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# Parenting for Prevention

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Student Assistance Services Corp., 660 White Plains Road, Tarrytown, New York, 10591, September, 2019

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## Accentuate the Positive



I like the adage that one can “catch more bees with honey than vinegar.” I think that people are more motivated by positive rather than negative messages. Sometimes, too many negative messages make people feel immobilized and unable to gather the energy to offset a negative issue.

Last year many people thought there was nothing they could do to prevent “recreational” marijuana from being legalized in NY State. The issue energized parents, educators, health care providers, and law enforcement professionals to become updated on the negative consequences of marijuana use on motor vehicle crashes, mental health, school performance physical injury, occupational safety and other issues. Like the “little engine that could,” this group of concerned citizens maintained a positive attitude to achieve a positive outcome.

I also thought the we would start the school year off with some good news about teen behavior. I hope that this positive information will motivate parents and school personnel to be even more vigilant about protecting our youth.

Editor: Patricia Murphy Warble,  
MSW, CPP

## Good News

### *About Teens*

During the summer there was an encouraging article in the New York Times based on research done by Aaron E. Carroll, a professor of pediatrics at Indian University School of Medicine and the Regenstrief Institute, and Margot Sanger-Katz, a correspondent who writes about health care for *The Upshot*.

A compilation of research about teen behaviors, concludes that today's teens are less likely to engage in many of the risky behaviors that their parent's generation may have done. They drink less, smoke less and use fewer hard drugs. Teens also have fewer car accidents, fewer fights, are less likely to drop out of high school, less likely to have sex and less likely to become pregnant.

However, the research is showing that overall, teenagers are making responsible decisions about their lifestyle. As more teenagers decide not to use alcohol and other drugs, and engage in other risky behaviors, there is what is described as the “benevolent effect of peer pressure.” When fewer teens engage in risky behaviors, it becomes more stigmatizing to engage in these behaviors and so more teenagers are taking a healthier path

“There is a whole bunch of good news out there ,” said Bill Albert, the chief innovation officer at Power to Decide, a group that used to be called the Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, before teenage pregnancy fell by half. “I think it is fair to call this the cautious generation.”

The percentage of high school juniors who have had sexual intercourse has declined to 42% from 62% since 1991 according to a survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The number of teens having sex with multiple partners has also fallen as fewer than 11 % of high school juniors have had four or more partners, down from 22 % in 1991. Also more teens who are having sex are using contraception and the rates of teenage birth have fallen by more than half.

The *Monitoring the Future* survey which is done every year by researchers at the University of Michigan, shows that the use of almost every type of drug, including alcohol and tobacco, has been falling. In the 2018 survey, 19% of 10th graders reported having consumed an alcoholic beverage in the prior 30 days, down from 40 % in the 1990s. Cigarette use has fallen from highs of 30% to 4% of tenth graders saying they had smoked in the last 30 days.

However, there is concern about teens smoking marijuana at about the same rate as they did a generation ago. And there is great worry about vaping which has been characterized as the “new epidemic.” About 16% of 10th graders and 21% of 12 graders reported use in the last month of 2018.

There is hope that after seeing the popularity of devices for vaping increase dramatically, health professionals, school personal, parents and others are taking proactive steps to educate teens about both the dangers of using vaping devices and becoming addicted to nicotine and THC. No one wants to see uninformed teens experiencing the serious consequences associated with the use of these devices.

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## **NY State Rejects Legalization of Marijuana and Approves Decriminalization**

As a result of pressure from New York’s parents, health care providers, law enforcement, educators and policy makers, the NY State legislators did not vote to legalize marijuana.

Kevin Sabet PhD, head of Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM), made the following statement, “Our broad coalition, including the NYS PTA, Medical Society of the State of New York, NY Sheriffs’ Association, NY Chiefs of Police Association, County Health Officials, local elected officials, concerned parents, teachers, addiction and recovery activists made their voices heard. Legislative leaders deserve credit for their willingness to advance sensible decriminalization over full commercialization of dangerous THC products and we look forward to working with them to craft good public policy.”

