

HC DrugFree

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



"No winter lasts forever, no spring skips its turn."

– Hal Borland

Dates to Remember in March & April

March 1: **Self-Injury Awareness Day**

March 3: HCPSS [Student Device Policy](#) Changes Go into Effect

March 6: **Black Balloon Day** ☐

March 13: Howard County Board of Education Hybrid Public Hearing on [Policy 9250 - Weapons](#) at 7 p.m. [Register to Testify](#)

March 17: **St. Patrick's Day** ☐ - Plan ahead for sober fun and a safe ride home

March 17-23: **National Drug & Alcohol Facts Week**

March 18: [Free Classes for HoCo Parents, Guardians and Grandparents](#)

March 20: **First Day of Spring** ☐

April 1: [HoCo Film Fest: HC DrugFree PSA Category Deadline](#)

April 26: [Medication and Sharps Drive-Thru Collection](#) in the Wilde Lake Village Center parking lot

March 1: Self-Injury Awareness Day & Black Balloon Day



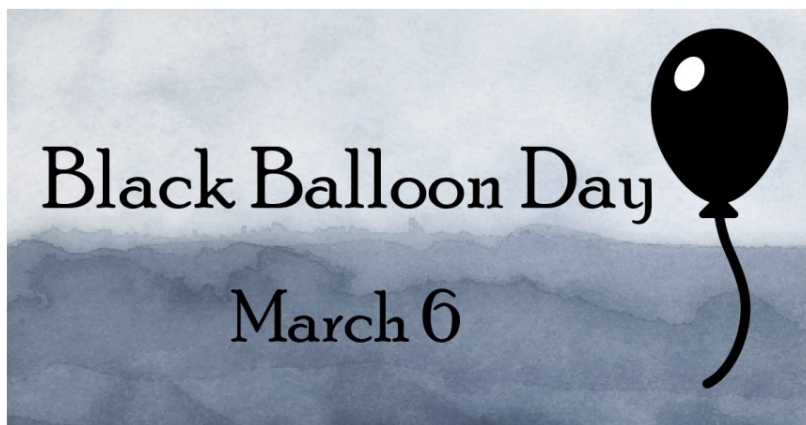
Self Injury Awareness Day

March 1



March 1 – Self-Injury Awareness Day (SIAD) is a time to bring hidden struggles into the light. Many people who self-harm do so as a way to cope with emotional pain, but shame and stigma often keep them from seeking help. Recognizing the signs, such as unexplained scars, wearing long sleeves in warm weather, or keeping sharp objects nearby, can be the first step in offering support. If you or someone you care about is struggling, know that help is available. Healthier coping strategies like journaling, talking to a trusted friend, or seeking professional support can make a world of difference. Let's stand together in compassion and remind those suffering that they are not alone.

March 6: Black Balloon Day



□ **March 6 – National Black Balloon Day** □ is a powerful reminder of the lives lost to overdose and the ongoing opioid crisis. Overdose remains the leading cause of accidental death in the U.S., and too many

families continue to feel the devastating effects. Families and communities place black balloons outside their homes as a visual tribute to honor loved ones and raise awareness about substance use disorder. By openly discussing addiction and overdose, we help break the stigma that prevents many from seeking the support they need. The more we talk about it, the more we encourage prevention, treatment, and hope. [Read more.](#)

Ways to Support & Raise Awareness

- **Be a supportive listener** - let your loved ones know they are not alone
- **Educate yourself and others** about self-harm and the emotions behind it, as well as the risks of substance use and overdose prevention
- **Encourage healthy coping strategies** like exercise, art, or mindfulness
- **Learn how to administer Narcan** (naloxone), a life-saving opioid overdose reversal medication
- **Share resources** such as Crisis Text Line (Text HOME to 741741), 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, or SAMHSA's National Helpline (1-800-662-HELP)

Teen Advisory Council: March & April Events

Reminder: There are no Teen Advisory Council (TAC) meetings in March or April, but there plenty of opportunities to stay involved.

Many TAC members volunteered to serve on HC DrugFree's Life Skills Classes Instructional Team on Mondays, March 3, 10, 17 and 24 and April 7 and 28 from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. In April, teens (and families/friends) may volunteer for the Saturday, April 26 Medication and Sharps collection. Volunteers will be needed from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Save the date and more information will be shared.

Thank you, TAC members (and parents!) for supporting our classes and events. If your student wants to participate in events to earn Community Service Hours, please go to our website to learn how to join TAC. [Learn more](#) or email Admin@hcdrugfree.org

Don't Wait to Start Your Spring Cleaning! Medication & Sharps Drive-Thru Collection



Tell your friends and don't wait to start your spring cleaning, so you're ready for HC DrugFree's next drive-thru Medication and Sharps collection:

Saturday, April 26 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Wilde Lake Village Center parking lot near the Swim Center.

Please join HC DrugFree and our partners for our convenient twice-a-year drive-thru medication and sharps disposal event. Bring prescription and over-the-counter medications, needles, syringes, Epi-Pens, vitamins, vapes, pet medications and more. Meds will be guarded and transported by the Howard County Police Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration. More information will be shared or visit our [website](#).

Follow Us

Are you following us on social media?



@hc_drugfree



HC DrugFree



HC DrugFree



@HCdrugfree

HCDrugFree

Follow HC DrugFree on social media so you don't miss any of our timely updates, and learn more about our local, State and national partners' events.



Classes for Grandparents/Parents Begin Soon!

Raising preteens and teens is tough. Wouldn't it be great if adults could take a class that taught us how to help our grandkids and kids avoid risky behaviors, all while learning how to say NO to drugs and alcohol? There is!

