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# Parenting for Prevention

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Student Assistance Services Corp., 660 White Plains Road, Tarrytown, New York, 10591, October, 2010

## Youth Leadership Conference



It has been my dream for years to provide the students of Westchester with the experience of attending a one-day Leadership Conference in the county.

This year that dream will come true on November 11 at Stepinac High School in White Plains when Ty Sells and his group from Youth to Youth International will facilitate a leadership day. The day will start at 9 with a dynamic, lively workshop given by Shaun Derick that will use music to encourage students to be true to themselves by “singing their own songs” and “writing their own lyrics.” The popular Ty Sells will also present later in the day and there will be interactive workshops too.

The day will end with a social event and other fun, interactive team-building activities. Please contact me for more information about this event at PWarble@sascorp.org or at 914-332-1300.

*Editor, Patricia Murphy Warble, LMSW, CPP*

## Teen Stress

Most teens will tell you that they are experiencing a significant amount of stress and pressure. One of the issues associated with a teen stress and pressure is that most young people have not developed healthy coping mechanisms to keep these feelings under control. As a result, many teens will search for their own way of coping and that can include unhealthy behaviors such as alcohol and other drug use.

Some of things that may indicate a teen is feeling stress can also be normal developmental characteristics of a teen. However, using a gauge based on intensity, frequency, and duration may help parents make an evaluation about their children’s mental state.

It can be difficult for parents to know when their children are feeling overwhelmed but a change in personality, behaviors, grades and friends may indicate that there are problems. Some of things that may indicate a teen is feeling stress can also be normal developmental characteristics of a teen. However, using a gauge based on intensity, frequency, and duration may help parents make an evaluation about their children’s emotional state.

At some time during adolescence, most teens experience what can be classic symptoms of stress and pressure; anger, anxiety, annoyance, frustration, impatience, “attitude” or fear. But if these feelings are severe, appear often, and last for a long period of time, they may indicate that your child is feeling stress and pressure in a way that may need some professional intervention. Additionally, physical symptoms such as headaches, sleeplessness, indigestion or chest pains and can also indicate that a teen is stressed and feeling pressure to succeed.

According to “Parents. The Anti-Drug” website, there can be a difference between boys and girls in terms of what they find stressful and how they deal with pressure and stress. Girls usually respond with a lot of emotion and often reach out to others to involve them in helping them deal with their issues. However, sometimes girls self-mutilate, eat too much or too little, shoplift and/or become promiscuous. Boys on the

other hand, often internalize their feelings, and don't discuss issues. They also are more prone to behaviors that can be confrontational such as fighting.

Some of the suggestions for parents in regard to helping children deal with stress and pressure is to role-model healthy ways to deal with these issues. That can take many forms but it begins with some basics like eating in a healthy manner, exercising, discussing stress, and not abusing alcohol or other drugs.

Other recommendations include parents helping their children implement stress reducing initiatives. This can be as elementary as helping them develop good organizational skills so they do not get behind in school work and then get overwhelmed. In addition, encouraging young people to incorporate relaxing activities into their schedule can also be very helpful. They can include meditation, listening to music, and exercising.

However, after doing some of these things, if a parent sees that stress or pressure is still overwhelming their child, consulting a mental health professional can be very helpful. Parents may want to look for someone in the school community like a Student Assistance/Project Success counselor if your school has the program. A school social worker, psychologist, or counselor are other good resources. Another possibility is a health professional outside of the school such as a therapist or counselor who is familiar with issues that impact teens. A short term

intervention can go a long way to helping your teen by giving your child a confidential person to talk to who can listen to their concerns and help them strategize how to deal with them.

## Alcohol Energy Drinks

These drinks have been around for awhile and are very popular on college campuses but now they are being consumed more frequently by middle and high school students. These drinks are called "Alcohol Energy Drinks" and are beverages that include a combination of alcohol, sweeteners, caffeine, and other dubious "energy" ingredients such as taurine, ginseng, etc.

These products, including the current, very popular "Four Loko", are packaged and marketed like traditional energy drinks, using colorful, youth-friendly packaging and ad themes. Research shows that teenagers are more likely to drink energy drinks than young adults in their 20s. Many of these products, including Four Loko, have significantly more alcohol by volume than an average beer (12% vs. 5%) and are sold in 24 oz. containers com-



pared to a standard 12 oz can of beer. Therefore a 24oz can of Four Loko has the alcohol equivalent of five 12 oz cans of beer. Some clerks are unaware that these products contain alcohol and they are not checking ID at the point of purchase.

The caffeine in these drinks masks alcohol's intoxicating effects, thereby promoting risk taking and reducing the likelihood of falling asleep, thereby increasing the risk of alcohol poisoning. The result of mixing alcohol with caffeine is a "wide awake drunk" and the consequences can be serious:

- One study found that patrons who had consumed alcohol mixed with energy drinks were **three times more likely to leave the bar highly intoxicated** and four times as likely to intend to drive upon leaving the bar district, "compared to other drinking patrons who did not consume alcoholic beverages mixed with energy drinks." (Thombs, et al. 2010)
- Students reporting drinking alcohol mixed with energy drinks drank more, binged more frequently, were more likely to both take advantage and be taken advantage of sexually, were more likely to ride with an impaired driver, and were more likely to be injured than those who did not. (O'Brien, et al. 2008)
- Mixing caffeine with alcohol reduced participants' perception of alcohol intoxication without counteracting the effects of alcohol on task performance, such as impaired judgment and delayed reflexes. (Marczinski & Fillmore, 2006).

