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# Parenting for Prevention

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Student Assistance Services Corp., 660 White Plains Road, Tarrytown, New York, 10591, April, 2014

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## Prom Season



In 1987, National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence designated April as

Alcohol Awareness month in order to bring a heightened awareness about the dangers of alcohol during the prom and graduation season.

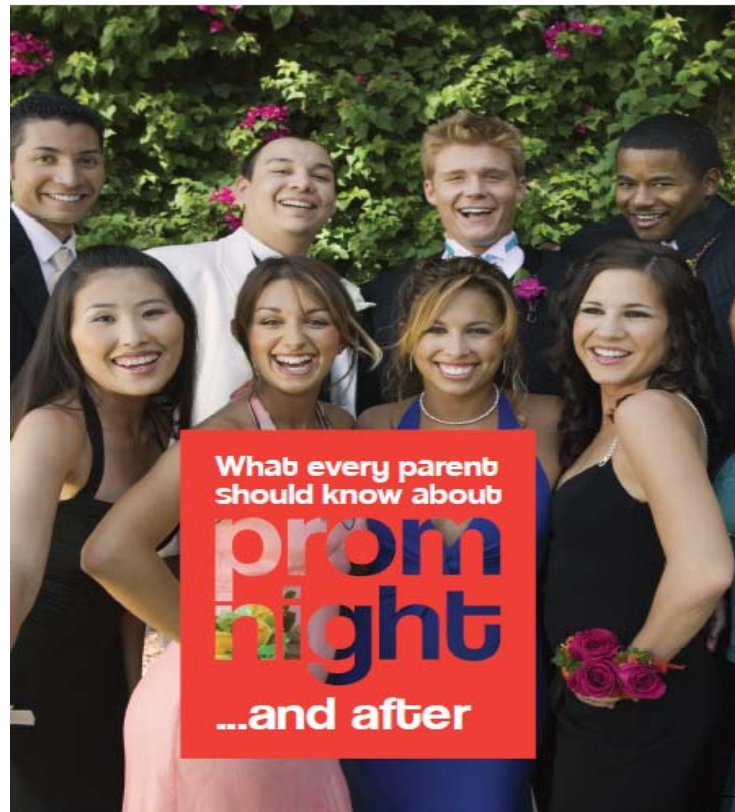
The Westchester County Office of Drug Prevention and STOP DWI produced a new prom brochure that is available at this time of year to highlight issues associated with proms and after-prom gatherings. Hard copies of the brochure can be ordered by calling Pat Tomassi, coalition director of the Westchester Coalition for Drug and Alcohol Free Youth at 914-995-4117. In addition, the brochure can be downloaded from the [powertotheparent.org](http://powertotheparent.org) site.

The brochure gives very practical information and is a useful tool to help parents begin a conversation with their teen about issues that may come up on prom night or at after-prom-parties. The brochure also discusses other strategies that parents can use to keep teens safe during prom activities.

Editor: *Patricia Murphy Warble, LMSW, CPP*

## New Prom Brochure For Parents

Westchester  
gov.com  
Robert P. Astorino, Westchester County Executive



## Alcohol Awareness Month

April is Alcohol Awareness Month which was started in 1987 by the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence. The month has been used to help raise awareness for the dangers of alcoholism and it is held in April because it's the start of prom season with graduation and end-of-the year parties following soon after that. The theme for this year's Alcohol Awareness Month is "Help for Today. Hope for Tomorrow."

## The Effects of Alcohol

Alcohol abuse is estimated to have a negative impact on 25% of children in the United States. This is because 75% of domestic abuse occurs with the attacker being under the influence of alcohol. Family members with an alcoholic in their midst use healthcare services twice as much as families without the influence of alcohol. Also, 16,000 deaths are caused every year by drinking and driving related crashes with several thousand more injured yearly.

## Teens at Risk

Alcohol Awareness Month is so important because it highlights the negative effects of alcohol on young people. Every day, an estimated 7000 youth under 16 year-of-age take their first drink of alcohol. Teens that drink under 15-years-of-age are four times more likely to become alcoholics later in life than youth who wait until they turn 20. This is primarily due to the impact of alcohol on the developing brain. In addition, 1700 college students in America are killed every year from injuries where alcohol was involved. Underage alcohol consumption costs around \$62 billion worth of losses due to healthcare use, missed employment and damages.

## How to Take Action During Alcohol Awareness Month and After

The most effective impact you can make is spreading the word and facts about alcohol abuse to those around you. Telling people about ways to prevent alcohol use in minors and helping alcoholics get treatment are extremely important. It helps to create a culture within your area of influence that promotes freedom from addiction and healthy lifestyles.

Furthermore, talk to those people most at risk such as children of alcoholic parents and siblings of teens and young adults who use alcohol and encourage them to get information and support by contacting the National Association for the Children of Alcoholics [www.nacoa.org](http://www.nacoa.org) and Alateen [www.al-anon.alateen.org](http://www.al-anon.alateen.org).

The following is data from a fall 2013 survey in regard to issues related to alcohol in Westchester This data is referred to as “core measures” and gives the actual data concerning use and the “perceptions” usually influencing youth alcohol use.

## Past 30-Day Use Of Alcohol

The survey question asked “During the past 30 days, on how many occasions, if any, have you had beer, wine or hard liquor to drink ?

Grade 9	18.7%
Grade 10	31.3%
Grade 11	41.0%
Grade 12	49.4%

## Perception of Risk of Using Alcohol

The survey question asked “How much do you think people risk harming themselves physically or in other ways, if they take one or more drinks of an alcoholic beverage nearly everyday ?

Grade 9	88.6%
Grade 10	86.6%
Grade 11	86.4%
Grade 12	86,3%

## Perception of Parental Disapproval Regarding Teen Use of Alcohol

The survey question asked “How wrong do your parents feel it would be for YOU to have one or two drinks of an alcoholic beverage nearly every day?”

