

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT TEAM UPDATE

August/September 2020

Provided By: Saint Vincent College Prevention Projects
SVCPP mailing address:
300 Fraser Purchase Road, Latrobe, PA 15650
Phone: 724-805-2050
Fax Number: 724-420-5930



Two words for
2020-2021
School Year:

- Flexibility
- Respect

Saint Vincent College Prevention Projects is funded by the Westmoreland Drug and Alcohol Commission, Inc. through a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs.

K-12 SAP Trainings & SAP Thematic Workshops

K-12 SAP TRAININGS are held at The Conference Center, Saint Vincent College.

Dates: September 22, 23, 24, 2020; December 8,9,10, 2020; March 16,17,18, 2021; May 18,19,20, 2021

The Training is designed for new members of either a secondary or elementary S.A.P. team. This is also appropriate for Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Treatment Staff and School-Based Probation Officers who have been assigned the role of "ad hoc" S.A.P. team members. Those individuals needing to make up a training session from a prior training will be able to complete those requirements at this training. For additional information or to register, please call Saint Vincent College Prevention Projects at 724-805-2050.

SAP Thematic Workshops: November 3, 2020; February 2, 2021; May 11, 2021

Awareness Days

Aug/Sept Awareness Days & Events

You can easily take advantage of special events to raise awareness of an important issue or cause. Here are a few up-coming events for the next several months:

International Overdose Awareness Day, August 31st: <http://www.overdoseday.com/>

National Wellness Month-August: <https://www.samhsa.gov/wellness-initiative/national-wellness-week-resources>

National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month-September:
<http://www.recoverymonth.gov/>

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Day, September 9: <http://www.fasday.com/>

World Suicide Prevention Day September 10: <https://www.iasp.info/resources/>

National School Backpack Awareness Day, Sept. 26,: <https://www.aota.org/Conference-Events/Backpack-Safety-Awareness-Day.aspx#:~:text=AOTA's%20National%20School%20Backpack%20Awareness,from%20heavy%20backpacks%20and%20bags.>



TRAININGS OF INTEREST...

FALL THEMATIC WORKSHOP– November 3, 2020- at The Conference Center, Saint Vincent College. This training will focus on Drug and Alcohol information and trends. For more information or to register, please call the Saint Vincent College Prevention Projects at 724-805-2050. The cost of the training is \$40.00 and this includes continental breakfast and lunch. Act 48 credits will be given.

K-12 SAP TRAINING—September 22,23,24, 2020- at The Conference Center, Saint Vincent College. Training is designed for new members of either a secondary or elementary S.A.P. team who have not completed the initial training with their team. This is also appropriate for Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Treatment staff and school-based probation officers who have been assigned the role of "ad hoc" S.A.P. team members. Those individuals needing to make up a training session from a prior training will be able to complete those requirements at this training. For information or to register, please call the Saint Vincent College Prevention Projects at 724-805-2050.

PROBLEM GAMBLING CONFERENCE

AUGUST 26, 2020 9:00 AM-2:30 PM

NOW BEING HELD VIRTUALLY

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CREDITS BEING OFFERED:

PCB Credits, Act 48 Credits, CEU's and Social Work Credits

Industry Professionals Speaking About Problem Gambling Related Behaviors

Gambling related Topics Being Covered

9:00 AM-10:30 AM Similarities/Differences Between Substance Use Disorder and Disordered Gambling
 10:30 AM-12:00 PM Older Adults and Gambling
 1:00 PM-2:30 PM Online Sports Betting Now and in the Future

Professional Development Credits Being Offered: PCB Credits, Act 48 Credits, CEU's and Social Work Credits



Westmoreland
 Drug & Alcohol Commission, Inc.
www.wedacinc.org

REGISTER HERE



STEP UP Westmoreland will provide outreach money to fund new and/or existing mental wellness, student-led groups for the middle/high school public and nonpublic schools of Westmoreland County. Through completion of this application (click link or use QR code) <https://app.keysurvey.com/f/41506056/1596/> up to twenty (20) schools will each be awarded \$500.00 to be used to support mental wellness student groups.

Monies can be used to advertise/recruit new members, design T-shirts for events, purchase marketing items, and/or assist in sponsoring STOMP OUT THE STIGMA school events.

