PREVENTION MATTERS! in WASHINGTON COUNTY

. . . in your family

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Back to school is often a very busy time for youth, young adults and parents. Between buying school supplies, coordinating schedules and providing healthy food choices, there is barely enough time to engage in a meaningful conversation with our children. It may seem easier to send a quick text message or email. Social media and mobile devices may be convenient, but they don't carry the impact of face-to-face conversations, especially when talking about substance abuse. In fact, speaking directly, openly and often to our kids about challenging topics such as smoking, drinking, drugs, and other risky behaviors is key to preventing unhealthy and often dangerous choices.

Parents are their children's life long teachers and it is through our words and our actions that children learn to make healthy lifestyle choices. What we say - and do - matters!

National Alcohol & Drug Addiction Recovery Month

September marks the 25th annual Recovery Month celebration.

Recovery Month promotes the benefits of prevention, treatment and recovery for substance use and celebrates people in recovery, recognizes the contributions of treatment and service providers, and promotes the message that recovery is possible.

When it comes to behavioral health, prevention works, treatment is effective and people can and do recover.

If you know someone in recovery, take a moment to congratulate them on reclaiming their lives and thank those who make recovery possible – the prevention, treatment and recovery service providers.

For information on services in Washington County check out Washington County's Addiction Services and Mental Health Services web pages.

TALKING TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

Families are faced with many challenges. With children and young people heading back to school or college it's a great time to begin a conversation with them about how they can make healthy lifestyle choices. Especially how to avoid the use of drugs or alcohol. Not to be too dramatic. . . but these are life and death decisions. But how do you help your kids say no to drugs and alcohol when there are so many pressures to say yes? Sitting down with them to discuss these tips might help.

- **Don't Be Afraid to Say No:** Sometimes, our fear of negative reaction from our friends, or others we don't even know, keeps us from doing what we know is right. It may seem like "everyone is doing it," but they are not. Don't let someone else make your decisions for you. If someone is pressuring you to do something that's not right for you, you have the right to say no, the right not to give a reason why, and the right to just walk away.

- **Connect With Your Friends and Avoid Negative Peer Pressure:** Pay attention to who you are hanging out with. If you are hanging out with a group in which the majority of kids are drinking alcohol or using drugs to get high, you may want to think about making some new friends. **You don't have to go along to get along.**

- **Make Connections With Your Parents or Other Adults:** As you grow up, having people you can rely on, people you can talk to about life, life's challenges and your decisions about alcohol and drugs is very important. The opportunity to benefit from someone else's life experiences can help put things in perspective and can be invaluable.

- **Enjoy Life and Do What You Love - Don't Add Alcohol and Drugs:** Learn how to enjoy life and the people in your life, without adding alcohol or drugs. Too often, "I'm bored" is just an excuse. Get out and get active in school and community activities such as music, sports, arts or a part-time job. Giving back as a volunteer is a great way to gain perspective on life.

- **Get Educated About Alcohol and Drugs:** You cannot rely on the myths and misconceptions that are out there floating around among your friends and on the internet. Your ability to make the right decisions includes getting educated.

- **Be a Role Model and Set a Positive Example:** Don't forget, **what you do is more important than what you say!** You are setting the foundation and direction for your life; where are you headed?

- **Plan Ahead:** As you make plans for the party or going out with friends you need to plan ahead. You need to protect yourself and be smart. Don't become a victim of someone else's alcohol or drug use. Make sure that there is someone you can call, day or night, no matter what, if you need them. And, do the same for your friends.

- **Speak Out/Speak Up/Take Control:** Take responsibility for your life, your health and your safety. Speak up about what alcohol and drugs are doing to your friends, your community and encourage others to do the same.

From: drugfreenevadacounty.org/news/page2

FAMILY DINNERS PROTECT AGAINST THE EFFECTS OF CYBERBULLYING

About 1 in 5 young people experience some form of online bullying, which can have serious effects on mental health and behavior. However, a recent study shows that eating dinner as a family may actually protect against some of the negative effects of being bullied.

