

# EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT TEAM UPDATE

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.



## SAINT VINCENT COLLEGE PREVENTION PROJECTS NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2026

VOLUME 2: ISSUE 5



SVCPP mailing  
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15650

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724-420-5930

## Awareness Days

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 February.

Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month—February.

More info at: <https://www.teendvmonth.org/about-teendvmonth/>

Through with Chew Week—February 15-21.

More info at: <https://nationaltoday.com/through-with-the-chew/>

Great American Spit-Out Day—February 19—<https://nationaltoday.com/great-american-spit-out/>

National Eating Disorder Awareness Week—February 25th-March 5th

More info at: <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/get-involved/ned-awareness>

Random Acts of Kindness Awareness Month—February.

More info at: <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/>



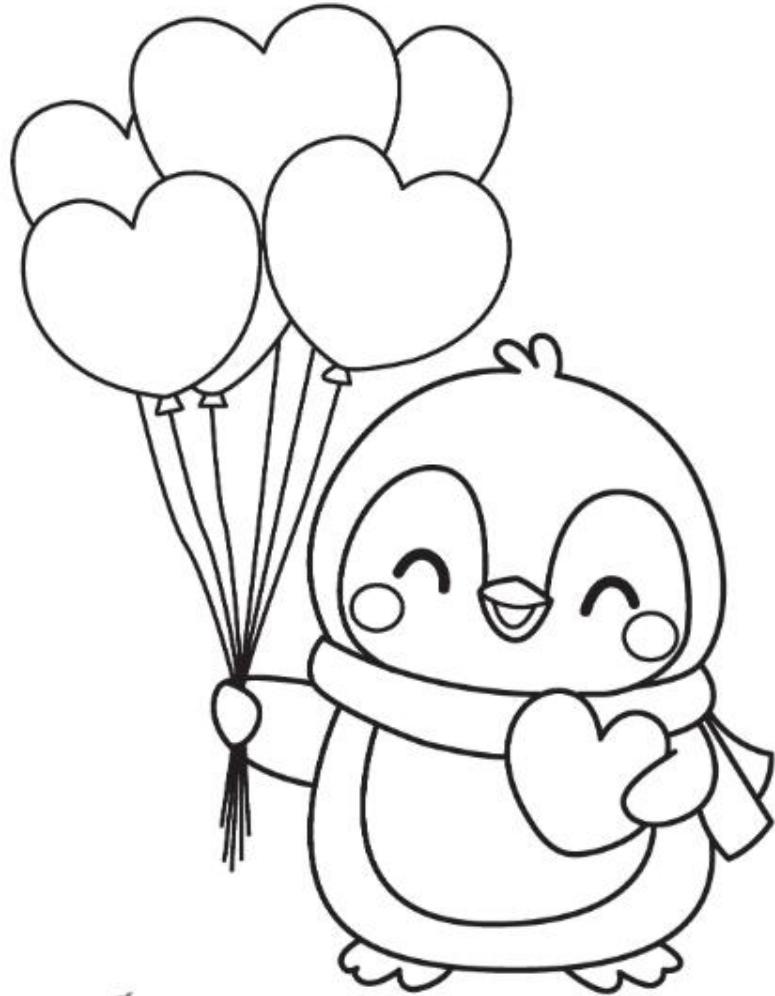
## Trainings, Workshops, Events, & more...



**Thematic Workshops— March 25, 2026.** We offer Workshops 3 times a year. Each of these will have a SAP process, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse focus. The training announcements will go to your email address and appear when appropriate in our monthly newsletter. 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 in the cafeteria. Act 48 credits will be given.

**K-12 SAP TRAINING— February 5&6, 2026; March 12&13, 2026; May 14&15, 2026.**

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 Liaison, 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. The cost of the training is \$360 which includes Training materials, lunch and continental breakfast both days.





