

Alcohol Awareness Month: Talking to Youth about Alcohol

April is Alcohol Awareness Month. The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, inc. founded Alcohol Awareness Month in 1987 to reduce the stigma associated with alcoholism. Not only is Alcohol Awareness Month an opportunity to increase knowledge of alcoholism, it is also an opportunity to talk to youth about alcohol.

According to MADD.org, individuals that begin drinking at a young age are more likely to be alcohol dependent later in life. Furthermore, “over 40 percent of individuals who start drinking before the age of 13 will develop alcohol abuse or alcohol dependence at some point in their lives. Ninety-five percent of the 14 million people who are alcohol dependent began drinking before the legal age of 21.6.” With prom and graduation season upon us now is the time to educate youth about the dangers of underage drinking.

Youth experiment with alcohol and other drugs for several reasons. Teens may feel insecure or feel a desire to be accepted by their peers. They also may experiment with alcohol as a way to cope with stress, trauma or transitions in life. Teens with mental health and behavior problems are at an increased risk to use or abuse alcohol. Alcohol abuse within the family is also a risk factor for underage drinking.

Ways to Prevent Underage Drinking:

- Develop a trusting and open relationship with youth
- Set clear expectations
- Encourage healthy relationships
- Set a positive example
- Know your child’s friends and activities

It can be difficult to break the ice, take advantage of teachable moments in your daily life. Many movies and TV shows contain messages about alcohol that can be used as conversation starters. Be open about the dangers of underage drinking and the effects alcohol has on the developing brain. Be prepared to share facts and debunk myths about underage drinking. Also, use the opportunity to brainstorm alternate activities and strategies to handle peer pressure.

Not only is it important to discuss the dangers of alcohol and discourage alcohol use, it is also important to discuss what to do if the teen or someone they know is intoxicated. Discuss the dangers of drinking and driving. Also, educate your child on how to recognize signs of intoxication and alcohol poisoning.

In April of 2015, Nebraska passed a medical amnesty law to encourage youth to call 9-1-1 if they believe someone they know needs medical attention as a result of drinking alcohol. This law, also referred to as the ‘Good Samaritan law’ went into effect in Nebraska in August of 2015. The law allows minors seeking medical assistance for themselves or another intoxicated minor to call 9-1-1 without it resulting in an MIP charge. While, this does not eliminate possible consequences students may face with parents, schools and other programming the student might be involved in it does allow teens to act without fear of criminal charges.

did you know?



All the above contain the same amount of absolute alcohol!

Taking the time to talk to youth about alcohol can be difficult, but it is worth it in order to protect their safety and well-being. There are several great resources available on the SCIP website to assist you in educating youth. In addition, Talkaboutalcohol.org provides many useful tips on how to talk to youth about alcohol.

Resources:

<https://www.ncadd.org/about-ncadd/events-awards/alcohol-awareness-month-2016>

<http://www.madd.org/underage-drinking/why21/myths.html>

<http://www.talkaboutalcohol.org/parenting-styles>

<http://www.drugfree.org/resources/8-ways-to-talk-with-your-teen-about-drugs-and-alcohol/>

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/tween-and-teen-health/in-depth/teen-drinking/art-20047947?pg=1>

<http://college.usatoday.com/2015/09/05/medical-amnesty-laws-college/>

Let's Talk About Suicide: A Community Outreach Approach to Prevention and Intervention

Imagine if you were faced with the opportunity to save someone's life. In weighing that decision some might question the risk involved. Now imagine if you could save someone's life by simply asking a question, offering support and connecting to help. Would you hesitate?

Suicide is the single most preventable cause of death yet every 17 minutes at least six Americans lose a loved one to suicide. 66% of those individuals who have died by suicide showed the warning signs to family and friends. Historically suicide has been a taboo subject. We are afraid to talk about it for fear we will provoke it. However, the reality is the more comfortable we become talking about suicide, the more capable we are to intervene and prevent it. Data supports the need to talk about suicide in our Nebraska communities. The number of individuals who die by suicide in Nebraska has been on the rise. According to data from the CDC, Nebraska, suicide is the 11th leading cause of death overall, the 2nd leading cause of death for ages 15-34 and the 7th leading cause of death for ages 10-14. On average, one person dies by suicide every two days in the state. Likewise, our youth are thinking about suicide more than we probably recognize. 14.6% of Nebraska high school students report they have seriously considered suicide in the past 12 months, while 13.1% had a plan (YRBS 2014). There is a need to train and educate parents, teachers, clergy, case workers, doctors, nurses, police officers, and our general population as a whole, so that our community may be more prepared to work together to prevent suicide. QPR is an evidence based early intervention strategy designed to train individuals from all backgrounds, professions and experiences on how to recognize the warning signs that someone may be contemplating suicide, how to begin a conversation and offer supportive dialogue with a suicidal person and how to get them to help. QPR stands for Question, Persuade and Refer.... Three simple steps that can help save a life.

