

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

MAY/JUNE 2025

VOLUME 1: ISSUE 8

NEWSLETTER DATE

K-12 SAP Trainings & SAP Thematic Workshops

K-12 SAP TRAINING Dates: May 29&30, 2025; September 18&19, 2025; November 20&21, 2025; February 5&6, 2026; March 12&13, 2026. Trainings are held at the Fred Rogers Conference Center, Saint Vincent College.

The Training is designed for new members of either a secondary or elementary S.A.P. team. This is also appropriate for Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Liaisons, 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 these trainings. For additional information or to register, please call Saint Vincent College Prevention Projects at 724-805-2050.

SAP Thematic Workshops: October 15, 2025; December 3, 2025; and March 25, 2026. Workshops are held at the Fred Rogers Conference Center, Saint Vincent College.

Training announcements will be emailed and also posted in the newsletter. For additional information or to register, please call Saint Vincent College Prevention Projects at 724-805-2050.

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 the next several months:

National Mental Health Month (May)—<https://www.aha.org/mental-health-awareness-month#:~:text=May%20is%20a%20time%20to,resources%20available%20in%20their%20community.>

Screen Free Week (May 1-9, 2025)—<https://www.screenfree.org/>

National Children's Mental Health Awareness Week (May 5-11, 2025)—<https://www.ffcmh.org/awarenessweek>

National Prevention Awareness Week (May 11-17, 2025)—<https://www.samhsa.gov/about/digital-toolkits/prevention-week/toolkit>

National Alcohol and other drug-related birth defects awareness week (May 13-19)—[https://www.dhd10.org/public-health-matters/national-alcohol-drug-related-birth-defects-awareness-week/#:~:text=a%20service...-National%20Alcohol%20and%20Other%20Drug%20Related%20Birth%20Defects,Week%20\(May%2013%2019\)](https://www.dhd10.org/public-health-matters/national-alcohol-drug-related-birth-defects-awareness-week/#:~:text=a%20service...-National%20Alcohol%20and%20Other%20Drug%20Related%20Birth%20Defects,Week%20(May%2013%2019))



SVCPP mailing
Address:

300 Fraser
Purchase Road,
Latrobe, PA
15650

Phone:
724-805-2050

Fax:
724-420-5930



Trainings, Workshops, Events, & more...



Thematic Workshops— October 15, 2025; December 3, 2025; and 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— May 29&30, 2025; September 18&19, 2025; November 20&21, 2025; February 5&6, 2026; March 12&13, 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.

It is that time of year again!

It is SAP 4092 "Bubble sheet" form submission. A reminder that the **deadline is June 30, 2025**, Click, "[Safe Schools](#)" link to access the website. If you need assistance with your user name and password, please contact Jay Wasser at **814-243-3658**. If you would like assistance with the 4092's and you are in Westmoreland County, please email Donna Cartia, donna.cartia@stvincent.edu to set up a date and time for technical assistance.

Looking for SAP Drug and Alcohol Liaison/Intervention Specialist(s) to join our Saint Vincent College Prevention Projects Team!

Short Description: The SAP Drug and Alcohol Liaison/Intervention Specialist will be responsible for providing services which assist in the identification, referral, and support of at-risk students in assigned buildings. Responsibilities may include but are not limited to: being active ad hoc members of the Student Assistance Program (SAP) Team; working collaboratively with administration and guidance personnel; working collaboratively in a non-duplicative fashion with county SAP mental health liaison; linking students and families to school-based and community resources; providing group and individual support services to identified youth; providing consultation and intensive case management for SAP referrals; administer screening tool to identified students with substance use concerns; and participating in public relations, community outreach, and marketing events. Click [HERE](#) for more information.



Have you heard the news?

PDE has granted all K-12 School District employees the opportunity to be SAP Trained free of charge! That's right, it's free through December 2026.

Saint Vincent College Prevention Projects

Current Training Dates:

- **May 29 & 30, 2025**
- **September 18 & 19, 2025**
- **October 2025: TBD**
- **November 20 & 21, 2025**
- **December 2025: TBD**
- **February 5 & 6, 2026**
- **March 12 & 13, 2026**
- **May 2026: TBD**

This special grant funding also allows for reimbursement for classroom teacher substitute costs **only** up to \$150/day per substitute!

****For information or to register, please call the Saint Vincent College Prevention Projects at 724-805-2050. Participants will receive all training materials, lunch and continental breakfast for both days.***





presents:

SAVE THE DATE!!

