

HC DrugFree: Keeping Howard County *in the KNOW!*  
...knowledge is power, so just say KNOW

**Where focus goes, energy flows.**  
Tony Robbins

## We All Make Choices

While we often talk about teaching adolescents to "make the right choices" when it comes to underage drinking, choices made by parents and other influential adults can have a significant impact on those same adolescents. [Watch the video](#) from SAMHSA to see what choices adults have when it comes to talking with adolescents about alcohol and make an informed decision.

## Student-Athletes' Mental Health and Suicide

Parents of several college student-athletes who struggled with mental health and died by suicide talked about their experiences recently on the Today Show. The parents explained how the pressure on student-athletes to perform both in school and in their sport, along with insanely busy schedules, social media perfectionism, and their desire to be perceived as strong and independent resulted in mental health issues that never received the intervention needed. One parent admitted that while the family had talked about the key topics like sex, drugs, and alcohol, he realized upon reflection that they had never discussed mental health and how to get help. Another parent emphasized the importance of explicitly asking "Are you thinking about killing yourself?" rather than "hurting yourself" and having that uncomfortable conversation. [Watch the video.](#)

Don't Get Benched for Life - if you or someone you know is thinking about suicide, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255 or text "HOME" to 741-741.

**DON'T GET BENCHED FOR LIFE.**



Visit [HCDrugFree.org](https://www.hcdrugfree.org) for more information.

**HCDrugFree**  
Empowering the Community



## June is Pride Month

June is Pride Month. [Click here](#) to learn what Pride Month is, why it is important, and why it is held in June. [Click here](#) for mental health and LGBTQI+ resources for youth and families.

## Resources in Spanish

Did you know that our website has a webpage of [resources in Spanish](#)? The page includes information and resources about drug and alcohol use prevention and how to talk with kids about drugs and alcohol. Please share with others so we can keep Howard County "In the Know."

## Tools to Decrease Anxiety During Traumatic Events

Supporting others during traumatic events doesn't always require advanced degrees and licenses. There are a number of tools that people can use to help themselves and others through stressful times, such as active listening and establishing routines. [Read more.](#)

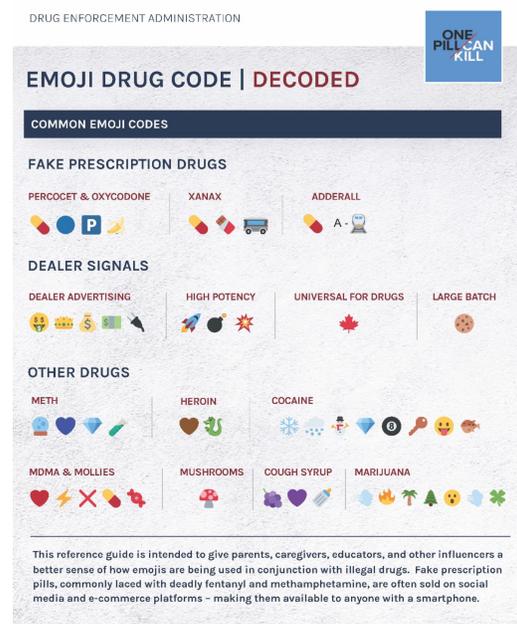
## Emoji Decoder for Parents

Do you "speak emoji"? Just like the slang of your youth, kids today have their own shared language, which includes emojis. Drug dealers use emojis to avoid having messages flagged for inappropriate content and kids are using them to keep parents and other adults unaware of what they might be doing. Here are a few articles to help parents better understand what to look for and what additional meanings some emojis have:

[Drug Slang Emojis: Here's What Every Parent Needs to Know - Bark](#)

[How Drug Dealers May Be Using Emoji To Sell Drugs | SWA Blog \(strugglingwithaddiction.com\)](#)

Video: [Emoji drug code decoded: Parents, do you know what that text really means? \(foxla.com\)](#) For a downloadable copy of the DEA's Emoji Drug Code Decoded click on the image or [here](#).