Requirements:

- Complete the application (click link above or use QR code)
- Be willing to virtually attend STEP UP Westmoreland monthly meetings (60 – 90 minutes) to share student group progress (student participation at meetings is suggested)
- Participate in annual STOMP OUT THE STIGMA events (fall and spring)

Applications will be accepted until Wednesday, September 16, 2020. Awards will be announced Wednesday, September 23, 2020.



International Overdose Awareness Day



Time to Remember. Time to Act.

International Overdose Awareness Day is a global event held on 31 August each year and aims to raise awareness of overdose and reduce the stigma of a drug-related death. It also acknowledges the grief felt by families and friends remembering those who have died or had a permanent injury as a result of drug overdose.

International Overdose Awareness Day spreads the message that overdose death is preventable.

Thousands of people die each year from drug overdose. They come from all walks of life.

Do you recognise the signs and symptoms of overdose? What is the impact of drug use and overdose on family, friends and those experiencing it?

Show Your Support

The silver badge, purple wristband and purple lanyard are symbols of awareness of overdose and its effects. Wearing these signifies the loss of someone cherished, or demonstrate support to those undergoing grief. It sends out a message that every person's life is valuable and that stigmatizing people who use drugs needs to stop.

More info including tips and events <https://www.overdoseday.com/>



FACT SHEET

DEPRESSANTS

31 AUGUST

—

INTERNATIONAL
OVERDOSE
AWARENESS DAY

WHAT ARE DEPRESSANTS?

Benzodiazepines, barbiturates (medical depressants), and alcohol all slow the central nervous system to produce a calming effect.

These substances are often prescribed to relieve pain, help you sleep or in the case of alcohol, used recreationally when socialising. However, when taken in excessive amounts or in combinations with other drugs, depressants can depress normal functions such as breathing and heart rate until they eventually stop, resulting in brain damage or death.

SIGNS OF OVERDOSE

- Vomiting
- Unresponsive, but awake
- Limp body
- Pale and/or clammy face
- Blue fingernails or lips
- Shallow or erratic breathing, or not breathing at all
- Slow or erratic pulse (heartbeat)
- Choking or sounds of a gurgling noise
- Loss of consciousness

OVERDOSE RESPONSE

Call an ambulance, tell the operator your location, and stay on the line.

Be prepared to give CPR if they stop breathing before an ambulance arrives.

Ensure the person has adequate air by keeping crowds back or opening windows. Loosen tight clothing.

If the person is unconscious or wants to lie down, put them in the recovery position and continue to monitor them.

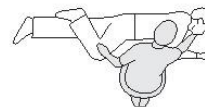
Provide paramedics with as much information as possible, such as what, and how much of the drug was taken, how long ago and any pre-existing medical conditions. If the drug came in a bottle or packet, give the packaging to the ambulance officers.

The Recovery Position

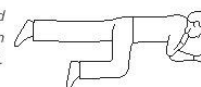
Support face Place the arm nearest to you at right angles to the body. Place their other hand against their cheek.



Lift Leg Get hold of the far leg just above the knee and pull it up, keeping the foot flat on the ground.



Roll over Keep their hand pressed against their cheek and pull on the upper leg to roll them towards you and onto their side.



WHAT NOT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF A SUSPECTED OVERDOSE

- Do **NOT** ignore snoring or gurgling: This could mean someone is having trouble breathing.
- Do **NOT** leave the person alone.
- Do **NOT** give the person anything to eat or drink, or try to induce vomiting.

TIME TO
REMEMBER.
TIME TO
ACT.

 **International Overdose Awareness Day**
prevention and remembrance

A Pennington Institute Initiative

For more information visit
www.overdoseday.com



SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH!

National Recovery Month (Recovery Month) is a national observance held every September to educate Americans that substance use treatment and mental health services can enable those with a mental and/or substance use disorder to live a healthy and rewarding life.

Recovery Month celebrates the gains made by those in recovery, just as we celebrate health improvements made by those who are managing other health conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, asthma, and heart disease. The observance reinforces the positive message that behavioral health is essential to overall health, prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can and do recover.

There are millions of Americans whose lives have been transformed through recovery. Since these successes often go unnoticed by the broader population, Recovery Month provides a vehicle for everyone to celebrate these accomplishments. Each September, tens of thousands of prevention, treatment, and recovery programs and facilities around the country celebrate Recovery Month. They speak about the gains made by those in recovery and share their success stories with their neighbors, friends, and colleagues. In doing so, everyone helps to increase awareness and furthers a greater understanding about the diseases of mental and substance use disorders.



