

# DAET COALITION NEWSLETTER

*A community resource to help prevent  
youth substance use in Ashland*



SPRING 2021



## A LETTER FROM THE COALITION

Dear Ashland Community Members,

Spring symbolizes hope. It seems fitting then that this newsletter arrives at a time where we can put optimism and positivity back into our vocabulary. It has certainly been a long year – one marked by uncertainty, challenge, and loss. We need to acknowledge the hardships, while recognizing a path forward. How do we keep going? Where can we look for progress and change? Hope can help.

This past February and March, DAET staff attended two trainings which focused on prevention during challenging times and how to grow and sustain a positive community culture. I am sharing these important concepts with you, as they truly serve as the foundation for our work to promote youth health & wellness.

- If we want health, we must promote health
- Hope is centered on the positive; the positive is real and is worth growing
- Balancing hope & concern

It is important to approach youth substance use prevention with a lens that both acknowledges our concerns about the challenges that youth experience (even more so this past year), while promoting positive behaviors and cultivating norms that support healthy decision-making and healthy human beings. If you attend our Coalition meetings or if you follow us on social media, you will see this reflected in our conversations and in our messaging. (If you don't follow us yet, see the back page for our Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram handles).

You will also see examples of these concepts throughout this newsletter. Our youth coalition is beginning to form. A collaboration between SADD, the Ashland Police Department and the AHS Health & Wellness classes helped to increase awareness and education about the risks associated with underage alcohol use. Ashland Middle School and Ashland High School both have poster campaigns that use positive messaging to promote youth health. And our highlight of May's Mental Health Awareness Month aims to reduce stigma around seeking mental health support and offers helpful programs and resources.

Thank you for staying connected to our work and for your commitment to Ashland youth.

In hope & health,

Kristin French, LCSW  
Director, DAET

## 10 STAYCATION IDEAS FOR YOUR SPRING BREAK!

- Hike & Picnic
- Bake/Cook
- Camp in the backyard or living room
- Explore another town nearby
- Plan for a garden: make birdfeeders, paint flower pots & rocks
- At home spa day
- At home sports tournament
- Visit a local nature preserve
- Mindful craft day: glitter jars, meditation rocks
- Plan a spring bucket list, get creative!



## Project ABC Virtual Family Fair Free Community Event!!!

**When:** Saturday May 1<sup>st</sup> 2021 10:00am - 11:30am

**Where:** Virtual - [click here to register!](#)

**Who:** Families who live in Ashland, Holliston, Hopkinton, or Natick with children ages 0-8

This event will feature activities for young children and information on organizations and services for families provided by local community partners that highlight:

- Early Literacy
- STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, & Math)
- Kindergarten Readiness
- Brain Building In Progress
- Healthy Habits
- Social & Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Information on programs that Strengthen Families
- And so much more!!!



All families will get the opportunity to participate in a raffle of baskets with goodies provided by local community organizations!

Questions? Contact Laina Abolfazli, Project ABC Coordinator  
(508) 435-9345 x113  
[labolfazli@metrowestymca.org](mailto:labolfazli@metrowestymca.org)

**DAET, APS, and Human Services have collaborated to bring families many exciting resources & activities!**

**TO REGISTER:** [Click here](#)

**CONTACT:** [labolfazli@metrowestymca.org](mailto:labolfazli@metrowestymca.org)

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## MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH 2021

LIFE CAN BE HARD.

YOUR MENTAL HEALTH DOESN'T HAVE TO SUFFER.

GET TOOLS AND INFORMATION THAT CAN HELP.



In 1949, Mental Health Awareness Month was established to increase awareness of the importance of mental health and wellness in Americans' lives, and to celebrate recovery from mental illness. In May, watch for DAET's opportunities to celebrate health & wellness.

