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# Parenting for Prevention

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Student Assistance Services Corp., 660 Plains Road, Tarrytown, New York, 10591, March, 2013

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## Youth Leadership Conference

The Youth Leadership conference for high school students was held on March 12th. Ty Sells, a well liked presenter in Westchester County Center and his colleagues from Youth to Youth facilitated the conference.

The three keynote speakers, each in their own entertaining and informative way, inspired the students to be better leaders and role models in their schools.

Approximately 250 students from 35 high schools attended the conference. It was a wonderful opportunity for student leaders to interact with student leaders from other schools, have positive experiences, and learn skills and strategies to share with others back at their school.

The students who attended had a productive and fun-filled day, and met other students who want to live a healthy life and make a positive contribution to their schools and communities.

**Patricia Murphy Warble.**  
LMSW, CCP

## National Survey of American Attitudes on Substance Abuse

According to the National Survey of American Attitudes on Substance Abuse 17th annual back-to-school survey conducted by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (CASA), 86% of American high-school students say that some classmates are using drugs, smoking or drinking during the school day. The actual percentage of students using drugs, drinking or smoking during the school day is about 17%.

The survey went on to report that 44% of teens report that they know a fellow student who sells drugs on the school grounds. According to the students, 91% said that the drug being sold is marijuana and 24% said prescription drugs.

**The take away from this survey for parents is to talk to their children and get engaged in their children's lives. They should ask their children what they're seeing at school and online. It takes a teen to know what's going on in the teen world, but it takes parents to help their children navigate that world."**

**Emily Feinstein, CASAColumbia's Senior Policy Analyst and the project director of the teen survey.**

The survey that was done this year took a closer look at the influence of social networking on the decisions that teens make in regard to using drugs and alcohol. The survey found that 75% of 12-17 year olds said that seeing pictures of their classmates and other teens partying on social networking sites encouraged them to want to do the same thing.

The survey compared teens who had not seen pictures on social networking sites of other teens getting drunk or even passed out, to those teens who had seen pictures. The survey found that those who had seen the pictures were:

- Four times likelier to have used marijuana;
  - More than three times likelier to have used alcohol; and
  - Almost three times likelier to have used tobacco.
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“This year’s survey reveals a new kind of potent peer pressure, digital peer pressure. Digital peer pressure moves beyond a child’s friends and the kids they hang out with. It invades the home and a child’s bedroom via the Internet,” said Joseph Califano, Founder and Chairman Emeritus of CASAColumbia, “So parents should be aware of what their children are viewing on social networking sites. If their teens are seeing pictures of other teens partying with marijuana and alcohol, getting drunk or passed out, or using drugs, they may think it looks like fun and want to try it.”

### Home Alone

This year the survey asked 12- to 17-year olds if they are home overnight without adult supervision if they would use drugs or alcohol. Compared to teens who are never home alone overnight, those who are left home alone overnight are:

- 2 times as likely to have used marijuana;
- Almost 2 times as likely to have used alcohol; and
- Almost 3 times likelier to have used tobacco.

### Parental Disapproval and Teen Use of Substances

Past and current research shows that a parent’s disapproval of teen substance abuse can be a deterrent to a teens using drugs, alcohol and tobacco. This survey indicated that if a parent does not express disapproval, their children are:

- 8 1/2 times likelier to say it’s okay for teens their age to use marijuana;
- 10 times likelier to say it’s okay for teens their age to get drunk; and
- 9 times likelier to say it’s okay for teens their age to smoke cigarettes.

“The take away from this survey for parents is to talk to their children and get engaged in their children’s lives. They should ask their children what they’re seeing at school and online. It takes a teen to know what’s going on in the teen world, but it takes parents to help their children navigate that world,” said Emily Feinstein, CASAColumbia’s Senior Policy Analyst and the project director of the teen survey.

### Other Survey Findings

- Most high school students (52 percent) know at least one friend or classmate who uses illegal drugs like acid, ecstasy, meth, cocaine or heroin; a third (33 percent) know at least one friend or classmate who abuses controlled prescription drugs or over the counter medicines to get high.
- Teens are more likely to be able to get prescription drugs than marijuana within an hour or within a day.
- Teens who attend religious services at least four times a month are less likely to have used marijuana, alcohol, or tobacco.

