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# Parenting for Prevention

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

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## Fall Is Here!



This has always been my favorite time of year. I think of it as the “beginning” of the new year. If I am going to make any resolutions, it would be done now rather than on January 1.

And after the heat of the summer, never has the cooler weather been more welcome. I love it all; walks with the leaves cracking under my feet, the smell and warmth of a fire, the cool evenings, the brilliant September sun, soccer and football games at our local high school, Homecoming and Halloween, which is my favorite holiday of the year.

So it is always a bit sad for me that Halloween has become a day of concern for so many parents because of the increased drinking that occurs on this day and night. During the celebrations associated with Halloween and Homecoming, it is especially important to make sure that all children are supervised and in a safe environment. It also makes me sad that for some students Homecoming is more about the parties than the pep rally and games.

Patricia Murphy Warble, LMSW, CPP

## Back To School



As our children start back to school there is a resource for parents that was launched in the past year to help parents keep their children safe and healthy. There is great power in being a parent and visiting [powertotheparents.org](http://powertotheparents.org) will help parents learn techniques and strategies



to protect their teen. Take a look at the parent tool kit website to help you have that important back to school conversation with your teens.

The beginning of the school year is an excellent time to discuss the negative health and social consequences of using alcohol and other drugs. Research has shown that teens who believe their parents disapprove of their smoking, drinking or using other drugs are less likely to do so which means that parents need to explain why they disapprove of use.

It can be difficult for parents to keep up with the latest trends and information about the use of alcohol and other drugs. But, sadly, there is some urgency to be knowledgeable about these issues as there are trends that are disturbing and dangerous.

- During the first half of 2013 there has been an increase in the number of youth with opiate use entering Westchester treatment programs.
- There has been a significant increase in the number of teens experimenting and using prescription drugs in our county. There is a link specifically geared toward teen abuse of prescription drugs. <http://www.oasas.ny.gov/AdMed/FYI/teenrxabuse.cfm>.
- An information sheet was posted at [thepartnershipatdrugfree.org](http://thepartnershipatdrugfree.org) this week that gave an overview of drug and alcohol trends state by state. According to the 2010-2011 National Surveys on Drug Use

and Health, in a ranking from most prevalent to least prevalent, New York is among the top ten states for cocaine use in the past year among persons aged 26 or older and alcohol use in the past month among youths aged 12 to 17. Although this is based on a statewide survey, the information collected by survey's given to Westchester teens further confirms this data.

- It is very helpful for parents to learn the current terms or slang that describe current drugs so that parents know what their children may be talking about in terms of drugs. The publicity surrounding the deaths of young people from overdoses from ecstasy at Randalls Island highlighted the word "molly." However, there have been references to that drug in songs that are popular with young people for some time. The singer Miley Cyrus recently released a song, "We Can't Stop" that has many drug references including the phrase "dancing with molly," which is a slang term for ecstasy (MDMA).
- Smoking synthetic marijuana, known as K2, Spice, Black Mamba, Mr. Smiley and Blaze, among other things, can result in very serious consequences. These synthetic cannabinoids are a blend of plant and herbal materials that have been sprayed with chemicals, producing an extra toxicity, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Sold most often on the Internet, synthetic marijuana produces euphoric and psychoactive effects similar to those associated with marijuana. However, doctors say there are additional side effects that may be particularly dangerous. The drug can leave patients catatonic and listless. And what makes matters worse, very little is known about synthetic marijuana or how to treat an adverse reaction or overdose.
- According to an article published in the New York Times on September 5, 2013, the number of middle and high school students who use e-cigarettes doubled in 2012 from the previous year according to a national survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. E-cigarettes are a battery-powered devices that deliver nicotine that is vaporized to form an aerosol mist. This device has been promoted as a healthy alternative to smoking although at this point the health effects are not clear. One of the biggest concerns is that this nicotine containing device will encourage young people to smoke cigarettes who may not have thought about smoking a traditional cigarette.
- Many young people are not familiar with the dangers associated with drinking or using drugs and as a result are susceptible to overdosing. Alcohol and most other drugs, including many prescription and non-prescription medications, can cause an overdose. An overdose requires immediate medical attention. Call 911 immediately if someone exhibits any of the symptoms listed below. Tell the operator: "Someone is unresponsive and not breathing."