# One in Four Students, One in Three Young Adults, Binge Drink

*Progress Being Made For Teens but Not Adults*

A report released on October 5th by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows that one in four high school students and one and three adults, 18 to 24 have engaged in binge drinking in the past month, putting themselves and those around them at risk. The CDC has a new on line publication called *Vital Signs*, <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/VitalSigns/> and binge drinking was the topic for October.

*CDC Vital Signs* provides the most recent data on key indicators of important health topics. Data are generated from CDC's national surveillance systems in order to inform the public about progress in key areas of public health and ways they can promote their own health and prevent or control disease. Each month, *Vital Signs* tracks recent progress in improving population health for one of 12 key diseases, conditions or risk factors. Progress can be tracked from year to year and the same health topics will appear the same month each year.

**While still unacceptably high, binge drinking among high school students was lower in 2009 than 1993.**

The CDC reported that among high school students who drink, 60% say they binge drink, which the CDC defines as four or more drinks for woman and five or more drinks for men over the span of a few hours. Adult men in the study were almost twice as likely as adult women to binge drink, with 26.5 % of men reporting binge drinking, compared with 14.5 % of women. However, the rates of binge drinking were very similar for high school girls, (23.4%) and boys (25%). CDC Director Dr. Thomas Frieden said "Binge drinking increases many health risks, including fatal car crashes, contracting a sexually transmitted disease, dating violence and drug overdoses."

**While still unacceptably high, binge drinking among high school students was lower in 2009 than 1993.** The young people who are binge drinking often take chances with alcohol without realizing the risks to their health or the danger they pose to others, said Dr. Robert Brewer, alcohol program leader at CDC and one of the authors of the report, one of the CDC's new monthly *Vital Signs* reports that highlight recent health statistics. Binge drinking among adults was slightly higher in 2009 than in 1992.

The team studied data on self-reported binge drinking within the prior month among about 412,000 U.S. adults aged 18 and older and among 16,000 U.S. students ages 14-18 from a youth behavior risk survey. "Alarmingly, almost one in three adults and two in three high school students who drink alcohol also binge drink, which usually leads to intoxication," Brewer said in a statement.

Excessive drinking, including binge drinking, kills more than 79,000 people in the United States each year. "States and communities need to consider further strategies to create an environment that discourages binge drinking," Brewer said in a statement.

In May the World Health Organization (WHO) agreed on a plan to curb binge drinking and other forms of excessive alcohol use through guidelines that recommend higher taxes on alcoholic drinks and tighter marketing regulations.

The WHO estimates that risks linked to alcohol cause 2.5 million deaths a year from heart and liver disease, road accidents, suicides and cancers.

Drinking too much is the third-leading cause of premature deaths and disabilities worldwide.

# Youth Leadership Conference



Plans for the first county-wide youth leadership conference are well underway and the keynote speakers, workshops and evening activities are being put into place. Ty Sells, from Youth to Youth International, and a very popular speaker in middle and high schools throughout the county, along with students

from his organization will present several workshops. They will be joined by Shaun Derick, who was a favorite presenter at the Youth to Youth conference in Rhode Island. Shaun will give his presentation based on music

In addition, there will be several workshops including one on martial arts, creative street art, making a PSA with drug-free messages to promote team building, and develop positive relationships. In the evening there will be a dinner followed by a social event that will have a DJ and many fun team-building activities.



The goal is to have committed student leaders from every high school in the county. When some of the students that attended the Youth to Youth conference during the summer were asked to rate the conference on a scale of 1 to 10, one of them said 100!!! That says it all!!

The success of the conference depends on school personnel, coalitions and agencies identifying student leaders. Please register the students by sending their name, address, school, and email to PWarble@sascorp.org or by calling 332-1300 by October 29.

## Upcoming Events

**October 27** **7:00pm**  
Masters School  
10 Seconds: The Power of One Decision  
Bobbie Petrocelli  
Contact: 479-6568

**November 9** **6 to 9pm**  
John Jay Middle School  
*Family U*  
Keynote for parents,  
*CrazyBusy*  
Edward Hallowell, MD  
Keynote for students,  
Ty Sells  
Workshops for students:  
*Your SELF*, Paula Prentis, LMSW  
and Chris Parrott, PsyD.  
*Common Sports Injuries*, Eric Small, MD and Tom Burns  
Workshops for parents:  
*Be a Parent, Not a Friend*, Patricia Warble, LMSW  
*Helping Children Deal With Anxiety*, Lauren Smith, LCSW  
*Common Sports Injuries*, Eric Small, MD and Tom Burns  
*Facebook, Formspring, Texting, Tweeting and U-Tube*, Bruce Kelly, Chris Griffin, Kiri Ryan and members of law enforcement  
Contact: 234-3227