The impact of prevention professionals, school personal, parents and other concerned citizens calling, writing and meeting with local legislators to express their concerns had a significant impact on elected officials. Many changed their mind about voting for legalization once they heard the research from other states.

While marijuana is not legalized in NYS (except when recommended by a health care provider for a specific condition), youth may be confused by the difference between legalization and decriminalization. Youth also need understand the different dangers that can result from different forms of marijuana and different routes of administration.

For example, vaping concentrated THC oil, “wax” or “dab” may result in a psychotic episode or serious lung damage; using edible products containing marijuana can result in a delayed effect that can be compounded by using more of the product than the suggested amounts; and finally contaminants such as fentanyl, other drugs and substances as well as bacteria and fungus pose additional serious health consequences.



JOIN THE VOICES FOR RECOVERY:  
**TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER**

[recoverymonth.gov](http://recoverymonth.gov)



National Recovery Month (Recovery Month), sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is a national observance held every September to educate Americans that substance use treatment and mental health services can enable those with mental and substance use disorders to live a healthy and rewarding life.

Now in its 30th year, Recovery Month celebrates the gains made by those in recovery, just as we celebrate improvements made by those who are managing other health conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, asthma, and cancer.

Recovery Month works to promote and support new evidence-based treatment and recovery practices, the emergence of a strong and proud recovery community, and the dedication of service providers and community members across the nation who make recovery in all its forms possible.

Each September, tens of thousands of prevention, treatment, and recovery programs and facilities around the country celebrate Recovery Month. They speak about the gains made by those in recovery and share their success stories with their neighbors, friends, and colleagues. In doing so, everyone helps to increase awareness and furthers a greater understanding about the diseases of mental and substance use disorders.

Recovery Month highlights the achievements of individuals who have reclaimed their lives in long-term recovery and honors the treatment and recovery service providers who make recovery possible. Recovery Month also promotes the message that recovery in all of its forms is possible and encourages citizens to take action to help expand and improve the availability of effective prevention, treatment, and the delivery of recovery services.

Each year, Recovery Month selects a new focus and theme to spread the message and share the successes of treatment and recovery. The 2019 Recovery Month observance will focus on community members, first responders, the healthcare community, and youth and emerging leaders highlighting the various groups that support recovery within our society.

The 2019 Recovery Month theme, "Join the Voices for Recovery: Together We Are Stronger," emphasizes the need to share resources and build networks across the country that support recovery in all its forms.

There is additional information about Recovery Month on line at [recoverymonth.gov](http://recoverymonth.gov) including a Recovery Month Toolkit that can be accessed to download materials for events, ideas and suggestions on ways to celebrate recovery in communities in a meaningful way.



New teachers,  
new supplies,  
new clothes,  
new friends,  
new pressures.

New opportunity  
to talk to your teen.

Back to school is an exciting time filled with new opportunities. But for many teens the start of the new year can also be filled with stress, anxiety, and the pressure to fit in. Learn how to talk to your teen about coping with these things safely at [www.PowerToTheParent.org](http://www.PowerToTheParent.org).

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A program of the Westchester Coalition for Drug and Alcohol Free Youth. Funding was made possible (in part) by Grant Number 5U79SP01556 from Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and through a Drug Free Community grant from SAMHSA. For more information call 914-332-1300 or email LetsDoThis@PowerToTheParent.org

## Upcoming Events

### Better High 2019: Living a Drug-Free Life

*“Be Bold, Be Strong, Be You”*

**October 14, 1:00pm to 4:00pm**  
**SUNY Purchase College,  
Baseball Field**

Teens in Westchester County will gather for an afternoon of fun-filled activities, entertainment and celebration. They will explore many ways to live a meaningful and happy teen life without alcohol and other drugs.

There is no charge for this fun and memorable day. Register at [betterhighday.org](http://betterhighday.org).