- ♦ **Signs of overdose**, which is a life-threatening emergency, include:
  - ♦ face is extremely pale and/or clammy to the touch;
  - ♦ body is limp;
  - ♦ fingernails or lips have a blue or purple cast;
  - ♦ the patient is vomiting or making gurgling noises;
  - ♦ the person cannot be awakened from sleep or is unable to speak;
  - ♦ breathing is very slow or stopped;
  - ♦ heartbeat is very slow or stopped.
- ♦ **Signs of overmedication** which may progress to overdose, include:
  - ♦ unusual sleepiness or drowsiness;
  - ♦ mental confusion, slurred speech,
  - ♦ intoxicated behavior;
  - ♦ slow or shallow breathing;
  - ♦ pinpoint pupils;
  - ♦ slow heartbeat, low blood pressure;
  - ♦ difficulty waking the person from sleep.

# Autumn Concerns:

## *Beginning School, Homecoming, and Halloween*

Every time of the year has specific concerns associated with it in terms of alcohol and other drug use. Research shows that during summer vacation students are more likely to be unsupervised and have more opportunities to experiment with alcohol and other drugs. The summer is when many students try marijuana for the first time.

### Back to School



**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).

**POWER  
TO THE  
PARENT  
.ORG**

A program of the Westchester Coalition for Drug and Alcohol Free Youth. Funding was made possible (in part) by Grant Number SU795P01556 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 [LetsDoThisPowerToTheParent.org](mailto:LetsDoThisPowerToTheParent.org)

Times of transition are challenging for most people. Going back to school can be very stressful for many adolescents. They often have to reestablish friendships and “prove” their status or maturity to peers. Negative peer pressure can have a powerful influence on students who may be struggling to fit in and maintain or establish friendships. Stress associated with the beginning of school can result in teens using alcohol and drugs to “blow off steam.” There is also a tremendous amount of stress to win and excel if a teen is involved with a sports team. Many teens regard their athletic ability to be the thing that will distinguish them when they try to get into college. If an athlete can get to the sectionals or states, they know that there will be college coaches attending these games. Drinking or using drugs including performance enhancing supplements can be associated with athletes who feel overwhelmed by this as well as academic pressures and lack of sleep.



**The most important part of Homecoming**

**is making sure your teen comes home to you.**

Homecoming is an annual celebration. But each year on Homecoming, teens can be exposed to drinking, pre-gaming, parties and pep rallies – and the pressure to fit in. Learn how to talk to your teen about growing up safely at [PowerToTheParent.org](http://PowerToTheParent.org).

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### Homecoming

Homecoming is a revered tradition in many high schools and colleges when graduates return to their school. The centerpiece of these weekends are sporting events, dances, or other activities that usually include parties. Some high school students attend parties or other kinds of gatherings with graduates who are now in college and have greater access to alcohol or other drugs. High school students may use substances for the first time so they don't appear “babyish” to the older returning students. Also alcohol is more likely to be used to celebrate an athletic victory or to drink out the frustration of a loss. Homecoming is a big “party” weekend in most communities, so parents need to set limits, be clear about their expectations, and take measures to keep their children safe.

**Halloween**



Halloween is another fall tradition that students love to celebrate. However, most students are in an unsupervised setting as the days of going out with their parents to “trick or treat” are long gone. As a result students can be gathering together either at a party or since it is usually still warm on Halloween, at an outside site. These are the kind of venues that may include alcohol and other drugs.

Another concern is that both middle and high schools students can be involved in “pranks” or other mischief that is often associated with Halloween and these actions could have serious consequences. If a student has also been using alcohol or other drugs, their judgment may be compromised and they may end up doing something that they would not normally do.

**Upcoming Events**

**October 21** **7:30pm**  
Family U  
John Jay Middle School  
*You Don't Know Me Till You Know Me*  
Michael Fowlin, PhD  
Contact: 234-3227

**November 14** **5:45pm**  
Bedford Central Family U  
Fox Lane Middle School  
*If It's Not Your Kid Whose Kid Is it?*  
Mike Nerney  
*Building Connections*  
Tara Brown  
*You Don't Know Me Till You Know Me*  
Michael Fowlin, PhD