Suicide Prevention with Kevin Berthia & Kevin Briggs

Kevin Berthia is a Suicide Survivor, Advocate, and Speaker. Kevin pours his heart into sharing his powerful story of growing up in silence, always feeling the need to hide the unbearable pain he was in. Through high school and into his early twenties, Kevin was known as the life of the party. Until his very public suicide attempt at the Golden Gate Bridge changed everything.

Kevin Briggs, a retired California Highway Patrol sergeant, spent many years patrolling the Golden Gate Bridge. While on patrol, he encountered numerous individuals who had lost all hope and were contemplating suicide. Through compassion and the ability to "Listen to Understand," he encouraged several hundred individuals over his career not to end their lives but to begin a new chapter. These challenging but rewarding efforts earned him the nickname "Guardian of the Golden Gate."



Please join us for a captivating story of compassion and survival

**Friday, May 16th, 2025 from
9:00 AM to 12:00 PM**

Sponsored by:

WESTMORELAND COUNTY

DEPARTMENT OF
HUMAN SERVICESBEHAVIORAL HEALTH &
DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

at the Westmoreland Intermediate Unit at

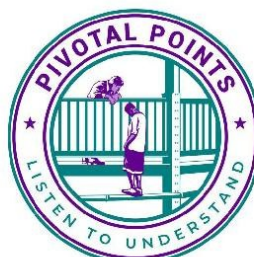
102 Equity Dr. Greensburg

Lunch and Provider Updates from 1 PM to

4PM to follow

Registration
Coming Soon**Kevin Berthia**

Suicide Survivor, Advocate, Speaker

Kevin Berthia
FOUNDATION**Kevin Briggs**

Veteran, Author, Speaker





WESTMORELAND COUNTY
JUVENILE PROBATION
PRESENTS

family FUN FEST

TWIN LAKES PARK & NATURE CENTER

MONDAY, JULY 21, 2025
3:00 TO 7:00 P.M.

Bring the whole family for a day filled with laughter, excitement, and unforgettable memories

Event Highlights

- EXCITING GAMES & ACTIVITIES
- FOOD & REFRESHMENTS
- LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
- CRAFTS & WORKSHOPS

Join Us for a Spectacular Family Fun Day!

FOR MORE INFORMATION: MICHELE WENTZEL
MWENTZE2@WESTMORELANDCOUNTYPA.GOV
724-830-4266



Awareness Month Information



NATIONAL PREVENTION *Week*

A CELEBRATION OF POSSIBILITY

SAVE THE DATE
**MAY 11-17
2025**

During National Prevention Week, communities and organizations across the country come together to raise awareness about the importance of substance use prevention and mental health promotion.

SAMHSA Pinkie Promise

Take the SAMHSA Pinkie Promise as a pledge to yourself and your friends to take care of your well-being:

- *I will respect myself and will make decisions that are good for me.
- *I won't let drug and alcohol use change or control my plans or my path for the future.
- *I will spread the word that any drug ingested that doesn't come from a reputable pharmacy could be a fake pill or contaminated with another substance that is often fatal.
- *I will participate in healthy hobbies or other activities that I enjoy and that connect me with friends and mentors.



SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION MONTH

PREVENTION AIMS TO...

- Prevent **initiation** of substance use
- Prevent **progression** of substance use (to a substance use disorder)
- Prevent and reduce **harms** associated with substance use

SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

NATIONAL PREVENTION *Week*

A CELEBRATION OF POSSIBILITY

May 11-17 2025

A week to bring together communities and organizations to raise awareness about the importance of substance use prevention and positive mental health initiatives.

Prevention is Possible.



Awareness Month Information



Overall Theme

Mental health is essential for overall well-being at every stage of life. Regardless of age, background, or experience, prioritizing mental health strengthens individuals, families, and communities.

The following key messages and weekly themes provide a foundation for developing messages and posts that resonate with your specific audiences throughout the month. Feel free to use these messages as well as the sample social media shareables in the toolkit.

Week 1: May 1-3

Supporting Older Adults' Mental Health. This week focuses on supporting the mental health needs of older adults.

Key messages:

- ◆ As we age, we may experience life changes that impact our mental health.
- ◆ Life changes in older adults can impact mental health, but help is always available.
- ◆ Mental health conditions in older adults may present differently, such as through changes in interests or energy levels.
- ◆ Open conversations about mental health can encourage older adults to seek support.
- ◆ Mental health care can enhance quality of life, independence, and social connections.
- ◆ Spending time with older adults fosters meaningful connections and well-being.

Week 2: May 4-10

Building Strong Foundations for Children's Mental Health. This week highlights the importance of early mental health support, resilience, and self-care for children and teens.