# Events and Community News



SAINT VINCENT COLLEGE

Prevention Projects

## STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM Spring Thematic Workshop

*"From Risk to Resilience: Student Assistance, Recovery, and the Polyvagal Path to Safety"*

### ANNOUNCEMENT

WASAP Council Meeting (8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.)  
March 25<sup>th</sup> 2026

TO:	SAP Contacts
TIME:	8:30 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.
PLACE:	St. Vincent College, Fred Rogers Center
<b>8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.</b>	<b>Registration, continental breakfast provided.</b>
<b>9:00 a.m.-9:15 a.m.</b>	<b>"Welcome &amp; Introductions"</b> Presenter: Donna Kean, Executive Director Saint Vincent College Prevention Projects
<b>9:15 a.m.- 10:00 a.m.</b>	<b>"Streamlining SAP"</b> Presenter: Ray Killen, School Counselor and Quinn Matz, Health and P.E. Teacher West Hempfield Middle School
<b>10:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>10:15 a.m.-11:00 a.m.</b>	<b>"Sage's Army Teen Prevention"</b> Presenter: Amber Yingling, Certified Recovery Specialist Sage's Army, Inc.
<b>11:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>
<b>12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.</b>	<b>"You Are the Emotional Wi-Fi: Polyvagal Theory and the Science of Safety"</b> Presenter: Susan L. Tarasevich, Ed.D. Susan Tarasevich Learning, LLC
<b>1:30p.m.-1:45 p.m.</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>1:45p.m. – 3:00 p.m.</b>	<b>"You Are the Emotional Wi-Fi: Polyvagal Theory and the Science of Safety" Continued</b> Presenter: Susan L. Tarasevich, Ed.D. Susan Tarasevich Learning, LLC
<b>3:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.</b>	<b>Summary/Evaluations/Concluding Remarks/Individual Team Assistance</b>

REGISTRATION: Phone – 724-805-2050 on or before **March 24, 2026**

ACT 48 Professional Development Credit – 5.00 hours

**COST: \$40.00 per person, includes lunch in the cafeteria.**

*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.*



## Events and Community News



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### Streamlining SAP

**Presenters: Ray Killen and Quinn Matz, West Hempfield Middle School**

Looking for a better way to gather information and feedback on the students referred to your SAP team? Tired of endless paperwork and messy records? This session is designed to help! Streamlining SAP will provide participants with tools and strategies for using Google Forms and Sheets to keep your team organized, efficient, and collaborative. You'll also learn effective methods for running productive meetings and explore creative event ideas that can positively impact your school community and help your SAP Team truly shine.

### Sage's Army Teen Prevention Program

**Amber Yingling, Certified Recovery Specialist, Sage's Army, Inc.**

Adolescents with substance use challenges often struggle academically, socially, and emotionally; many do not access formal treatment or feel safe discussing their experiences in traditional school settings.

Integrating CRS and CFRS within the SAP offers students relatable, non-judgmental support from individuals with lived experience, strengthening trust, early identification of concerns, and connection to resources.

SMART Recovery Teen programming complements this support by equipping students with skills that target underlying thought patterns and behaviors, promoting long-term resilience and well-being.

### You Are the Emotional Wi-Fi: Polyvagal Theory and the Science of Safety

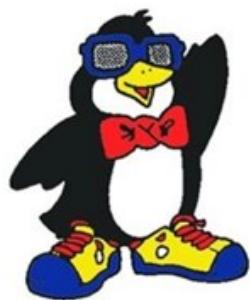
**Presenter: Susan L. Tarasevich, Ed.D. Susan Tarasevich Learning, LLC**

Visit us at [www.susantarasevichlearning.com](http://www.susantarasevichlearning.com)

This presentation doesn't just focus on your work with students; it's for you as well. This workshop applies educational neuroscience and Polyvagal Theory to classroom practice and student support systems, equipping educators with trauma-informed, co-regulation strategies that enhance emotional resilience, reduce behavioral barriers to learning, and strengthen supports for referred students.