Grade 9	97.3%
Grade 10	97.2%
Grade 11	96.8%
Grade 12	96.1%

**Perception of Friends' Disapproval**

The question asked was "How wrong do your friends feel it would be for you to have one or two drinks of an alcoholic beverage nearly every day?"

Grade 9	81.3%
Grade 10	78.5%
Grade 11	77.8%
Grade 12	72.6%

**April 20**

April 20 recently became "celebrate marijuana day" by marijuana users. Many teens saw the news and other media coverage of rallies and gatherings held in Colorado and the State of Washington even though smoking marijuana in public is illegal in those states! The frequent news coverage of efforts to legalize marijuana for medical purposes in New York provides parents with many "teachable moments" which are opportunities to discuss marijuana when youth will be receptive to their parents' thoughts.

**The Opinion of Parents Matters**

Research shows that youth are less likely to use all drugs, including marijuana and alcohol when they believe their parents would disapprove of their use and when they believe there is risk of harm in using the substance. These have been important factors in the sharp decline in youth tobacco use. The 2013 Westchester Survey found that high school students believed their parents would be most disapproving of prescription drug use, followed by cigarettes, followed by alcohol, and then marijuana.

Similarly, Westchester high school students believe that there is the greatest risk of harm from misuse of prescription drugs, followed by smoking cigarettes, followed by using alcohol, followed by using marijuana

**What Should Parents Say?**

- I want you to be as physically, emotionally, and socially as healthy as possible. Using marijuana or any other substance to achieve a feeling or behavior you are not able to achieve without the substance, is not healthy, because it prevents you from developing the skills to achieve the behavior and feelings without substances. As a result, you will continue to need the substance and for the substances that produce tolerance (such as alcohol, marijuana, and many prescription drugs) you will need more of the drug to achieve the feeling and the behavior that you want. In other words, I want you to know how to have fun, relax, start a conversation, deal with anger, boredom and stress etc without chemicals.
- Your brain is still developing until the mid-20s and the younger someone is when they start using alcohol, marijuana and other drugs, the greater the impact on their nervous system, and the more likely they are to develop an addiction
- Even though something is legal, it can still have serious health consequences for peo-

ple who use it. Tobacco products are the best example of this reality.

- Drugs that are prescribed for a medical condition can alleviate suffering and sometimes cure conditions. Morphine helps patients who have burns and major pain from other medical conditions. The same dose of morphine, for someone without pain, can cause an overdose death. Similarly, cortisone can be an effective treatment for many conditions such as a severe asthma attack, joint and muscle diseases, and others but there can also be serious side effects. There are components of marijuana such as CBD that can help alleviate some medical conditions, but just as with morphine and cortisone, the dose of the component in marijuana needs to be determined by a physician providing the care for the medical condition and the quality of the component. It also needs to be regulated to make sure that it isn't contaminated and doesn't do more harm than good.
- School is hard enough. Smoking marijuana, using alcohol and using drugs not prescribed to you affect memory and make it more difficult to learn and retain information.
- You wanted to be on a team. Alcohol, marijuana and other drug use affects your reaction times, increases the chance that you will be injured and prolongs the recovery period, even a day or two after use. Using substances is not only

<p>harmful to you but affects your team’s chances of winning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(If applicable). When I used _____ when I was younger, we didn’t know all that we know now. If I did, I probably would not have used _____ and I regret that I did. Besides, (if applicable) the marijuana back then was not nearly as potent as it is today and therefore was less likely to cause as many negative effects and was less likely to cause addiction.</li> <li>(If applicable.) I wish that I had never started using _____ because it is very difficult for me to stop. I want you to be healthier than I am and not need to use _____.</li> </ul> <p>The following is data from a fall 2013 survey in regard to issues related to marijuana in Westchester. This data is referred to as “core measures” and gives the actual data concerning use and the “perceptions” usually influencing youth alcohol use.</p>	<p><b>Past 30-Day Use Of Marijuana</b></p> <p>The survey asked “During the past 30 days, on how many occasions, if any have you used marijuana or hashish ? (Percent reporting at least once.)</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Grade 9</td> <td>6.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grade 10</td> <td>12.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grade 11</td> <td>19.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grade 12</td> <td>22.6%</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Perception of Risk of Using Marijuana</b></p> <p>The survey about marijuana was “How much do you think people risk harming themselves physically or in other ways if they smoke marijuana once or twice a week?”</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Grade 9</td> <td>70.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grade 10</td> <td>62.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grade 11</td> <td>54.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grade 12</td> <td>49.1%</td> </tr> </table>	Grade 9	6.8%	Grade 10	12.2%	Grade 11	19.5%	Grade 12	22.6%	Grade 9	70.3%	Grade 10	62.8%	Grade 11	54.3%	Grade 12	49.1%	<p><b>Perception of Parental Disapproval Regarding Teen Use of Marijuana</b></p> <p>The survey question was “How wrong do your parents feel it would be for YOU to smoke marijuana?”</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Grade 9</td> <td>95.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grade 10</td> <td>94.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grade 11</td> <td>89.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grade 12</td> <td>89.2%</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Perception of Friends’ Disapproval</b></p> <p>The survey question asked “How wrong do your friends feel it would be for you to smoke marijuana?”</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Grade 9</td> <td>76.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grade 10</td> <td>64.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grade 11</td> <td>48.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grade 12</td> <td>43.4%</td> </tr> </table>	Grade 9	95.9%	Grade 10	94.9%	Grade 11	89.3%	Grade 12	89.2%	Grade 9	76.5%	Grade 10	64.1%	Grade 11	48.1%	Grade 12	43.4%
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