Key messages:

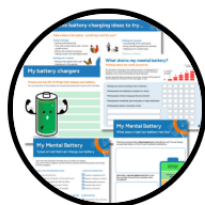
- ◆ Supportive families, communities, and resources help children lay the groundwork for lifelong well-being.



Awareness Month Information



- ◆ Supportive families, schools, and communities help children and teens build strong mental health.
- ◆ Teaching coping skills early empowers young people to manage emotions and challenges.
- ◆ Recognizing early signs of mental health concerns can lead to timely support and positive outcomes.
- ◆ Open conversations about emotions help children develop resilience and feel safe seeking help.
- ◆ Regular physical activity can help improve children's mental health and enhance their well-being.
- ◆ Many children face mental health challenges—early intervention and support can make a difference.



DOWNLOAD A FREE RESOURCE!

Mental health worksheets – Free printable activity sheets for KS2+

PRIMARY

SECONDARY

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Download Now ►

Week 3: May 11-17

Hope and Support for Serious Mental Illness and Serious Emotional Disturbance. This week focuses on raising awareness, reducing stigma, and promoting recovery for people living with serious mental illness (SMI) or serious emotional disturbance (SED) and their families.

Key messages:

- ◆ Support, understanding, and access to care help people with SMI or SED—and their families—pursue recovery and live meaningful lives.
- ◆ People younger than 18 who have mental health conditions that severely affect their ability to function in school, family, or within the community are described as having SED.
- ◆ Millions of people live with SMI or SED, but treatment and support can help them thrive.
- ◆ Early diagnosis and continuous support help people with SMI manage symptoms and live enjoyable, productive lives.
- ◆ People with conditions like bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and major depression can benefit from personalized care that helps them navigate challenges.
- ◆ Coordinated care and strong community connections improve quality of life for people with SMI or SED. There is hope—many people with SMI are living, working, and flourishing in recovery.



Awareness Month Information



Week 4: May 18-24

The Connection Between Mental and Physical Health. This week explores how deeply connected mental and physical health are.

Key messages:

- ◆ Mental and physical health are deeply connected—and integrated care for co-occurring conditions supports lifelong wellness.
- ◆ Mental and physical health are equally important—taking care of one supports the other.
- ◆ Depression and anxiety increase the risk of chronic illnesses like heart disease and diabetes.
- ◆ Regular activity, good nutrition, and quality sleep support both mental and physical well-being.
- ◆ Integrated treatment for co-occurring mental health and substance use conditions improves outcomes.
- ◆ Preventive care, strong support networks, and early intervention promote lifelong wellness.



Week 5: May 25-31

The Power of Community and Connection in Mental Health. This week focuses on the role of community, support networks, and recovery in promoting well-being.

Key messages:

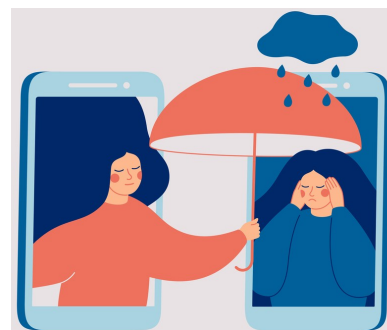
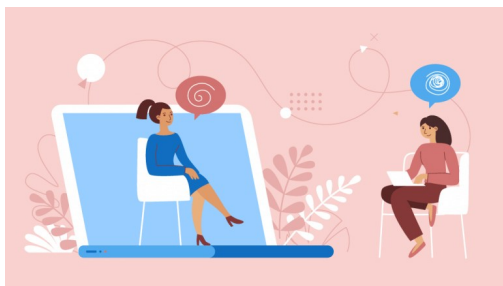
- ◆ Supportive relationships and connected communities foster a sense of belonging and promote mental well-being for all.
- ◆ Strong mental health is for everyone—and support should be available to all.
- ◆ Each person's mental health journey is unique—a strong support system makes a difference.
- ◆ Prioritizing self-care and seeking support strengthen resilience and well-being.
- ◆ Social connection and community support play a vital role in mental health and recovery.
- ◆ Open conversations about mental health help break stigma and encourage people to seek support.

Info from: <https://www.samhsa.gov/about/digital-toolkits/mental-health-awareness-month/toolkit>



Tips For How to Help a Person with Mental Illness

Because millions of people in the U.S. live with a mental health condition, you likely encounter people with a mental illness in your family or in your daily life. However, if you are unsure of how best to approach someone who may be struggling, these tips may help.