By reviewing the framework for applying educational neuroscience in schools, we will apply this to classroom practices as well as action planning for referred students.

Leave with real-world applications of co-regulation that you can apply to your everyday educational and personal routines to enhance your emotional resilience and build this capacity in your students.



## Have you heard the news?

PDE has granted all K-12 Public School District employees the opportunity to be SAP Trained free of charge through December 2026. This special grant funding allows for reimbursement for classroom teacher substitute costs up to \$150/day per substitute.

### Saint Vincent College Prevention Projects

#### 2025–2026 Training Dates for K-12 SAP Training:

- ◆ **February 5&6, 2026**
- ◆ **May 14&15, 2026**
- ◆ **March 12&13, 2026**

Workshop cost for all other training participants is \$360.00/person

### Saint Vincent College Prevention Projects

#### 2025-2026 Training Dates for SAP Thematic Workshop:



- **March 25, 2026**

Workshop cost is \$40/person

*For information or to register, please call the Saint Vincent College Prevention Projects at 724-805-2050.*

*Participants will receive training materials, lunch and continental breakfast at all trainings.*

*All trainings and workshops will be offered at:*

*Saint Vincent College 300 Fraser Purchase Road, Latrobe, PA 15650*



## **Kick the Nic in 2026: 14.9% of Pennsylvania Residents Use Tobacco or Nicotine Products; American Lung Association Offers Support to Help People Quit**

Harrisburg, PA | December 26, 2025

Currently, 14.9% of adults in Pennsylvania use at least one tobacco or nicotine product such as cigarettes, e-cigarettes or nicotine pouches. Nicotine is extremely addictive, so the American Lung Association is offering free resources and support to help people quit tobacco and nicotine products for good.

Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death and disease in Pennsylvania killing 22,010 people each year. While it's best to quit as early as possible, quitting tobacco and nicotine products at any age will enhance the length and quality of your life.

"In our state, 14.9% adults smoke and 17% of high school students use a tobacco product. We know that breaking the addiction to nicotine is extremely difficult. For most people, it takes multiple attempts to quit tobacco for good. Each quit attempt brings a person closer to reaching their goal," said Elizabeth Hensil, Director of Advocacy with the American Lung Association in Pennsylvania. "It is critical that people who are ready speak with their healthcare provider about Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved tobacco treatment medications, coupling them with proven effective cessation programs to quit."

The American Lung Association offers a free [Lung Helpline](#) to help people get started on their journey to quit. People can call 1-800-LUNGUSA to connect with a licensed registered nurse, respiratory therapist or certified tobacco treatment specialist. Services to help people quit nicotine and tobacco are available for adults and also teens ages 13 and up. The Lung Helpline also offers [programs to employers to help their employees quit](#).

In addition, the Lung Helpline can help assist with information about lung cancer screening if they are eligible, help navigate insurance challenges, and connect people with [Lung Health Navigators](#) who specialize in lung cancer, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and pulmonary fibrosis.





## Dating Violence

### What is Dating Violence?

Dating violence is the use of physical, sexual, emotional, or verbal force by one dating partner towards the other. Abuse can cause injury and even death, but it doesn't have to be physical. It can take many different forms, including threats, constant text messaging or instant messaging, insults, isolation from family and friends, sexual abuse, name-calling, emotional abuse, and controlling a partner's behavior and appearance.

### Did You Know?

- ✓ 1 in 3 Teens Experiences Dating Violence
- ✓ Adolescent Girls in Abusive Relationships Are Approximately 5 Times More Likely to Become Pregnant Than Girls in Non-abusive Relationships
- ✓ Most Victims Murdered by Their Significant Other Over the Last Ten Years in Georgia Began Their Relationship With Their Abuser While Between the Ages of 13 and 24

## Teen Dating Violence Micro lessons

We are excited to announce our new resource to the greater Atlanta Community. Our new Micro lessons Toolkit is designed to give adults a discussion guide for having a conversation about dating violence topics with a young person.