Each year, Recovery Month selects a new focus and theme to spread the message and share the successes of treatment and recovery. The 2020 Recovery Month observance will work to inspire people across the country to recognize the strength and resilience of individuals living in recovery as well as to support those with substance use disorders or co-occurring disorders to consider seeking treatment.

The 2020 National Recovery Month theme, “Join the Voices for Recovery: Celebrating Connections,” reminds people in recovery and those who support them, that we all have victories to celebrate and things we may wish we had done differently. This is true of everyone and, as in most cases, we cannot do it alone. Recovery Month will continue to educate others about substance use disorders and co-occurring disorders, the effectiveness of treatment and recovery services, and that recovery is possible. All of us, from celebrities and sports figures to our co-workers, neighbors, friends, and family members, throughout our lives have experienced peaks and valleys, both big and small. But, with strength, support, and hope from the people we love, we are resilient.

Previously, *Recovery Month* was sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). In June, SAMHSA announced its decision to retire its annual convening of *Recovery Month* stakeholders as well as the development of future themes and assets, and the management of the events calendar.

Faces & Voices of Recovery has created a new Recovery Month website that will host all Recovery Month events and assets that make this celebration possible. Find and post upcoming events and download graphics on the Recovery Month website.

[Learn more about past year themes on the SAMHSA website.](#)



What is FASD?

Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD)



FASD AWARENESS MONTH 2020

September is Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Awareness month, with recognition specifically on September 9, to recognize and raise awareness for FASD. The Westmoreland Drug and Alcohol Commission, Inc., in partnership with Saint Vincent College Prevention Projects and Westmoreland County Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, are asking you to partner with us in raising awareness of FASD in Westmoreland County. We are distributing FASD materials across the county and ask that you share those materials. If you receive a T-shirt, please wear your shirt during September, especially on September 9, to raise awareness. Coasters will also be distributed to local bars and restaurants to utilize during September in an effort to remind patrons of the dangers of drinking while pregnant. There are many other ways you can help to spread awareness about FASD, such as adding an FASD graphic to your email signature, posting a graphic on your website, displaying posters about FASD at your business, disseminating the FASD rack cards or magnets, encouraging your staff to wear pink on September 9 and any other ideas you may have to raise awareness of FASD.

If you would like more information or materials, please call the Westmoreland Drug and Alcohol Commission at 724-542-4508.



NO AMOUNT OF ALCOHOL
is safe to consume while pregnant
or while trying to become pregnant.



September is Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Awareness Month

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders

Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs) are a group of conditions that can occur in a person whose mother drank alcohol during pregnancy. These effects can include physical problems and problems with behavior and learning. Often, people with FASDs have a mix of these problems.

If you think your child might have an FASD, talk to your health care provider.

What are FASDs?

FASDs refer to a range of effects that can happen to a person whose mother drank alcohol during pregnancy. These conditions can affect each person in different ways, and can range from mild to severe. They can affect the mind or the body, or both. Because FASDs make up a group of disorders, people with FASDs can exhibit a wide range and mix of symptoms.

Fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) is one condition among the full range of FASDs. A baby born with FAS has a small head, weighs less than other babies, and has distinctive facial features.

Some of the behavioral and intellectual disabilities of people with FASDs include:

- Difficulty with learning or memory
- Higher than normal level of activity (hyperactivity)
- Difficulty with attention
- Speech and language delays
- Low IQ
- Poor reasoning and judgment skills

People born with FASDs can also have problems with their organs, including the heart and kidneys.

What causes FASDs?

FASDs are caused by a woman's drinking alcohol during pregnancy. Alcohol in the mother's blood passes to the baby through the umbilical cord. When a woman drinks alcohol so does her baby.

There is no known amount of alcohol that is safe to drink during pregnancy or when trying to get pregnant. All drinks that contain alcohol, including wine and beer, can harm an unborn baby. There is no safe time to drink alcohol during pregnancy. Alcohol can harm a baby at any time during pregnancy. So, to prevent FASDs, a woman should not drink alcohol while she is pregnant, or even when she might get pregnant. This is because a woman could get pregnant and not know it for up to 4 to 6 weeks. In the United States, nearly half of all pregnancies are unplanned.