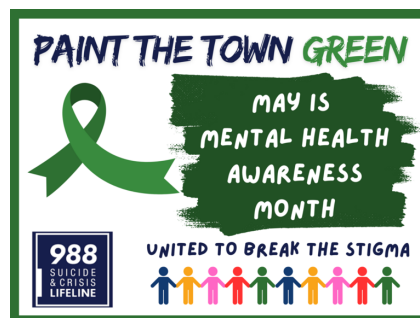


Suggestions on how you may approach someone living with a mental health condition:

- ◆ Talk to them in a space that is comfortable, where you won't likely be interrupted and where there are likely minimal distractions.
- ◆ Ease into the conversation, gradually. It may be that the person is not in a place to talk, and that is OK. Greeting them and extending a gentle kindness can go a long way. Sometimes less is more.
- ◆ Be sure to speak in a relaxed and calm manner.
- ◆ Communicate in a straightforward manner and stick to one topic at a time.
- ◆ Be respectful, compassionate and empathetic to their feelings by engaging in reflective listening, such as "I hear that you are having a bad day today. Yes, some days are certainly more challenging than others. I understand."
- ◆ Instead of directing the conversation at them with 'you' statements, use 'I' statements instead.
- ◆ Be a good listener, be responsive and make eye contact with a caring approach.
- ◆ Ask them appropriate questions and avoid prying.
- ◆ Give them the opportunity to talk and open up but don't press.
- ◆ Share some easy insights as a way of encouraging easy conversation, such as comments about the weather, the community or other.
- ◆ Reduce any defensiveness by sharing your feelings and looking for common ground.
- ◆ Speak at a level appropriate to their age and development level. Keep in mind that mental illness has nothing to do with a person's intelligence.



Awareness Month Information



- ◆ Be aware of a person becoming upset or confused by your conversation with them.
- ◆ Show respect and understanding for how they describe and interpret their symptoms.
- ◆ Genuinely express your concern.
- ◆ Offer your support and connect them to help if you feel that they need it. Ask, “How can I help?” if appropriate, or even, “Can I pray with you now?” if appropriate.
- ◆ Give the person hope for recovery, offer encouragement and prayers.

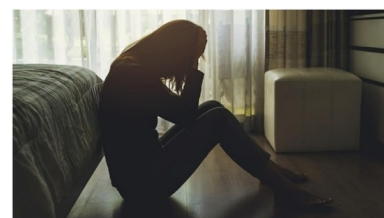
Things to Avoid Saying:

- ◆ “Just pray about it.”
- ◆ “You just need to change your attitude.”
- ◆ “Stop harping on the negative, you should just start living.”
- ◆ “Everyone feels that way sometimes.”
- ◆ “You have the same illness as my (whoever).”
- ◆ “Yes, we all feel a little crazy now and then.”



Things to Avoid Doing:

- ◆ Criticizing blaming or raising your voice at them.
- ◆ Talking too much, too rapidly, too loudly. Silence and pauses are ok.
- ◆ Showing any form of hostility towards them.
- ◆ Assuming things about them or their situation.
- ◆ Being sarcastic or making jokes about their condition.
- ◆ Patronizing them or saying anything condescending.



Info from: <https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/NAMI-FaithNet/Tips-For-How-to-Help-a-Person-with-Mental-Illness/>



See the Unseen: Five Reason for Absenteeism and the Transformative Impact of Home Visits

By: Ivory A. Toldson and Michael Gary, Jr., of [Concentric Educational Solutions](#)



In our roles at Concentric Educational Solutions (CES), we have witnessed the profound impact of home visits on improving student attendance and engagement. During the 2023-2024 school year, CES conducted 24,000 home visits across our engagements, reaching 14,000+ students and their families. These visits have not only strengthened the bond between schools and families but also provided crucial insights into the complex reasons behind chronic absenteeism.

Our extensive research and on-the-ground experience have revealed five primary factors contributing to student absenteeism:

1. **Student Health Challenges** - Chronic illnesses such as asthma and diabetes, as well as acute conditions like influenza, often lead to extended absences. These health issues can significantly disrupt a student's academic progress, especially when access to healthcare is limited or recovery time at home is inadequate. Additionally, families believe that absences are excusable for sickness, which is not the case.
2. **Lack of Student Engagement** - Many students feel disconnected from their schoolwork, leading to decreased motivation to attend classes. As one Professional Student Advocate (PSA) noted, "You're competing with the whole Internet for students' attention." This disconnect often stems from a lack of culturally relevant curriculum, unengaging teaching methods, or content that seems irrelevant to students' lives.
3. **Family Challenges** - Socioeconomic factors such as housing instability, food insecurity, lack of childcare, parental health concerns, and unemployment can create significant barriers to regular attendance. One PSA shared a poignant example: "He lives with his great aunt, who was very old. He's like, 'This is how I have money to make it through the week.' So it's like real-life issues."
4. **Mental Health Concerns** - Students grappling with anxiety, depression, or other mental health issues may find the school environment overwhelming, leading to avoidance and absenteeism. Limited access to mental health services or stigma surrounding seeking help can exacerbate these challenges.