This guide is designed to give you and your teen a "road map" to having conversations on the different aspects of healthy relationships. There are activities, resources, and tools included with every release. We will be releasing these lessons every month, and we hope that parents, teachers or any adults that serve teens use this powerful tool in helping end teen dating violence.

[Download Micro-lesson](#)

Power

Control

Safety



## Awareness Month Information



### Take the Internet Addiction Test to See Your Score

#### INTERNET ADDICTION TEST

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Years Online \_\_\_\_\_ Do you use the Internet for work? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

This questionnaire consists of 20 statements. After reading each statement carefully, based upon the 5-point Likert scale, please select the response (0, 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5) which best describes you. If two choices seem to apply equally well, circle the choice that best represents how you are most of the time during the past month. Be sure to read all the statements carefully before making your choice. The statements refer to offline situations or actions unless otherwise specified.

**0** = Not Applicable

**1** = Rarely

**2** = Occasionally

**3** = Frequently

**4** = Often

**5** = Always

1. \_\_\_\_\_ How often do you find that you stay online longer than you intended?
2. \_\_\_\_\_ How often do you neglect household chores to spend more time online?
3. \_\_\_\_\_ How often do you prefer the excitement of the Internet to intimacy with your partner?
4. \_\_\_\_\_ How often do you form new relationships with fellow online users?
5. \_\_\_\_\_ How often do others in your life complain to you about the amount of time you spend online?
6. \_\_\_\_\_ How often do your grades or school work suffer because of the amount of time you spend online?
7. \_\_\_\_\_ How often do you check your email before something else that you need to do?
8. \_\_\_\_\_ How often does your job performance or productivity suffer because of the Internet?
9. \_\_\_\_\_ How often do you become defensive or secretive when anyone asks you what you do online?
10. \_\_\_\_\_ How often do you block out disturbing thoughts about your life with soothing thoughts of the Internet?
11. \_\_\_\_\_ How often do you find yourself anticipating when you will go online again?
12. \_\_\_\_\_ How often do you fear that life without the Internet would be boring, empty, and joyless?
13. \_\_\_\_\_ How often do you snap, yell, or act annoyed if someone bothers you while you are online?
14. \_\_\_\_\_ How often do you lose sleep due to being online?
15. \_\_\_\_\_ How often do you feel preoccupied with the Internet when off-line, or fantasize about being online?
16. \_\_\_\_\_ How often do you find yourself saying "just a few more minutes" when online?
17. \_\_\_\_\_ How often do you try to cut down the amount of time you spend online and fail?
18. \_\_\_\_\_ How often do you try to hide how long you've been online?
19. \_\_\_\_\_ How often do you choose to spend more time online over going out with others?
20. \_\_\_\_\_ How often do you feel depressed, moody, or nervous when you are off-line, which goes away once you are back online?



## Take the Internet Addiction Test to See Your Score Conti.

### SCORING

The IAT total score is the sum of the ratings given by the examinee for the 20 item responses. Each item is rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 0 to 5. The maximum score is 100 points. The higher the score is, the higher is the severity of your problem. Total scores that range from **0 to 30** points are considered to reflect a normal level of Internet usage; scores of **31 to 49** indicate the presence of a mild level of Internet addiction; **50 to 79** reflect the presence of a moderate level; and scores of **80 to 100** indicate a severe dependence upon the Internet.

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All rights reserved. Center for Internet Addiction Recovery, P.O. Box 632, Bradford, PA 16701

Test from: <https://www.iitk.ac.in/counsel/resources/IATManual.pdf>



## PUT A STOP TO EXCESSIVE USAGE OF SMARTPHONES

Once you realize that being addicted to the internet is bad for you and that it's taking over your life, you can start to stay away. You can tell people not to use the internet after a certain time every day.



