

Eau Claire County Parent and Guardian Newsletter

Eau Claire Health Alliance - Substance Misuse Action Team

Fall 2023

Thank you for signing up for our newsletter!

The Substance Misuse Action Team distributes this quarterly newsletter to share information and education with parents and guardians in Eau Claire County about substance misuse.

This quarter's topics include back to school tips, talking to youth about substance misuse, and local activities and trainings. Continue reading to learn about these topics and more!

Back to School and Mental Health

The beginning of the school year can be an emotional time for kids and caregivers. After all, it's a transition—and even good changes can be stressful. Though this transition may be familiar, it's important to remember school readiness is about more than school supplies or having the coolest backpack and clothes; it's also about mental health. There are many things you can do to help the kids in your life start the school year strong.



1. **Communicate.** Many children feel anxious as the school year approaches. Encourage your child to express their feelings about going back to school. Have regular conversations with your child to acknowledge their feelings, make them feel understood, and reassure them.
2. **Create routines.** Introducing consistent routines can foster a sense of security in children and make a transition smoother. Establish a regular sleep schedule, mealtime, homework time, and time for relaxing to help your child adjust.
3. **Set aside time for daily check-ins.** Setting aside time to check-in with your child after school can help you support your child's learning. Taking 15 minutes a day to ask your child what they learned, what homework they have, and generally how their day was can help you understand their needs, thoughts, and feelings.
4. **Encourage in-person social interactions.** Encourage your child to connect with classmates to rekindle old friendships and make new ones. Social relationships can help the transition be more exciting and enjoyable for your child.

Learn more at [SAHMSA.gov](https://www.sahmsa.gov), or find additional tips at [Resilient Wisconsin](https://www.resilientwisconsin.org).

Talking to Your Children about Substance Use

Building prevention skills among children and adolescents is an important part of a healthy life. Having conversations about drugs and alcohol starting at any early age can ensure your child has the skills they need to make healthy choices in the future. Prepare yourself by knowing your conversation goals and learning more about the current trends in drug and alcohol use among youth.

There are a variety of resources available to help prompt conversation with youth at all ages, from elementary school to college. One campaign is **Talk. They Hear You.** Through this campaign you can find resources like [Talking to Kids About Alcohol and Other Drugs: 5 Conversations Goals](#) and [Answering Your Child's Tough Questions](#), along



with hands-on to specific topics.



**AFTER HIGH SCHOOL:
TALKING WITH YOUR YOUNG ADULT ABOUT
UNDERAGE DRINKING**

THEIR NEXT PHASE OF LIFE
While they're ramping up high school studies and preparing for college, many young adults make important decisions about the rest of their lives. Some choose to pursue a college degree immediately, and others may decide to enter the workforce or military or delay college enrollment.

THE QUEST FOR INDEPENDENCE AND SELF-RELIANCE CAN BE EXCITING
But it also can increase stress levels and lead to a variety of unhealthy behaviors—like underage drinking.^{1,2} Research shows that as teens continue to develop into the 20s, the alcohol use can damage young adults' maturing brains—just as they're starting the next phase of their lives.^{3,4}

Young adults entering the workforce are exposed to—and spend more time with—older coworkers who may become influences or cause the alcohol use.⁵ This is especially true in industries where heavy alcohol use is common among employees. For example, there is a higher heavy alcohol use among people aged 18 to 24 who work in the construction industry than in other industries.⁶

If young adults find themselves temporarily unemployed, there's still a lot to do. Research shows that unemployed young adults are more likely to be daily drinkers than their peers. This increases their likelihood of engaging in risky behaviors that have serious consequences, like drinking and driving.⁷

Additionally, the resource [After High School: Talking to Your Young Adult About Underage Drinking](#) has information about having important conversations with a young adult heading to college.

Learn more at [Talk. They Hear You.](#)

National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day

The next Prescription Drug Take-Back Day in our community is Saturday, October 28th, from 10am - 2pm. Safely dispose of your expired or unused prescription and over-the-counter medications for free by visiting an event location in Eau Claire County.

- Altoona Emergency Services
1904 Spooner Ave.
- Marshfield Medical Center - Eau Claire
2116 Craig Road
Medical Offices - Door B

If you can't make the Take-Back event, visit a permanent medication drop-off location. Find the nearest permanent location or learn more about safe medication disposal at [GetInvolvedASAP.org](#).

Local Events and Resources

Community Reinforcement and Family Training

At the Roots

Join At The Roots for a FREE family group support program!

This Family Support Group is for family members and friends concerned about their loved ones who live with a substance use disorder. This program is based on the [Community Reinforcement and Family Training \(CRAFT\)](#) model. The CRAFT model is a highly effective, evidence-based, motivational program that impacts families in multiple areas of their lives. [Learn more here.](#)



Public Library Events and Clubs for All Ages

Looking for activities to fill your child's after school schedule? Check out events held at your local public library! There are numerous clubs available to all ages including book clubs, Lego club, Pokémon Fan Club, different crafting clubs, and more. Joining clubs can help your child build relationships with others who have similar interests, expand their skill sets, and find new hobbies. Find a club by viewing the library event calendar or visiting the kids or teens pages.

Find a library near you: [Altoona](#), [Augusta](#), [Eau Claire](#), [Fall Creek](#)

Safe Haven Teen Center

Evolving Wellness

Open Thursdays, 3pm-7pm, the teen center offers a safe place for teens to connect, unplug, share a meal, and



just be themselves. This includes a taco bar at 4:30pm and Safe Haven Circle at 5:30pm, and focuses on topics like acceptance, coping skills, self-expression, meaningful connections, and empowerment. Learn more at EvolvingWellness.org or [this flyer](#).

Trainings and Classes Available for Parents

Making the Internet Safe

September 26th, 12p.m. to 1:30p.m.

Discover how to protect your family from your biggest technology concerns like malware, inappropriate content, and the time spent on technology.

Register for the [webinar here](#).

NAMI Basics

Online course

Free virtual six session class for parents and primary caregivers of children and adolescents who have psychological, emotional or behavioral issues that might be indicators of future mental health concerns.

[Register here](#) for the self-paced virtual course.



Eau Claire Health Alliance Action Team

Substance Misuse

Visit the Substance Misuse Website



Learn more by visiting our website or following us on social media

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