## Alcohol Overdose

Do your high school or college students know if a friend is in danger from drinking too much? Do you?

Here are some warning signs:

- Mental confusion
- Passing out or not waking up
- Seizures
- Slow breathing
- Cold, clammy or blue skin

What should you do?

- Call 911
- Don't leave them alone
- Be sure they keep breathing
- Position them using the [BACCHUS Maneuver](#) - roll them to their side with knees bent to be sure they don't choke on vomit

[Watch this video](#) from the Gordie Center for more information on warning signs of alcohol overdose and what to do when you suspect someone may be experiencing an overdose.

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## Situational Tolerance and Alcohol

With college students coming home for the summer, vacationing, and seniors heading off to new places, it is important that everyone be aware of how the situation in which someone drinks alcohol can impact their tolerance. Drinking in a new environment may increase the chances of alcohol overdose because the body responds differently. [Watch this video](#) from the Gordie Center on situational tolerance and what can be done to decrease the risk of alcohol overdose.

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## June 16: The Effects of the Opioid Crisis in Medicaid / Medicare - Diversion of Prescription Drugs

The Washington Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) invites everyone to their next FREE Lunch & Learn Web Series to learn about The Effects of the Opioid Crisis in Medicaid/Medicare - Diversion of Prescription Drugs. To learn more or to register, [click here](#).

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## Talking With Kids About Traumatic Events

Parents often avoid talking with their children about traumatic events, such as community violence, because they aren't sure what to say or what is appropriate for their child. Here are a few resources for school-age children and preschoolers that may be helpful in giving you a place to start:

- Suggestions from the [National Education Association \(NEA\)](#) on talking to students about school shootings
- For parents of young children, [PBS Kids](#) has developmentally appropriate ideas for talking with children about tragic events in the news

For more resources on coping with traumatic stress for children and adults, visit our [Facts & Resources page](#).

## Surgeon General on Youth Mental Health

Youth mental health has been an increasing concern over the past decade, with the sudden and severe impact of the pandemic making it even worse. In this [article](#), the U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy was interviewed about what can be done to better support youth and their mental health, including increasing physical activity and decreasing screen time, talking with youth about mental health, and how to connect youth with mental health services.

## Life Skills Classes: Register Now!

HC DrugFree is providing another series of *FUN* and interactive skills-based classes designed to promote positive health and personal development for students entering grades 6 to 9. If slightly younger/older, register and we will contact you. Classes will be held July 18 to 21, & 25 to 28 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. via Zoom. If you would like to register your child, please [complete this form](#).



For more information, [visit our website](#). Funding provided by the Howard County Health Department, MD Department of Health, and SAMHSA.

## Reminder: Safely Store Medication

Adolescence is a time when parents are giving their children more independence and responsibility in preparation for adulthood. Teaching adolescents about safe use of prescription medications, safely storing medications, and monitoring your adolescent's medication use are important for keeping them safe.

For more safety tips, [click here](#) or on the image for a downloadable copy.

**Keeping Adolescents Safe Around Prescription Opioids and Other Medications**

**Where are adolescents getting non-medical prescription drugs?<sup>1,2</sup>**

48%	Given for free by a friend or relative
32%	Received from their own prescription
26%	Bought from a friend
17%	Brought from a doctor/stranger
14%	Took from a friend/relative without asking
4%	Brought on the internet

**What can families do to protect adolescents?<sup>5, 6, 7</sup>**

- ✓ **Dispose:** Dispose of expired, unused, unwanted, or damaged medications; perform an annual spring cleaning in the medicine cabinet.
- ✓ **Secure:** Store medications to limit access; track possession of containers if unsecured.
- ✓ **Monitor:** Track how many pills are in prescription bottles or packets and track refills. Give special attention to antidepressants, abused medications such as opioids, stimulants and sedatives, benzodiazepines, insulin, and anti-seizure drugs, and stimulants (ADHD) meds.
- ✓ **Identify:** Discuss with other adults in your area (e.g., grandparents, parents of your teen's friends, and neighbors) about the risks and ask them to monitor and secure their medications as well.
- ✓ **Take as Prescribed:** Tell your teen not to take medicine from friends or give away their medicine to anyone.
- ✓ **Dispose:** Dispose the medicine to your teen on an as-needed basis to minimize risk for misuse.
- ✓ **Talk:** Talk with your teen about the dangers of medicine misuse.