## LIMIT DEVICE ACCESS

If you give up your digital devices for a set amount of time, especially the ones that bother you the most, you can take some important steps. It could be your gaming console, your smartphone, your laptop, etc.



Info from: <https://sourcebae.com/blog/internet-addiction-tips-how-to-regain-control-and-find-balance/>

**SOURCEBAE.COM**



## Available Services Through SVCPP:



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

#### Special Speaker 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, Mobile Bedroom, Social Media, Click-Bait and Other On-Line Potholes, and more.

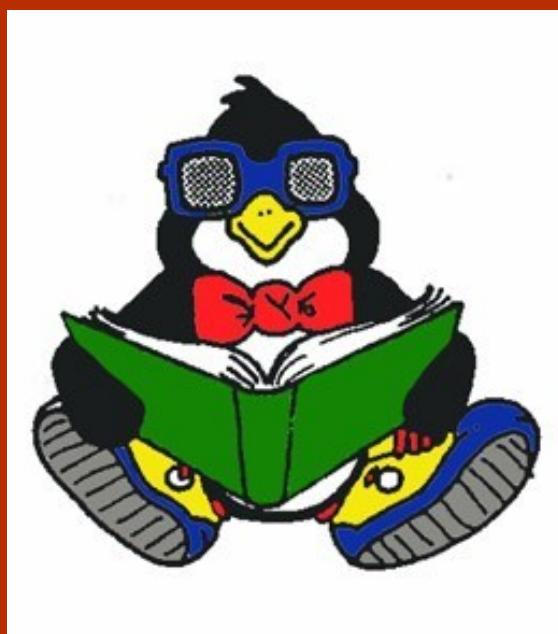
#### RADAR (Free Materials)

#### 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 Potochnik, Prevention Education & Community Outreach Services Manager at Saint Vincent College Prevention Projects at 724-805-2050 or email**

**beth.potochnik@stvincent.edu**





## Available Intervention Services Through SVCPP:



**The following Tier II Intervention Programs are offered to all  
Westmoreland County Secondary Schools  
at NO cost to the school districts:**



### **N.O.T. (Not on Tobacco) Program**

SVCPP Intervention Specialists deliver 6 sessions covering facts vs. myths, triggers and advertising nicotine products, identifying support strategies, benefits to quitting nicotine use and how your body responds, creating healthy habits, and ways to stay nicotine free. N.O.T. explores the various delivery systems, i.e. vape devices, chewing, smoking, etc. N.O.T. is an American Lung Association program aimed to recognize dependence on nicotine and to identify replacement strategies to restore health.

### **The Blues Program**

SVCPP Intervention Specialists provide early intervention service groups for adolescents with observable behaviors displaying depressive symptoms or are at-risk for depression. These are 6 session groups provided weekly within your school.

### **Marijuana Brief Intervention Program**

SVCPP Intervention Specialists use this evidence-based program for early intervention with students who may be experimenting with marijuana in its various forms. During the 6 weekly sessions, students will identify triggers, how their environment can contribute to usage, and practical evidence-based ways to reduce/eliminate marijuana use.

### **In-Depth Program**

The American Lung Association's INDEPTH ® (Intervention for Nicotine Dependence: Education, Prevention, Tobacco and Health) program is an alternative to suspension or citation program that is offered as an option to students who face suspension for violation of school tobacco or e-cigarette use policies. This program is administered by a trained adult facilitator in either a one-on-one or group format and can be offered in a school or community-based setting. The program consists of four sessions of approximately 50 minutes geared toward youth and focused on tobacco use, including e-cigarettes, nicotine dependence, establishing healthy alternatives and making the change to be free of all tobacco products. Because the program is offered as an alternative to suspension or citation, attendance is mandatory to fulfill the obligation for the infraction. While INDEPTH is not a cessation program, steps toward cessation are strongly encouraged. Students may decide to quit or reduce their tobacco/nicotine use as result of their participation in the program.