### DAET MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| MAY 1  | Project ABC Virtual Family Fair (See front page for details)   |
| MAY 1  | Mental Health Awareness Month social media launch - Tools2Thrive highlighted all month.                    |
| MAY 3  | Ashland Town Pages Tools2Thrive article co-authored with Ashland Public Schools and Ashland Human Services |
| MAY 8  | DAET Parenting for Prevention tip sheet highlights   |
| MAY 14 | Virtual AHS Cookie Competition & Positive Mental Health Trivia Night                                       |
| MAY 21 | Project ABC Virtual Family Dinner (Details coming soon)  |



[CLICK HERE TO GET YOUR TOOLS2THRIVE TOOLKIT: Resources ~ Tip Sheets ~ Activities](#)

### COURTESY OF LINDA PRICE



## TOP 10 ACTIVITIES FOR RELAXATION

Managing anxiety and grief

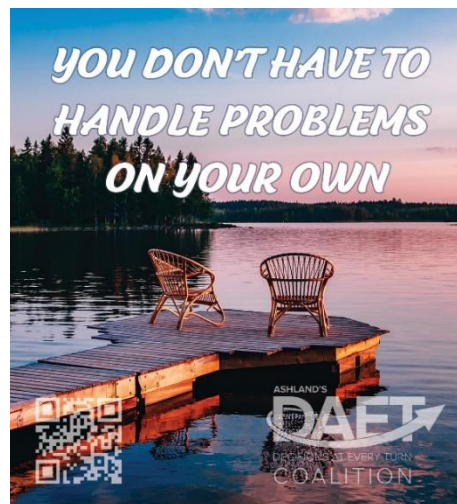
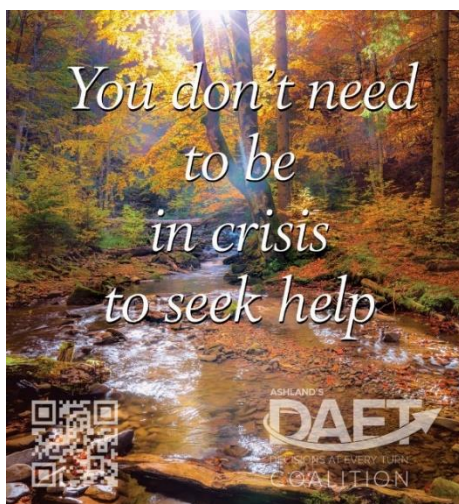
- Cultivate a positive mindset; Crush the ANTS (Automatic Negative Thoughts).
- Daily practice in gratitude.
- STOP, BREATHE, and THINK to respond instead of react.
- Observe all thoughts and emotions with compassion. Label them (e.g. "worry" "sadness") without judging.
- Practice progressive muscle relaxation: Tighten and relax muscles moving from head to toes.
- Try a breathing exercise:
  - Mindful sighing.
  - Belly Breathing: Place hands on belly and notice the movement.
  - 1-minute breathing: Inhale slowly, pause, exhale slowly, pause and repeat. Count each cycle.
  - 4-7-8: Breathe in for 4, pause for 7, and exhale for 8.
- 5-4-3-2-1: Notice 5 things you see, 4 things you hear, 3 things you feel, 2 things you smell, and 1 thing you taste (can be imagined).
- Gentle stretching with slow breathing.
- Other ideas: listen to calming music, play an instrument or sing, exercise, art, puzzles, read, write, yoga, Tai Chi, Qi-gong, walk outside in nature, listen to a meditation app.
- Treat yourself with gentleness and kindness...just like you would a friend.



For more information, please contact [michelle@mindingyourmind.org](mailto:michelle@mindingyourmind.org) or Visit [www.mindingyourmind.org](http://www.mindingyourmind.org) [www.wellnessem empowerment.org](http://www.wellnessem empowerment.org)

Linda Price is one of our favorite champions of mindfulness. If you missed her "Surviving to Thriving" webinar, you can watch a replay [HERE](#).

DAET and the Ashland High School Counseling Department are working together on a poster campaign that encourages students to prioritize their mental health and aims to reduce the stigma often associated with seeking help. Each monthly message creates an opportunity and a space for reflection and action. **January:** Seeking Support. **February:** There are People Who Care about You. **March:** Normalizing Mental Health Needs. Coming soon – **April:** Empowerment. **May:** The Importance of Mental Health. A QR code links to helpful online teen resources, tips, and strategies for prioritizing mental health.





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## BUILDING A YOUTH COALITION



At the end of January, DAET held a kickoff meeting for Ashland Middle School students interested in forming a youth coalition. Since then, a small group of

6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade students have committed to being involved in creating this group to make positive change in Ashland. DAET partnered with Health Resources in Action to provide a 2-part training for our emerging student leaders. Students were guided through a process of creating a youth coalition name, a mission statement, and overall goals for the year. The students have narrowed the youth coalition name down to three options: Ashland Youth Advocates for Change, Ashland Youth Action Team, and Ashland Youth Justice Coalition. Stay tuned for the final vote!



