



UPDATES FROM SCIP

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New Year - New SCIP



By now you should all have had a glimpse of the new changes to SCIP. We are still the same great program, with some exciting new changes. Our name has changed to *School Community Intervention & Prevention*. That change was made to encompass the important prevention piece of our program. We also have a brand new logo and tag line that, we have been told, is very eye catching and better represents what we do. Our new brochures have a much updated look to them. We have designed those in two formats, one for the general community, the other specifically designed for parents. You should all have received a few each of the brochures, or will very soon, as well as an updated agency list on our new letterhead.

We very much appreciate everyone's input and feedback during the process of making these changes!!

Understanding Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in children and adolescents occurs as a result of a child's exposure to one or more traumatic events that were either life-threatening or caused severe injury, to which they have responded with intense fear, helplessness, or horror. Traumatic events can come from many sources, including witnessing or being the victim of violence, physical or sexual abuse, automobile accidents, fires, natural disasters, diagnosis of a life-threatening illness, traumatic death of a loved one, or emotional abuse or neglect. These events undermine a child's sense of security in a reasonably safe world, as well as cause them to not believe that their parents can protect them from harm. Traumatized children and adolescents are frequently preoccupied with danger and vulnerability, leading to misperceptions of danger, even in situations that are not threatening.

Once symptoms emerge, PTSD leads to neurophysiologic correlates that impact brain function in developing children and adolescents. The key to understanding traumatized children is to remember that they will often be in a state of low-level fear and their emotional, behavioral and cognitive functioning will reflect this state. When in a state of alarm, they will be more anxious and less capable of concentrating. Those that have experienced repeated trauma may develop a kind of emotional numbing, called dissociation, to deaden or block the pain and trauma.

Following the trauma, children may initially show agitated or confused behavior, anger, sadness, or denial. Children with PTSD tend to avoid situations or places that remind them of the trauma. They may become less emotionally responsive, depressed, withdrawn and more detached from their feelings. Other symptoms may include regressive behaviors (thumb-sucking, wetting or soiling themselves, clingy, whiny), physical symptoms such as headaches and stomachaches, feelings of being all alone, loss of interest in activities, inappropriate sexual behaviors (usually in sexual abuse victims), self-harm, and abuse of drugs or alcohol. They may also re-experience the traumatic event by having frequent memories or flashbacks of the event. Symptoms of PTSD may be shown through play, drawing and/or stories.

Once the trauma has occurred, early intervention is essential. Support from parents, school, and peers is important. Emphasis needs to be placed upon establishing a feeling of safety. While psychotherapy is essential in treating PTSD, teachers can be great allies in keeping children safe and successful in school by using the following suggestions:

- Provide comfort and support; let them know their reactions are normal.
- Be available if the child wants to talk about the traumatic event; children do not benefit from "not thinking about it", talking lets them learn they don't have to be afraid of their memories.
- Provide a consistent, predictable pattern for the day; explain any changes in activities to them beforehand. Discuss expectations for behavior and your "style of discipline" with the child; make sure the rules are clear.
- Protect the child by cutting short, stopping, restructuring or limiting activities which are upsetting or re-traumatizing for them.
- Be prepared; have a "safe" room. Unexpected things may trigger memories of trauma causing agitated or out-of-control behavior; you may need to remove the child for a "calming" period.
- Be nurturing, comforting, and affectionate, but be sure it is in an appropriate context; take your cue from the child as some may recoil from physical contact.
- Give the child "choices" and some sense of control; this will help them feel more safe. When having difficulty with compliance, frame the "consequence" as a choice; it can help defuse situations when they feel out of control or anxious.
- Watch for signs of re-enactment; these can come in the form of playing, drawing or inappropriate behaviors.
- Communicate with parent/caregiver on any changes or "incidents".

(Sources: emedicine.medscape.com; specialchildren.about.com; aacap.org)



Be On The Look Out!



Product Alert!

New Energy Inhaler Compared to “Club Drug”

AeroShot inhaler is a slim, pocket-sized tube, resembling lipstick, that works like an asthma inhaler. Puff gently, and the tube releases a light powder that dissolves instantly in your mouth. AeroShot contains 100 milligrams of caffeine which is equivalent to a large cup of coffee, and it has more caffeine per dose than a can of Red Bull. Each inhaler also contains niacin and two B-vitamins. Its manufacturer, Breathable Foods, describes it as “breathable energy”.

Senator Charles Schumer of New York is calling the product dangerous to teens, suggesting the product would encourage excessive caffeine intake and could be used in combination with alcohol to fuel binge drinking. “The product is nothing more than a club drug designed to give users the ability to drink until they drop,” Schumer said. Schumer is calling for federal testing of the product.

There’s an additional risk to inhaled stimulants, as opposed to those which are swallowed. Coffee, for example, travels through the digestive tract, then its caffeine is absorbed into the bloodstream, which then sends the stimulant to the brain. It is a gradual effect. Inhaled substances spur much faster reactions, and a noticeable buzz is felt after only a couple of puffs, causing alarm among medical experts. “This would be the first product where caffeine would be delivered to the body very rapidly,” says Dr. Sharon Levy of The Children’s Hospital, Boston. “It could get people high.”

Costing only \$2.99 per inhaler, AeroShot previously was available only online; however, it was just made available to retail outlets in Boston and New York in January of 2012 and will be rolled out from there.

(Sources: wpix.com; boston.com)



SnoBars

Another alcohol infused product has hit the market - SnoBar Cocktails. These are frozen treats that include popsicles and ice cream.

Margarita pops made with premium tequila, lime and triple sec; cosmopolitan pops with vodka, triple sec and cranberry juice; and ice cream flavors such as pink squirrel, brandy Alexander, brandy chocolate chip and grasshopper are making their debut in Arizona.



Each serving contains as much alcohol as a regular drink, with some of the products containing as much as 14 percent. Consumers are warned to be more cautious when driving after eating a popsicle or two. You may not realize how impaired you are after having a pop or an alcoholic ice cream.

There are also potential dangers to making alcohol more tempting. How will it be kept away from the kids, making sure they are not inadvertently consuming some of it? One mother expressed concern that kids usually get their own stuff and could easily grab one of the alcoholic popsicles.

Parents are warned about the message they may be sending to their kids by purchasing the pops; they should consider if they are creating a behavior pattern for them.

(Sources: drugfree.org; phoenixduiattorneyblog.com)

Update on Synthetic Drug Ban

In December, the U.S. House voted to ban more than 30 synthetic drugs, including “bath salts” and “spice”. The Synthetic Drug Control Act would make it illegal to manufacture or dispense the drugs.

Makers of spice spray herbs with compounds that mimic marijuana’s active ingredient, THC. They continue to change the recipe just enough to skirt state laws that ban the substance. In some states, laws banning spice include a provision that prohibits chemicals that are intended to act in a similar way to the banned substances.



According to the recent Monitoring the Future survey, one in every nine high school seniors reported using synthetic marijuana in the prior 12 months. The drug is popular in part because most drug tests do not detect spice, and it is available on many websites. Users may experience hallucinations, seizures, vomiting, anxiety and an accelerated heart rate.

Bath salts are made from chemical compounds similar to amphetamine, which cause users to experience a euphoric high. They may also experience hallucinations, paranoia, confusion, rapid heartbeat, nausea, dizziness, and kidney pain. Ingesting or inhaling bath salts can be deadly.



Nebraska has just introduced a bill that will ban the class of chemicals used to manufacture bath salts. The measure would make the penalties for possessing bath salts mirror those for possessing methamphetamine.

(Sources: drugfree.org; journalstar.com)