**If your school district can benefit from these services, please email:** Christina Weimer, SAP Coordinator and Intervention Services Manager, [Christina.weimer@stvincent.edu](mailto:Christina.weimer@stvincent.edu)



## Westmoreland County Information



1200 Maronda Way, Suite 300, Monessen, PA  
Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

724-243-2220

<http://wedacinc.org>



Southwestern Pennsylvania Human Services, Inc.

203 S Maple Ave, Greensburg, PA 15601  
Hours: Monday-Thursday 8:30am-9:00pm    <http://www.sphs.org>  
Friday 8:30am-5:00pm

724-834-0420



### Outside In

*To the Fullest...*

Outpatient Services  
PHONE 724-837-1518

Residential Programs  
PHONE 724-238-8441

PO Box 639  
Greensburg, PA 15601



First Floor Suite 110, 40 N Pennsylvania Avenue, Greensburg, PA 15601  
(724-830-3617)

<http://www.co.westmoreland.pa.us/>

### SVC Prevention Projects

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Cell: 724-771-4776



Map from: <https://www.city2map.com/en/us/pa/westmoreland-county.html>



## **What Parents Should Know About Nicotine Pouches**

### **Are nicotine pouches dangerous, especially for kids?**

Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of cancer and cancer deaths. Nicotine may not contain the chemicals and toxins found in cigarette smoke, but it is highly addictive. It can also negatively affect the entire body, causing lung and stomach problems, increasing blood pressure and heart rate, and narrowing arteries, which can lead to a heart attack.

And while nicotine pouches may be a safer alternative to cigarettes or vaping because they don't contain the known carcinogens associated with tobacco and are not inhaled in the lungs, they still are not recommended as something people should pick up. And they are especially not meant for youth, says Morean.

That said, long-term data about the health risks of nicotine pouches are not yet available. "We don't know what happens, over time, when you have varying strengths of nicotine sitting in your mouth in a pouch," Morean says. "It's possible that the risk is very minimal. But it's also possible that it has an effect over time. There are studies looking at changes in cheek cells, but we don't have all the information yet. We do know that it can irritate your gums in the short term, and some people find that nicotine gives them an upset stomach."

Morean also notes that nicotine is a stimulant. "For adolescents and young adults, nicotine has detrimental effects on the developing brain. When your brain is forming, nicotine use can cause issues, including increased impulsivity and ADHD-type cognitive symptoms," Morean says.

It can also lead to a predisposition to addiction, both to nicotine and other substances. If someone, including a child, is new to using nicotine, they also will feel a "buzz," Morean says.



**ZYN Fact Sheet**  
**For**  
**Parents**



"The feeling doesn't last long; it's like a little head rush where you feel lifted," she says. "But after using nicotine regularly, your body gets used to it, and you don't get that buzz anymore. Once you become dependent on it, you just feel normal when you have it. And when you don't have it, you start having cravings, headaches, or other withdrawal symptoms that indicate, 'Hey, time for another one,'" she says. "Then, you have another one, and your withdrawal symptoms go away, and you get back to baseline."



## Signs Your Teen Might Be Using ZYN

### *Signs to watch for:*

- Changes in mood
- Irritability
- Restlessness
- Small round tins containing white, rectangular and gum-like pouches
- Dizziness
- Headaches
- Nausea

Look for changes in mood, irritability, or restlessness, which could be signs of nicotine withdrawal (Figure 2; Editorial staff, 2024; Center for Disease Control [CDC], 2023). Finding small, round containers (similar to those used for mints or chewing tobacco) or something resembling a piece of white, rectangular gum could indicate ZYN use (Truth Initiative, 2023). Watch for symptoms like dizziness, headaches, or nausea, especially if your teen has no other apparent cause for these issues (MacMillan, 2024; CDC, 2023).