Register to attend our FREE Spring 2025 Guiding Good Choices® classes for Howard County parents, guardians and grandparents. This includes grandparents and parents not residing in Howard County if their grandchildren or children live here.

Series will run **Tuesdays and Fridays** on **March 18, 21, 25, 28** and **April 1** from **noon to 1:30 p.m.** on **Zoom**. More information can be found on our [website](#) and [flyer](#). If you have questions, register and include questions on the registration form so our team can reply.

In the Know



You adore your grandkids, but let's be real—being a grandparent doesn't come with a manual!

Join our free parenting classes to learn new skills and increase family closeness and communication!

HCDrugFree



Register Here!

Share Your Story to Educate & Inspire Our Community

Have you or someone you care about been impacted by **youth substance use, behavioral health challenges, or the dangers of rising drug trends**? Your experiences and insights can help educate and support others in Howard County.

HC DrugFree is inviting **students, parents, caregivers, and community members** to share their **stories, perspectives, and positive messages** about:



- ✓ **Youth substance use prevention**— What has worked for your family? What challenges have you faced?
- ✓ **The impact of behavioral health disorders**— How has mental health played a role in your life or your child's well-being?
- ✓ **Education on prevention, treatment, recovery, and wellness**— What advice or resources have been helpful?
- ✓ **The dangers of substance misuse and medication abuse**— What do you want others to know about keeping loved ones safe?

By sharing your story, you can **help break stigma, encourage prevention, and provide hope and guidance** to other families in our community. **Some stories may be featured in our newsletters or blog posts.** If you'd like to contribute, please submit your story through our [online form](#). We will always ask for your permission before sharing any personal experiences.

Parent's Guide to Substance Use Prevention

The **Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA)** updated 2024 guide, ***Growing Up Drug Free: A Parent's Guide to Substance Use Prevention***, provides essential information to help parents and caregivers raise children who understand the risks of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use. This resource includes **an overview of youth substance use trends, risk and protective factors, tips for age-appropriate conversations, and steps to take if you suspect drug use.** With nearly **3 million adolescents starting alcohol use and 2 million trying marijuana or vaping nicotine in 2022**, informed parenting is more important than ever.



Learn more about today's drug threats and how to safeguard your child's future. *Growing Up Drug Free* is available in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

New "Taking Care of Us" Factsheet Available

The **"Taking Care of Us"** factsheet is now available, offering **critical suicide prevention and mental health resources tailored for Black and Brown communities**. This initiative, in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Health, the Black Mental Health Alliance, and other partners, seeks to address the alarming rise in suicide rates—particularly among **Black youth aged 10 to 19**, whose suicide rate has increased **54% since 2018**.

Key highlights from the factsheet:

- **Know the Warning Signs** – From isolation and mood swings to expressing hopelessness, recognizing the signs can save lives.
- **How to Help** – Learn how to talk about suicide, find a trusted adult, and

connect to **988** for immediate support.

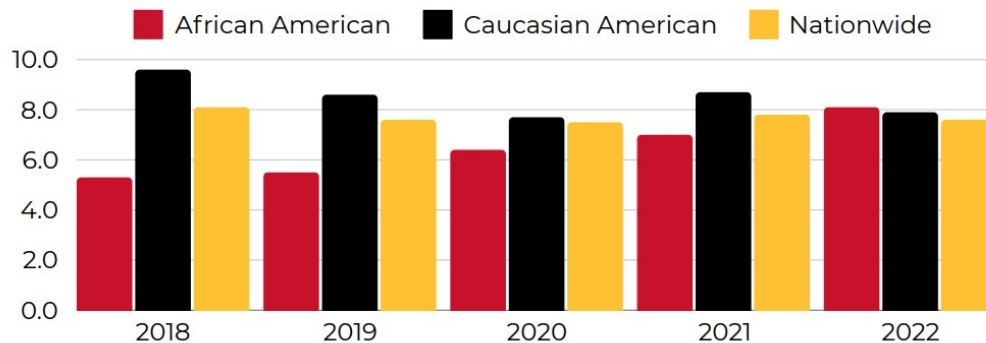
- **Breaking the Silence** – Talking about suicide won't put the thought into someone's head – it can provide relief and open the door to healing.

Read the full factsheet and resources to [learn more](#).



Did You Know?

A report by PEW Research with data from the CDC Wonder database shows that the suicide rate among Black youth ages 10 to 19 surpassed that of their white peers for the first time in 2022, increasing 54% since 2018, compared to a 17% decrease for white youth. In fact, the suicide rate among Black adolescents is increasing faster than other racial and ethnic groups.



April 1 Deadline: HC DrugFree PSA Category



HC DrugFree's 2024-25 public service announcement (PSA) Category theme is: ***Make the Call: Help Without Hesitation***. [Learn more about our PSA Category](#). The HoCo Film Fest film submission deadline: **Midnight on April 1**.

Donate Today

Your support allows us to continue to provide our FREE resources and programs to the community. Please visit hcdrugfree.org/donate or mail a check to: HC DrugFree, 5305 Village Center Drive, Suite 206, Columbia, MD 21044

[Donate here!](#)

Resources

NAMI Howard County - Mental Health Services:

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Howard County is dedicated to improving the lives of individuals affected by mental health conditions and their loved ones. [Download brochure](#)

Free Narcan Training, Fentanyl Test Strips, Xylazine Test Strips Available in Maryland:

Free training and test strips available across Maryland. [Access map](#) and [learn more](#)

[Additional Resources](#)

For more information, contact

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