



The Community Collaborative for Youth and Families

Cultivate a thriving community through an inclusive collaborative helping youth and families acquire the foundation to be stable and successful.

www.thecommunitycollaborative.org

“Chasing the Dragon” Opioid Town Hall

Calls to Action: What Can You Do?

- First and foremost: If you or someone you love struggles with addiction, seek help now.
- Help raise awareness with neighbors, co-workers, and friends about what you’ve learned this evening.
- Have a conversation with your family on the dangers of addiction.
- Perform a medication inventory in your home. Safely store current medication and properly dispose of unused and/or expired medications.
- Become a more informed patient by increasing your own involvement in physician discussions regarding your and your loved one’s pain/medical care.
- Understand opioid addiction can occur from non-medical use and medically prescribed overuse.
- Have no illusions that opioid addiction can never happen to you or a loved one.
- Attend *REVIVE!* Training and learn how to administer Narcan to reverse an opiate overdose.
- Report crime or suspected drug activity to law enforcement.

Resources

Rappahannock Area Community Services Board: 540-373-3223 or www.rappahannockareacsb.org

National Addiction Hotline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

VaAware: www.vaaware.com

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): www.samhsa.gov

Get Smart about Drugs (DEA Resource for Parents, Educators & Caregivers):

www.getsmartaboutdrugs.gov

Partnership for Drug-Free Kids: www.drugfree.org

Just Think Twice: www.justthinktwice.gov

Notes

Behavioral Signs of Heroin Abuse and Addiction

- Lying or other deceptive behavior
- Avoiding eye contact or distant field of vision
- Substantial increases in time spent sleeping
- Increase in slurred, garbled or incoherent speech
- Sudden worsening of performance in school or work, including expulsion or loss of jobs
- Decreasing attention to hygiene and physical appearance
- Loss of motivation and apathy toward future goals
- Withdrawal from friends and family and instead spending time with new friends with no natural ties
- Lack of interest in hobbies and favorite activities
- Repeatedly stealing or borrowing money from loved ones or unexplained absence of valuables
- Hostile behaviors toward loved ones, including blaming them for withdrawal or broken commitments
- Regular comments indicating a decline in self-esteem or worsening body image
- Wearing long pants or long sleeves to hide needle marks, even in very warm weather

Warning Signs of Heroin Abuse

What do you see?

- Needles or syringes not used for other medical purposes
- Burned silver spoons
- Aluminum foil or gum wrappers with burn marks
- Missing shoelaces (used as a tie-off for injection sites)
- Straws with burn marks
- Small plastic bags with white powdery residue
- Water pipes or other pipes

Physical Symptoms

- Weight loss
- Runny nose (not explained by other illnesses or medical condition)
- Needle track marks visible on arms
- Infections or abscesses at injection site
- For women, loss of menstrual cycle
- Cuts, bruises, or scabs from skin picking

Addressing the Topic of Addictions in the Home

Speak with your children about addiction.

- Explain that addiction is a progressive and chronic disease
- Explain that misuse of prescription drugs is dangerous
- Explain that illegal opioids are addictive substances and misuse can occur after a single dose
- Be a positive role model!

Check your medicine cabinet.

- Be aware of medications in your home
- Ask your healthcare provider if any prescriptions in your home have a potential for abuse
- Set clear expectations with your family about never using medications without your knowledge
- Keep an inventory of medications including over-the-counter meds
- Properly store and dispose of unused or expired medications

Remember...

- Opioids do not discriminate. They effect people regardless of where they were born, how much money they have, how old they are, or their race or nationality.
- Each day, 1,756 teenagers abuse a prescription drug for the first time.
- Each day, 78 people die from opioid overdose.
- 1 in 5 high school seniors report misusing prescription drugs at least once, yet only 12% of parents think alcohol or drugs is a problem in their home.
- 9 in 10 addicts started experimenting before they turned 18 years old.
- Most first time users obtain the drug for a family member or friend.