How many people have FASDs?

We do not know exactly how many people have an FASD. Few estimates are available. Based on community studies using physical examinations, experts estimate that the full range of FASDs among 6-7 year old children in the United States and some Western European countries might be as high as 2 to 5 out of 100 school children (or 2% to 5% of the population).



TOPICS OF INTEREST...

Are there treatments for FASDs?

FASDs last a lifetime. There is no cure for FASDs, but research shows that early intervention treatment services can improve a child's development.

There are many types of treatment options, including medication to help with some symptoms, behavior and education therapy, parent training, and other approaches. No one treatment is right for every child. Good treatment plans will include close monitoring, follow-ups, and changes as needed along the way.

There are a number of factors that can help reduce the effects of FASDs and help people with these conditions reach their full potential. These factors include:

- Diagnosis before 6 years of age
- A loving, nurturing, and stable home environment during the school years
- Absence of violence
- Involvement in special education and social services



What can I do if I think my child has an FASD?

Ask for a Referral

If you or your health care provider thinks your child could have an FASD, **ask your provider for a referral to a specialist** (someone who knows about FASDs), such as a developmental pediatrician, child psychologist, or clinical geneticist. In some cities, there are clinics whose staff have special training in diagnosing and treating children with FASDs. For providers and clinics in your area, visit the National and State Resource Directory from the National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS) www.nofas.org/resource-directory/ or call 800-66-NOFAS (66327).

Get an Evaluation

Call your state's public early childhood system to request a free evaluation to find out if your child qualifies for intervention services. You do not need to wait for a health care provider's referral or a medical diagnosis to make this call. Steps for a free evaluation from the state depends on your child's age:

For children younger than 3 years old, contact your local early intervention system at www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/parents/states.html. To learn more, visit www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/ei-overview/ or call (973) 642-8100.

For children 3 years old or older, contact your local public school system.

Even if your child is not old enough for kindergarten or enrolled in a public school, call your local elementary school or board of education and ask to speak with someone who can help you have your child evaluated.

To learn more, visit www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/schoolage/ or call (973) 642-8100.

To help your child reach his or her full potential, it is very important to get help for FASDs as early as possible!

For More Information

To learn more about FASDs, visit

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov/fasd or call 800-CDC-INFO
- American Academy of Pediatrics FASD Toolkit www.aap.org/fasd
- Center for Parent Information and Resources www.parentcenterhub.org/resources/ or call (973) 642-8100
- National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS) www.nofas.org or call 800-66-NOFAS (66327)
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's FASD Center for Excellence www.fasdcenter.samhsa.gov





Picture: Conocimiento, Progreso, Oportunidad, Tutoría, Inclusión, Prevención, Juntos, Habilidades, Conciencia, Resiliencia, Evidencia, Investigación, Escucha, Dirección, Educación, Estrategia, Formación, Colaboración.

Suicide prevention remains a universal challenge. Every year, suicide is among the top 20 leading causes of death globally for people of all ages. It is responsible for over 800,000 deaths, which equates to one suicide every 40 seconds.

Every life lost represents someone's partner, child, parent, friend or colleague. For each suicide approximately 135 people suffer intense grief or are otherwise affected. This amounts to 108 million people per year who are profoundly impacted by suicidal behaviour. Suicidal behaviour includes suicide, and also encompasses suicidal ideation and suicide attempts. For every suicide, 25 people make a suicide attempt and many more have serious thoughts of suicide.

Suicide is the result of a convergence of genetic, psychological, social and cultural and other risk factors, sometimes combined with experiences of trauma and loss. People who take their own lives represent a heterogeneous group, with unique, complex and multifaceted causal influences preceding their final act. Such heterogeneity presents challenges for suicide prevention experts. These challenges can be overcome by adopting a multilevel and cohesive approach to suicide prevention.

Preventing suicide is often possible and you are a key player in its prevention! You can make a difference - as a member of society, as a child, as a parent, as a friend, as a colleague or as a neighbour. There are many things that you can do daily, and also on World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD), to prevent suicidal behaviour. You can raise awareness about the issue, educate yourself and others about the causes of suicide and warning signs for suicide, show compassion and care for those who are in distress in your community, question the stigma associated with suicide, suicidal behaviour and mental health problems and share your own experiences.