Student representatives from SADD and AHS School Resource Officer Dave Muri led Health & Wellness class discussions about the physical and behavioral health risks associated with underage alcohol use and the legal implications of the Social Host Law. Students then participated in different activities using "impairment goggles" that simulate various Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) levels. Students were able to safely experience the real-life risks of alcohol impairment on motor coordination, depth perception and reaction time, and understand how any level of impairment is dangerous.

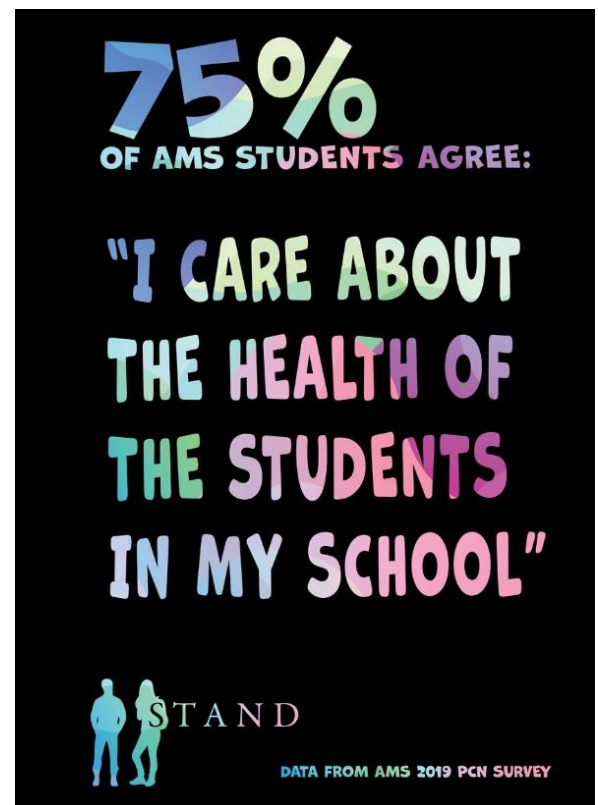
*"I liked using the goggles! Some of the tasks were really hard to do while using them so it was easy to see why you shouldn't drink and drive!"*

*~ AHS Student*

The AMS STAND (Students Taking a Noble Direction) Campaign launched its most recent poster in April. The campaign aims to bring awareness to the norm that most Ashland Middle School students care about their school and want the AMS community to be the best it can be. The posters are hung around the school to encourage student and student/adult conversations about healthy decision-making. The data is taken from the 2019 AMS Positive Community Norms Survey.

### Try these Conversation Starters with your middle school student:

- Did you see this message at school?
- What did you think about it?
- Did you and your friends talk about it?
- Did you hear other students or teachers talk about it?
- What does health mean to you?



## DAET COALITION MEETING CALENDAR

SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN
Themes: ~ Back to School ~ Suicide Prevention	Themes: ~ Substance Use Prevention ~ Mental Health Awareness	Themes: ~ Great American Smokeout ~ Foundation of Developmental Assets & Developmental Relationships	Themes: ~ Impaired/Drugged Driving Prevention ~ Foundation of Developmental Assets & Developmental Relationships	Themes: ~ Developmental Assets & Developmental Relationships ~ Building Relationships Action Steps
Social Media blitz	Fall Coalition Meeting	Prevention Training or Event	Prevention Training or Event	Winter Coalition Meeting
FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
Themes: ~ Developmental Assets & Developmental Relationships ~ Building Relationships Action Steps	Themes: ~ National Drug & Alcohol Facts Week ~ National Poison & Inhalants Awareness Week	Theme: ~ American Public Health Week	Theme: ~ Mental Health Awareness Month	Theme: ~ Kickoff Substance-Free Safe Summer
Prevention Training or Event	Prevention Training or Event	Spring Coalition Meeting	Prevention Training or Event	End of Year Celebration

## DAET SOCIAL MEDIA

Don't miss out on prevention tips & strategies for positive family health, DAET events & programs, and helpful resources.

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