## Children More Likely to Approve of Drug Use if Parents Admit Past Substance Use

The following article comes from a report on the *Join Together* website.

“Middle school students are less likely to think using drugs is bad if their parents told them about their own past substance use, a new study finds. Children whose parents warned them not to use drugs were more likely to avoid them, [ABC News](#) reports.

The study by researchers at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign included 561 middle school students. They were less likely to accept drug use if their parents set rules against drugs, and told them about people who have gotten into trouble because of drugs.

“Parents should really hit on what are the bad things that can happen, health-wise, from using drugs,” researcher Jennifer Kam told ABC News. “They should really clearly tell kids that they disapprove of them using drugs. Also, give them strategies to avoid use or decline use in a way that makes them look cool.”

She advised parents against lying. “I wouldn’t volunteer the information, but if a child asks, and a parent lies, it could impact the relationship later on,” she noted. The study appears in the journal [Human Communication Research.](#)”

## Mealtime Matters

*More good news*

Sharing meals helps cement family relationships, no matter how you define "family." "Sitting down to a meal together draws a line around us," says Miriam Weinstein, author of *The Surprising Power of Family Meals*. "It encloses us and, for a brief time, strengthens the bonds that connect us with other members of our self-defined clan, shutting out the rest of the world."

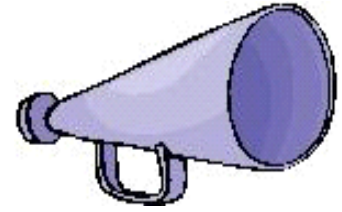
A white paper released by CASA, in 2012, confirms the value of family meals as the paper reports that teens who have regular family dinners are more likely to report having excellent relationships with their parents. Teens who have frequent family dinners are almost 1 1/2 times likelier to say they have an excellent relationship with their mother and 1 1/2 times likelier to say they have an excellent relationship with their father.



Taking this one step further, the white paper goes on to report that teens who have excellent relationships with their mom and dad are less likely to use drugs, drink or smoke. In addition, the CASA paper reports that teens who eat meals regularly with their family are less likely to report high levels of stress in their lives. It appears that families who report having meals together are more likely to know what is going on in their children's lives. Family dinners or other meals provide the opportunity for children to talk to their parents and for parents to listen and learn.

It is important to note, that the actual research done by CASA was done on the value of having dinner together. However, the bottom line is that what is really being celebrated is the value of families spending time together.. It is helpful for all to be sitting at the same table and sharing ideas, thoughts and concerns and practicing verbal communication skills.

However, if a family dinner is not possible due to work, sports or other commitments, spending time together at any meal during the day can result in the same beneficial results. If it is challenging to get together for a meal then there are also other ways of coming together in a meaningful way; perhaps talking a walk, playing games, doing a hobby or activity together or any other way that families can connect in a way that promotes interaction, sharing and conversation.



CASA gives some suggestions on good conversation starters to make mealtime fun and interactive;

- If you could study anywhere in the world where would you go?
- If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?
- Where would you want to go on a road trip with your friends?
- What would you do if someone offered you drugs?
- What is your favorite holiday and why?
- What do you think makes a person successful?
- Where should we go on our next family trip and why?
- Do you believe it is better to flaunt your accomplishments or keep them to yourself?
- What is the most vivid dream you can remember? What do you think it means?
- If you could choose to live in any of the past time periods, when would you live and where?
- If you could adopt an exotic animal, which one would you choose?

## Spring Break

Spring break can provide an opportunity for the family to spend more time together sharing meals, doing chores and errands together, and having fun. While teens need some alone time, make sure they are not spending too much time alone in their room over the vacation.

## Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America Conference



A record number of Westchester Coalition leaders, some of who are seen here with Congresswoman Nita Lowey, attended the annual Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) conference in Washington, D.C.

This year the major themes continued to be concern about the rise in prescription drug and marijuana use by teens and the need to address mental health issues. There was also a special symposium held to address issues, concerns, and new findings about the negative effects of “medical marijuana.”

## Upcoming Events

### April to May Staying Connected To Your Teen (Parenting Series)

New Rochelle Library

Contact: Ann Marie Linden,  
332-1300 to register

### April 16 7:00PM

Blind Brook High School

Matt Ballace

Call: 937-3600X3144 to register