It takes work to prevent suicide. The positive benefits of this work are infinite and sustainable and can have a massive impact. The work can affect not only those in distress but also their loved ones, those working in the area and also society as a whole. We must endeavour to develop evidence based suicide prevention activities that reach those who are struggling in every part of the world.

Joining together is critical to preventing suicide. Preventing suicide requires the efforts of many. It takes family, friends, co-workers, community members, educators, religious leaders, healthcare professionals, political officials and governments. Suicide prevention requires integrative strategies that encompass work at the individual, systems and community level. Research suggests that suicide prevention efforts will be much more effective if they span multiple levels and incorporate multiple interventions. This requires the involvement of interventions that occur in communities and involve social and policy reforms, as well as interventions that are delivered directly to individuals. To reach our common goal in preventing suicidal behaviour we as the public, we as organisations, we as legislators and we as members of society must work collaboratively, in a coordinated fashion, using a multidisciplinary approach.



Everyone can make a contribution in preventing suicide. Suicidal behaviour is universal, knows no boundaries so it affects everyone. The millions of people affected each year by suicidal behaviour have exclusive insight and unique voices. Their experiences are invaluable for informing suicide prevention measures and influencing the provision of supports for suicidal people and those around them. The involvement of people with lived experience of suicide in research, evaluation and intervention should be central to the work of every organisation addressing suicidal behaviour.

Picture: Conocimiento, Progreso, Oportunidad, Tutoría, Inclusión, Prevención, Juntos, Habilidades, Conciencia, Resiliencia, Evidencia, Investigación, Escucha, Dirección, Educación, Estrategia, Formación, Colaboración.

TOPICS OF INTEREST...

This is the third year that the WSPD theme is "**Working Together to Prevent Suicide**" is being used.

We have chosen this theme as it highlights the most essential ingredient for effective global suicide prevention- collaboration. We all have a role to play and together we can collectively address the challenges presented by suicidal behaviour in society today.

On September 10th, join with us and many others across the world who are playing their part in the prevention of suicide. Be sure to involve or invite other local organisations and collaborators to organise an event to mark WSPD 2020.

"Every day, we lose many lives to suicide, and many more are profoundly impacted by their deaths. We acknowledge all who experience the challenges of suicidal ideation, and those who have lost loved ones through suicide."

Ways to take part in WSPD 2020

This Thursday, September 10th, join with us and many others across the world who are playing their part in the prevention of suicide. To optimise your activities be sure to involve or invite other local organisations and collaborators to organise an event to mark WSPD 2020.



**International Association
for Suicide Prevention**

**World Suicide Prevention Day
Cycle Around the Globe**

Show your support by taking part in the annual IASP Cycle Around the Globe, in which we encourage our valiant participants to collectively cycle the globe! Participants can take part in groups, individually, at home, in the gym or anywhere! Please see <https://bit.ly/2Z9mHYP> for more information.

Join us on social media Connect with us on Facebook ([facebook.com/IASPinfo](https://www.facebook.com/IASPinfo)) Twitter (twitter.com/IASPinfo) and YouTube (<https://bit.ly/2zFqQci>) to share your support of WSPD 2020. #wspd #suicideprevention #suicide



Download our WSPD materials

View WSPD 2020 Suggested Activities: <https://bit.ly/2AumK7a>

Download our Light a Candle Postcard: <https://bit.ly/3bCkLk>

Download WSPD Banners: <https://bit.ly/366MZMX>

Find and share our WSPD Imagery available on our resources page at: <https://bit.ly/3fVbt08>



You can also take part in our Light a Candle event in which we invite participants to Light a Candle near a window at 8pm on WSPD as a symbol of support for suicide prevention, and for many it is a means of remembering a loved one. For more information, please visit: <https://bit.ly/2zOgWF9>