In the new research published in the journal *JAMA Pediatrics,* the researchers surveyed 18,834 students between the ages of 12 and 18 from 49 schools in the Midwest. Their findings showed a positive association between cyberbullying and problems like anxiety, depression and self-harm as well as substance abuse like frequent drinking and prescription drug abuse.

Interestingly, the researchers found teens eating dinner with their families reduced the effects of cyberbullying. The data show that when there are no family dinners, there's an increase in the rates of problems with cyberbullying, but four or more family dinners a week resulted in fewer problems.

"With more frequent dinners comes more regular family contact, which facilitates parental guidance and support, open communication with parents and siblings, and opportunities for adolescents to express problems and concerns as they arise," the study authors write.

The researchers acknowledge that their findings do not conclude that bullying on its own is enough to increase the risk for mental health and behavioral problems, nor are family dinners necessarily enough to protect against them, since there are several other factors in an adolescent's environment that could play a role.

It's likely that having family dinners can serve as a release for young people, and that they benefit from communicating their problems and frequently interacting with their family. It's an argument for seeing family meals as more than just an opportunity to eat.

Alexandra Sifferlin, Sept. 2014
HEALTH MENTAL HEALTH/PSYCHOLOGY

"Surveys of teens repeatedly show that parents can make an enormous difference in influencing their children's perceptions of tobacco, alcohol, or illicit drug use," said SAMHSA Administrator Pamela S. Hyde. "Although most parents are talking with their teens about the risks of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs, far too many are missing the vital opportunity these conversations provide in influencing their children's health and well-being. Parents need to initiate age-appropriate conversations about these issues with their children at all stages of their development in order to help ensure that their children make the right decisions."

"Talk. They Hear You." is SAMHSA's new national media campaign encouraging parents with ideas and resources to promote conversations with children ages nine and older about the dangers of underage drinking. The campaign features a series of TV, radio, and print public service announcements in English and Spanish showing parents how to seize the moment to talk with their children about alcohol. Information about the campaign is available at: www.underagedrinking.samhsa.gov.

WISE OWLS ROLL OUT

Prevention Matter's *Be Part of the Wise Majority* campaign is off to a great start.

The campaign is based on results of the 2012 Oregon Positive Community Norms Survey.

The survey showed that adults have misperceptions about underage drinking. For instance 86% of adults agree that drinking has a negative impact on youth, yet they believe only 21% of other adults hold that same belief.

Posted messages will reveal that most Oregon adults are concerned about underage drinking, that they hope youth don't drink, and most have healthy attitudes around drinking.

From this solid foundation of shared beliefs a new story can emerge and further the growth of positive norms and healthy behaviors in our community.

Look for Wise Majority owls and their messages on benches, bus shelters and buses in Washington County.

October is National Substance Abuse Prevention Month, a month-long observance that focuses on the role substance abuse prevention plays in promoting safe and healthy communities. Learn more at http://www.samhsa.gov/prevention/nationalpreventionmonth

For more information on Prevention Matters contact:
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To learn about prevention efforts in Washington County
visit the websites of our local Drug and Alcohol Prevention Coalitions
Beaverton Together - HEY! - Tigard Turns The Tide - Tualatin Together
or visit our new Prevention Matters Website.

DID YOU KNOW

About 1/4 of fatal teen car accidents involve underage drinking and driving. (MADD)

70% of young drivers who died in underage drinking and driving accidents didn't use a seat belt. (MADD)

Among race demographics, whites had the highest percentage of underage (ages 12-20) past-month alcohol use (30%). Asians had the lowest rate at 16%. SAMHSA

Among underage drinkers (ages 12-20), 31% paid for the alcohol the last time they drank – including 8% who purchased the alcohol themselves and 22% who gave money to someone else to purchase it.

Among those who did not pay for the alcohol they drank, 37% got it from an unrelated person of legal drinking age; 21% received it from a parent, guardian, or other adult family member.SAMHSA

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