**References:** 1. National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2018). Prescription Drug Abuse: A Public Health Problem. [https://www.drugabuse.org/prescription-drug-abuse](#). 2. National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2018). Prescription Drug Abuse: A Public Health Problem. [https://www.drugabuse.org/prescription-drug-abuse](#). 3. National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2018). Prescription Drug Abuse: A Public Health Problem. [https://www.drugabuse.org/prescription-drug-abuse](#). 4. National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2018). Prescription Drug Abuse: A Public Health Problem. [https://www.drugabuse.org/prescription-drug-abuse](#). 5. National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2018). Prescription Drug Abuse: A Public Health Problem. [https://www.drugabuse.org/prescription-drug-abuse](#). 6. National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2018). Prescription Drug Abuse: A Public Health Problem. [https://www.drugabuse.org/prescription-drug-abuse](#). 7. National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2018). Prescription Drug Abuse: A Public Health Problem. [https://www.drugabuse.org/prescription-drug-abuse](#).

**MDHHS** **MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES** **MARYLAND PREVENTION CENTER**

## Why Kids Fall Apart After School

As a parent, can you relate to this? Your child's teacher tells you they are doing

great in school and are a joy to have in the class. Yet the child you see at home is a mess. Why doesn't your child behave that way at home? Well, hard though it may be, take it as a compliment. It's likely that your child works very hard to hold it together all day at school, and when they come home they have no energy left to regulate themselves and they feel that it is a safe place to let it all out. For tips on how to help your child when they get home, [read more.](#)

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## Would You Recognize the Difference?

Some companies are using packaging that is almost exactly like the packaging of common snacks, like chips and candies, to help market their tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) edible products. Most people would have to look very closely to see the differences. Copycat packaging of THC edibles is especially problematic for children who may not realize that the contents are not their favorite candy or snack, and the amount of THC in one package is enough to make children very ill. See some examples of copycat packaging and [read more.](#)

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## Alcohol and Gambling: Not A Good Mix

Addictive disorders, such as pathological gambling and alcohol use disorders frequently co-occur at greater than chance levels. Consider the party atmosphere of many gambling activities, such as players receiving free cocktails at casinos, or private poker parties offering refreshments for players, such as beer, whiskey or cocktail of choice. [Read more.](#)

For help, contact 1-800-GAMBLER.

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## Summer Internship Opportunities: High School and College Students

### Accepting Applications.

Do you know a college student considering a career in public health, education, drug & alcohol prevention, or who is interested in learning more about the inner workings of nonprofit organizations?

HC DrugFree is looking for responsible summer interns to help with some of our programs. We offer a variety of opportunities for interns to gain experience with the flexibility of working virtually from anywhere. Internship experiences will also be a great addition to a resume, a college application, and future job interviews, and depending on your college's policies, may be able to count for credit. We are especially looking for high school and college students to assist with and be positive role models for the middle school students in our Life Skills classes (July 18, 19, 20, 21, 25, 26, 27 and 28). High school students can receive service hours for their work as well.

Interested high school and college students should [complete this survey.](#)

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## Get Friends Connected to HC DrugFree

Friends keep friends informed! This newsletter and social media remain the best ways for us to share vital information with you! Please Like & Share our content on social media or forward this newsletter to a friend to help us with our mission of keeping Howard County safe and informed. Invite a friend to [subscribe to our newsletter](#). You can also view previous newsletters in the [Newsletter Archive](#) on our website.

## Running Out of Time!



Our fiscal year will end on June 30, so please hurry to make your donation. Become a [Friend or Sponsor of HC DrugFree](#) today. Monthly payments are welcome. Thank you for your support.

[Donate](#)



## Additional Resources

For more information, contact

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