Find out more at: <https://www.iasp.info/wspd2020/>

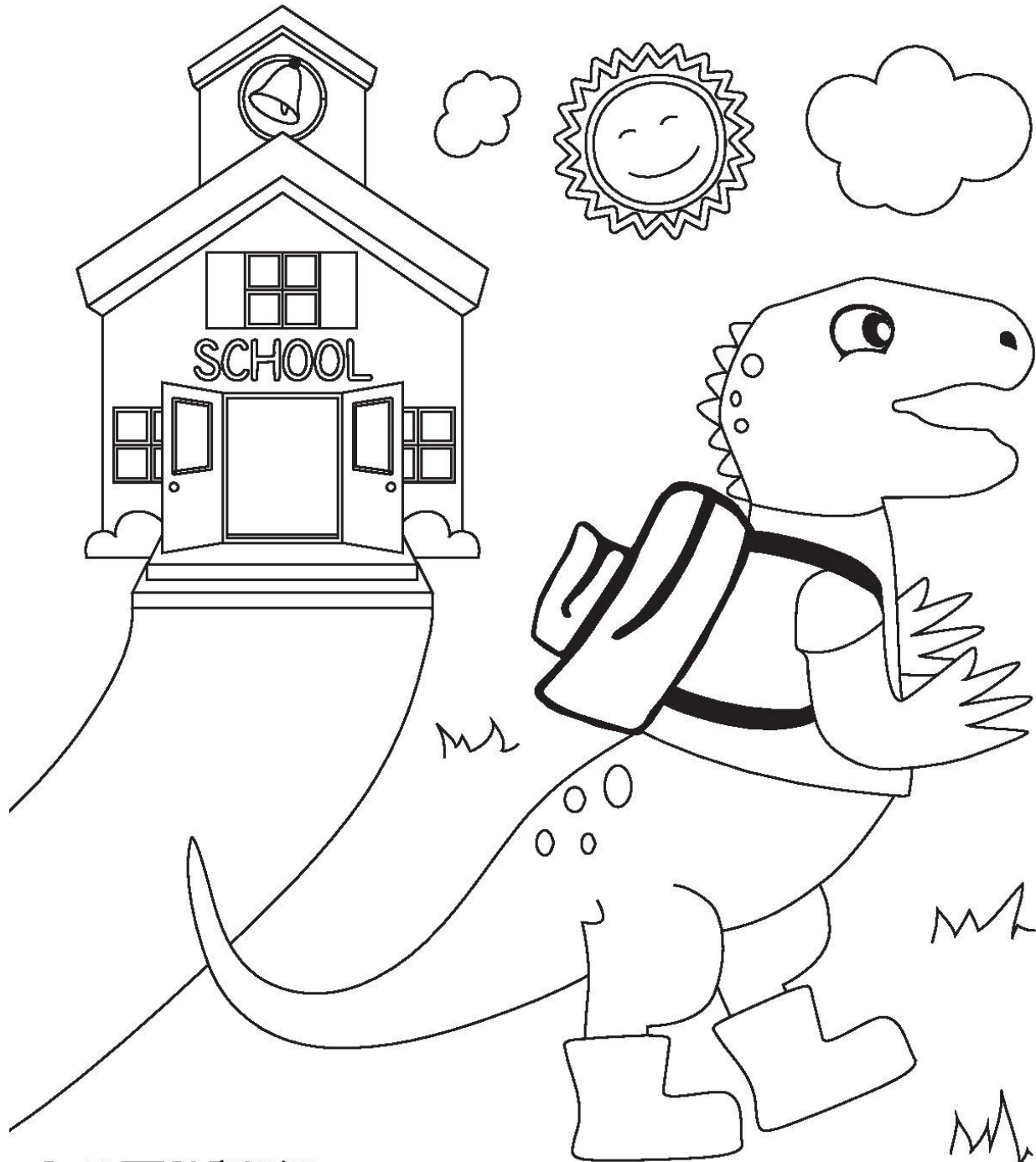
IASP is a Non-Governmental Organization concerned with suicide prevention, and dedicated to: preventing suicidal behaviour; alleviating its effects, and providing a forum for academics, mental health professionals, crisis workers, volunteers and suicide survivors.

"We, as members of the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP), have taken it upon ourselves to alleviate this human burden. What an enormous privilege; but also, what an enormous responsibility."
Robert D. Goldney, IASP President of 1997-1999.

AOTA's National School Backpack Awareness Day: September 16, 2020

COLOR ME!

OT Rex Junior knows how to pack his backpack light and wear it right! In recognition of AOTA's National School Backpack Awareness Day, give OT Rex Junior some color to get him ready for a great day at school!