QPR is designed much like CPR as a first responder strategy. Whereas CPR is an emergency medical intervention, QPR is an emergency mental health intervention for those with suicidal ideations. Just as CPR is used to prevent a medical crisis, QPR can be used to identify and interrupt a mental health crisis. The ultimate goal of QPR is to prevent suicide attempts and completions by detecting persons who are in the thinking or ideational phase of a suicide plan. Those contemplating suicide fully understand that talking about suicide is taboo. As a result they are often reluctant to tell others how desperate and hopeless they feel. A key concept in QPR is learning to overcome our fear of the word suicide and finding the means to talk about it. Everyone can play a role in suicide prevention and offer hope in the face of despair.

The QPR Gatekeeper training is currently being offered throughout Nebraska. Trainings can be offered through schools, parent groups, churches, places of business, civic groups or neighborhood associations, just to name a few. Thanks to grant funding, the QPR Gatekeeper training is currently be offered for free. To schedule a training or for more information please contact your SCIP Coordinator.



QPR- ASK A QUESTION, SAVE A LIFE

References: CDC, The American Foundation of Suicide Prevention, Nebraska Youth Risk Behavior Survey, The QPR Institute

WHY WE SHOULD...“LIKE TO MOVE IT MOVE IT”!!!!!!!

Most of us know that exercise is good for us and our body. But did you know that exercise is also good for our mind. Exercise is indeed one of the best and most effective ways to help improve a person’s mental health.

People, young and old who exercise regularly tend to develop and have a better sense of well-being. They feel more energized throughout the day, tend to sleep better at night, have sharper memories, and feel more relaxed and positive about themselves and their lives. And it’s also powerful medicine for many common mental health challenges.

Exercise & Depression

Exercise is a great for combating depression for several reasons. It has been shown to help treat depression as well as antidepressant medication and it has the added benefit of no side-effects that comes from taking medication. Furthermore, it promotes all kinds of changes in the brain, including neural growth, reduces inflammation, and new activity patterns that encourage feelings of calm and well-being.



Exercise also releases endorphins, a feel good chemical in your brain that energizes your spirits and makes you feel good. In addition to all of this, exercise can also serve as a distraction, allowing you to find some quiet time to break out of the cycle of negative thoughts that feed depression.

Exercise & ADHD

Exercising regularly also is one of the easiest and effective ways to reduce the symptoms of ADHD and improve concentration, motivation, memory, and mood. Physical activity immediately increases the brain’s dopamine, norepinephrine, and serotonin levels all of which affect focus and attention. In this way, exercise works in much the same way as ADHD medications such as Ritalin and Adderall.

Exercise & Anxiety

Exercise is an effective anti-anxiety treatment. It helps relieve tension and stress, increases energy, and increases the release of endorphins that make you feel good. Most anything that gets you moving can help, but you’ll get even a greater benefit if you pay attention instead of zoning out while you exercise.

For example, try to noticing the sensation of your feet hitting the ground, or the rhythm of your breathing etc. By focusing on your body and how it feels as you exercise, you’ll not only improve your physical condition faster, but you may also distract yourself from the anxiety you feel from the constant worries running through your head.

Exercise & Stress

Have you ever noticed how your body feels when you’re under stress? Your muscles might be tight and tense causing you to have back or neck pain, or painful headaches. You may feel a

tightness in your chest, a pounding pulse, or muscle cramps. You may also experience problems such not being able to sleep, heartburn and/or, stomachaches. The worry and discomfort of all these physical symptoms can in turn lead to even more stress, creating a vicious cycle between your mind and body.

Exercise & PTSD/Trauma

Furthermore, evidence suggests that by really focusing on your body and how it feels as you exercise, you can actually help your nervous system become “unstuck” and begin to move out of the immobilization stress response that characterizes PTSD or trauma. Instead of thinking about other things, pay close attention to the physical sensations in your joints and muscles, even your insides as your body moves. Exercises that involve cross movement and that engage both arms and legs—such as walking (especially in sand), running, swimming, weight training, or dancing—are some of your best choices.

Again, exercising is a good way to break this cycle. Besides releasing endorphins in the brain, physical activity helps to relax the muscles and relieves tension in the body. Since the body and mind are so closely linked, when your body feels better so does your mind.

Check out this great opportunity for the whole family to exercise together:



SCIP is planning its third annual fundraiser, “Hop, SCIP, Jump and RUN”, set to take place on May 28, 2016 at Haymarket Park. Proceeds will benefit SCIP, a program of Lincoln Medical Education Partnership.

New this year children and adults of all ages will participate in a 1-mile Fun Run or 5K Race. Participants will also have the opportunity to visit sponsor booths to become eligible for prizes. Sponsor booths may include a variety of resources, information, treats and activities.

Registration: 8:00 am

1-mile Fun Run: 9:00 am

5K: 9:30 am

The 5K Race is \$25.00 per person and the 1-mile Fun Run is \$15.00 per person. Children under the age of 9 must be accompanied by an adult; 1 adult can run for free if they are with a child under the age of 9 (event shirt not included). For more information go to www.scipnebraska.com.

Sources:

www.helpguide.org/articles/exercise.../emotional-benefits-of-exercise

fit.webmd.com/kids/move/article/exercise-helps-body

www.heart.org/.../HealthyLiving/HealthyKid