new things more difficult. People who begin drinking before they turn 15 are more likely to develop a drinking problem at some point in their lives than those who begin drinking at age 21 or older.



Learn more about underage drinking at  
[stopalcoholabuse.gov](http://stopalcoholabuse.gov).

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# TIPS FOR TEENS: THE TRUTH ABOUT OPIOIDS



**Opioids Affect Your Brain:** Opioids are a class of drugs that include the illegal drug heroin, synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, and pain relievers available legally by prescription, such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, codeine, morphine, and many others. They affect both the spinal cord and brain to reduce the intensity of pain-signal perception as well as brain areas that control emotion. They can also affect the brain to cause euphoria or "high".

**Opioids Affect Your Body:** Opioids slow down the actions of the body, such as breathing and heartbeat. Even a single dose of an opioid can cause severe respiratory depression (slowing or stopping of breathing), which can be fatal; taking opioids with alcohol or sedatives increases this risk.

**Opioids Are Addictive:** Even though heroin is highly addictive, more people struggle with addiction to prescription pain relievers. Many young people who inject heroin report misuse of prescription opioids before starting to use heroin.

To learn more, visit our website or scan the QR code:



## MIDDLETOWN ALLIANCE CONTACT INFO:



Chairperson Kim Kratz:  
kkratz@middletownnj.org



Coordinator Erika McKee:  
emckee@middletownnj.org



732-615-2277

## WANT TO TEST YOUR SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH KNOWLEDGE?

Visit our website or  
scan the QR code!



## 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

## SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH

September is National Recovery Month! To view recovery resources,  
Visit our website or scan the QR code to learn more!



# HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

Hosted by the Middletown Alliance and the Prevention Coalition of Monmouth County

OCTOBER 24TH, 6:30-7:30 PM

MIDDLETOWN HIGH SCHOOL NORTH: MEDIA ROOM

63 Tindall Rd, Middletown Township, NJ 07748

Discover how alcohol, drugs, and paraphernalia can be easily hidden in a teenager's bedroom, bathroom, and other locations within your home and car.



**REGISTER NOW!**

SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT:

<https://forms.gle/b1wu9Jc7aREzxDpC6>



Presented by: Professor Douglas Collier, M.A., DEA (Ret)

There are signs and symptoms of youth substance use to be aware of. With early intervention, which most times can just be a simple conversation, it might save their life or a life of a friend.