RED RIBBON WEEK 2020

OCTOBER 23-31st

Be *Happy* Be *Brave* Be *Drug Free*

We are excited that you are joining us in celebrating Red Ribbon Week 2020! We understand that this year may look different, but we hope that you are able to find creative ways to still celebrate the week and get the message out to your students, parents, teachers, administration, staff, and community.

This year, WeDAC is working on something to recognize how schools and organizations are promoting raising awareness around Red Ribbon Week. If you would be willing to share, please either email us your photos or share with us on our Facebook (@Wedacinc), Snapchat (CSAYMP) or Twitter (@Wedacinc). Also, check our Facebook page during Red Ribbon week for our Red Ribbon Contest. (Details will be posted on our Page during the month of October)






In case you need some ideas of how you can participate in Red Ribbon Week, here are some ideas:

- Wear red
- Share social media messaging
- Red Ribbon Virtual Scavenger Hunt
- Distribute Red Ribbons/Bracelets
- Add 'celebrating Red Ribbon Week' to your email signature
- Sponsor a local drug trends training for your staff or coworkers
- Host a spirit week
- Display red ribbons or posters outside your school/business/etc.
- "Think outside the box"
- Have youth on your planning committee
- Join the DEA in #GoRed4RedRibbon

These are just a few ideas, for more ideas go to www.redribbon.org. If you have any questions or would like any more information visit www.wedacinc.org.



Westmoreland County Contact Info

 <p>1200 Maronda Way, Suite 300, Monessen, PA 724-243-2220 Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM http://wedacinc.org</p>	 <p>First Floor Suite 110 40 N Pennsylvania Ave Greensburg, PA 15601 724-830-3617 http://www.co.westmoreland.pa.us/</p>
 <p>Southwestern Pennsylvania Human Services, Inc.</p> <p>203 S Maple Ave, Greensburg, PA 15601 724-834-0420 Hours: Monday-Thursday 8:30am-9:00pm http://www.sphs.org Friday 8:30am-5:00pm</p>	
 <p>212 Outlet Way, Suite 1, Greensburg, PA 724-853-7300 Hours: Mon.-Thurs. 8:30 AM—9:15 PM http://www.gatewayrehab.org</p>	<p><u>SVC Prevention Projects</u></p> <p>Laurel Sherbondy 724-805-2050 Donna Cartia 724-805-2050</p>
 <p>701 Fourth Avenue, New Kensington, PA 724-339-7180</p>	

AVAILABLE SERVICES FROM SVCPP:

LOOK FOR THE
 SAINT VINCENT COLLEGE PREVENTION PROJECTS
 AT MANY SCHOOL EVENTS THROUGHOUT WESTMORELAND COUNTY

Lunch and Learn Presentations

Presentations are available to your community group, business or organization at minimal cost or FREE. Topics include: Current Drug Trends, Power of Parents, Gambling/Gaming Awareness, Responsible Gambling, Talking with your Kids, and The Dangers of Underage Drinking.

RADAR (Free Materials)

Regional Alcohol/Drug Awareness Resource, information Center

The Saint Vincent College Prevention Projects provides free materials (pamphlets, brochures, posters, etc.) to schools, organizations, community groups, and to the general public on various topics that include: alcohol, tobacco, drugs, violence prevention, child guidance, and medications and the elderly.

To schedule a program for your business, school or organization, please contact Beth Joseph, Prevention Education & Community Outreach Services Manager at Saint Vincent College Prevention Projects at 724-805-2050 or email beth.joseph@stvincent.edu

Let's Make the Connection - PARENT PAGE

PLEASE SHARE—HELPFUL INFORMATION

Helping Children Cope With Changes Resulting From COVID-19

Families across the country are adapting to the evolving changes in daily life caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Most schools, places of public gathering, and nonessential businesses are closed, and parents and other caregivers are faced with helping their families adjust to the new normal. This includes trying to keep children occupied, feeling safe, and attempting to keep up with schoolwork as best as possible. None of this is easy, but it helps to stay focused on what is possible in order to reinforce a sense of control and to reassure children that they are okay, and that the situation will get better.