### How to Talk to Your Teen About ZYN

Approach the topic calmly and without judgment. Ask your teen what they know about nicotine pouches like ZYN. Share facts about the health risks associated with nicotine, particularly during adolescence. Let your teen know your expectations about nicotine and substance use. Discuss the importance of making healthy choices. If your teen is using ZYN or another nicotine product, offer support. Consider seeking resources such as counseling or nicotine cessation programs designed for teens.

**COMMON NICOTINE WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS**

FEELING FRUSTRATED OR ANGRY

FEELING SAD OR DEPRESSED

FEELING ANXIOUS OR JUMPY

TROUBLE CONCENTRATING

TROUBLE SLEEPING

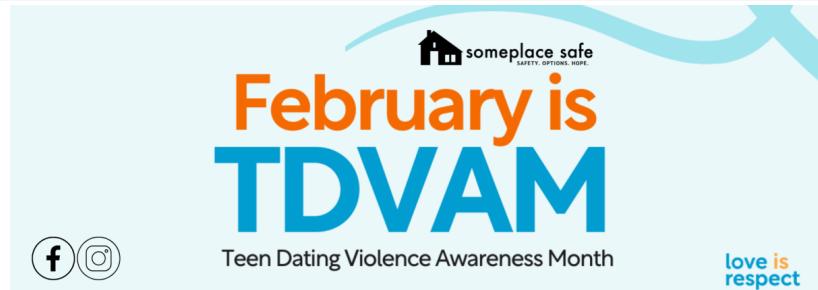
INCREASED APPETITE

STRONG CRAVINGS AND URGES TO USE NICOTINE PRODUCTS, MAKING IT HARD TO REDUCE USE OR QUIT

Info from: <https://extension.usu.edu/heart/research/what-to-know-about-zyn-nicotine-pouches>



## Teen Dating Violence - Parents



### What Would You Do if You Thought Your Child Was in an Abusive Relationship?

Although many parents don't believe that violence can happen to their teens, abuse can happen to anyone. One in three teens will experience dating abuse, and there are things you can do to help as a parent. Here are some tips:

- ✓ It's Never Too Early to Discuss Healthy Relationships and Self-respect With Your Teen. Help Your Child Establish a Dating Bill of Rights and Guide Them Through Dating Do's and Don'ts
- ✓ Know the Signs That Your Teen Could Be in an Abusive Relationship (See Below)
- ✓ Look Past the Myths and Get the Facts
- ✓ Understand the Severity and Prevalence of Teen Dating Violence ([Click Here](#) for Statistics on Teen Dating Violence)
- ✓ Encourage Dialogue With Your Teen About Dating Abuse. If Your Teen Wants to Talk, Let Them and Listen Quietly
- ✓ Learn What to Say if Your Teen Approaches You About Teen Dating Violence
- ✓ Take Whatever Safety Measures Necessary, Like Having Friends Walk Your Teen Home, Consider Changing Your Teen's Schedule, or Getting the School's Assistance, if Necessary
- ✓ Call PADV's Crisis Line for Assistance in Creating a Safety Plan at [+1 \(404\) 873-1766](#)



## From the Desk of Saint Vincent College Prevention Projects: Parent Tips & Resources



### What Are the Signs?

Sometimes these signs are a part of being a teenager, but when these changes happen suddenly or without any explanation, there might be cause for concern.

- Sudden Changes in Clothes or Make-up
- Bruises, Scratches, or Other Injuries
- Failing Grades, Skipping Class, or Dropping Out of School Activities
- Avoiding Friends
- Difficulty Making Decisions or Always Relying on the Decisions of Others
- Sudden Changes in Mood or Personality; Becoming Anxious or Depressed, Acting Out, or Being Secretive
- Changes in Eating or Sleeping Habits, Avoiding Eye Contact
- Constantly Thinking or Worrying About Their Dating Partner
- Using Alcohol or Drugs
- Emotional Outbursts and "crying Fits"