It is very important to remember that children look to adults for guidance on how to react to stressful events. Acknowledging some level of concern, without panicking, is appropriate and can result in taking the necessary actions that reduce the risk of illness. Teaching children positive preventive measures, talking with them about their fears,

STAY CALM, LISTEN, AND OFFER REASSURANCE

- Be a role model. Children will react to and follow your reactions. They learn from your example.
- Be aware of how you talk about COVID-19. Your discussion about COVID-19 can increase or decrease your child's fear. If true, remind your child that your family is healthy, and you are going to do everything within your power to keep loved ones safe and well. Carefully listen or have them draw or write out their thoughts and feelings and respond with truth and reassurance.
- Explain social distancing. Children probably don't fully understand why parents/guardians aren't allowing them to be with friends. Tell your child that your family is following the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which include social distancing. Social distancing means staying away from others until the risk of contracting COVID-19 is under control. Showing older children the "flatten the curve" charts will help them grasp the significance of social distancing. Explain that while we don't know how long it will take to "flatten the curve" to reduce the number of those infected, we do know that this is a critical time—we must follow the guidelines of health experts to do our part.
- Demonstrate deep breathing. Deep breathing is a valuable tool for calming the nervous system. Do breathing exercises with your children.
- Focus on the positive. Celebrate having more time to spend as a family. Make it as fun as possible. Do family projects. Organize belongings, create masterpieces. Sing, laugh, and go outside, if possible, to connect with nature and get needed exercise. Allow older children to connect with their friends virtually.
- Establish and maintain a daily routine. Keeping a regular schedule provides a sense of control, predictability, calm, and well-being. It also helps children and other family members respect others' need for quiet or uninterrupted time and when they can connect with friends virtually.
- Identify projects that might help others. This could include: writing letters to the neighbors or others who might be stuck at home alone or to healthcare workers; sending positive messages over social media; or reading a favorite children's book on a social media platform for younger children to hear.
- Offer lots of love and affection.



TAKE TIME TO TALK



Let your children's questions guide you. Answer their questions truthfully, but don't offer unnecessary details or facts. Don't avoid giving them the information that experts indicate as crucial to your children's well-being. Often, children and youth do not talk about their concerns because they are confused or don't want to worry loved ones. Younger children absorb scary information in waves. They ask questions, listen, play, and then repeat the cycle. Children always feel empowered if they can control some aspects of their life. A sense of control reduces fear.

Let's Make the Connection - PARENT PAGE

PLEASE SHARE—HELPFUL INFORMATION

BE HONEST AND ACCURATE

- Correct misinformation. Children often imagine situations worse than reality; therefore, offering developmentally appropriate facts can reduce fears.
- Explain simple safety steps. Tell your child this disease spreads between people who are in close contact with one another, when an infected person coughs or sneezes, or when one touches infected objects or surfaces.
- Stay up-to-date on the facts. Go to <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html> for additional factual information.

KEEP EXPLANATIONS AGE-APPROPRIATE

- Early elementary school children. Provide brief, simple information that balances COVID-19 facts with appropriate reassurances that adults are there to help keep them healthy and to take care of them if they do get sick. Give simple examples of the steps people make every day to stop germs and stay healthy, such as washing hands. Use language such as "adults are working hard to keep you safe."
- Upper elementary and early middle school children. This age group often is more vocal in asking questions about whether they indeed are safe and what will happen if COVID-19 spreads in their area. They may need assistance separating reality from rumor and fantasy. Discuss the efforts national, state, and community leaders are doing to prevent germs from spreading.
- Upper middle and high school students. Issues can be discussed in more depth. Refer them to appropriate sources of COVID-19 facts. Provide honest, accurate, and factual information about the current status of COVID-19. Engage them in decision-making about family plans, scheduling, and helping with chores at home.
- For all children, encourage them to verbalize their thoughts and feelings. Be a good listener!



STAY CONNECTED TO SCHOOL

- Locate learning resources. Schools' capacity to conduct virtual learning experiences will vary greatly, but most schools are providing lessons and learning activities for children to do. Take advantage of the many companies and online platforms currently offering free learning opportunities.
- Identify additional resources. Know if your school or district is providing additional resources, such as meals, or technology, such as a laptop or tablet.
- Stay in touch. Find out how the school is communicating with families and students. Be sure to read any communications you receive. Check with your children, particularly older ones, as they may be receiving information directly that would be helpful for you to know.
- Connect with school staff. Reach out to your child's teacher and other relevant school staff if you have concerns about their coping and keeping up with assignments or activities.

Info from: <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/helping-children-cope-with-changes-resulting-from-covid-19>