Truancy Information



5. **Lack of Awareness** - Some parents or guardians may not fully grasp the extent of their child's attendance issues or the potential consequences. As one PSA observed, some parents with irregular work schedules rely on their children to "be responsible" for their own attendance.

Addressing these barriers through home visits has proven highly effective. Our approach includes:

- ♦ Connecting families with essential resources for healthcare, housing, and food assistance.
- ♦ Collaborating with schools to create more engaging and culturally relevant learning experiences.
- ♦ Providing training and support to parents and guardians to emphasize the importance of attendance and strategies for supporting their child's academic success.

Pennsylvania School Attendance Toolkit: A toolkit of information to support professionals working with students and families to increase



student attendance

November 2021

Click HERE



Home visits serve as a critical extension of existing school and district efforts to combat chronic absenteeism. By addressing out-of-school factors that significantly impact attendance, we can build trust, establish open communication, and develop tailored solutions for each student and family.

The success of our home visit program is evident in improved attendance rates and reduced chronic absenteeism among participating students. Moreover, we've observed a positive shift in how families perceive their schools and their role in their child's education. By bridging the gap between schools and communities, we're not only improving attendance but also fostering a more supportive and collaborative educational environment where all students can thrive.

The power of home visits lies in their ability to break down barriers and build trust between schools and families. By addressing the root causes of chronic absenteeism, we can create a more equitable and inclusive educational system. Home visits are not just a solution; they are a necessity – an investment in our children's future and a testament to our unwavering belief that every student deserves the opportunity to reach their full potential.

As we move forward, it is crucial that schools, districts, and policymakers recognize the value of home visits and invest in programs that support this vital outreach. By doing so, we can ensure that every student has the support and resources they need to succeed, both in and out of the classroom.

Info from: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/see-unseen-five-reason-absenteeism-transformative-impact-toldson-qo2oe/>



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



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

724-834-0420

Hours: Monday-Thursday 8:30am-9:00pm

<http://www.sphs.org>

Friday 8:30am-5:00pm

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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Intervention & SAP Manager

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Donna Cartia

Assistant SAP Coordinator

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



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



Help Children Reduce Screen Time

Here are a few simple tips to help your children reduce their screen time and increase physical activity in order to maintain a healthy weight.

- **Know how much screen media and physical activity your family is getting.** By knowing how much screen time and how much physical activity they get, you will be more aware of how much ENERGY OUT they are burning. Screen time includes TV, DVD, video games, and computer use (not related to school or work). The goal is for them to have no more than 2 hours of screen time a day and get 60 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity each day.
- **Talk to your family.** Explain to your children that it's important to sit less and move more so they will stay at a healthy weight, be more energized, have a chance to practice certain skill sets (such as riding a bike or shooting hoops), and socialize with friends and peers. Tell them that you also are going to limit your screen time and increase your physical activity, so you will all be working toward this goal together.
- **Set limits on screen time.** Set a house rule that your children may have no more than 2 hours a day of screen time. More importantly, enforce the rule once it's made. You may want to check into devices or Internet programs that set limits on the TV or on the computer.
- **Minimize the influence of TV in the home.** Do not put a TV or computer in your child's bedroom. This tends to physically isolate family members and decrease interaction. Also, children who have TVs in their room tend to spend almost 1½ hours more in a typical day watching TV than do their peers without a set in their room.
- **Make meal time, family time.** Turn off the TV during family meal time. Better yet, remove the TV from the eating area if you have one there. Family meals are a good time to talk to each other. Research has shown that families who eat together tend to eat more nutritious meals than families who eat separately. Make eating together a priority and schedule in family meals at least two to three times a week.
- **Provide other options and alternatives.** Watching TV can become a habit for your child. Provide other alternatives for them to spend their time, such as playing outside, learning a hobby or sport, or spending time with family and friends.
- **Set a good example.** You need to be a good role model and also limit your screen time to no more than 2 hours per day. If your kids see you following your own rules, then they will be more likely to follow. Instead of watching TV or surfing the Internet, spend time with your family doing something fun and active.
- **Don't use TV to reward or punish a child.** Practices like this make TV seem even more important to children.
- **Be a savvy media consumer.** Advertising of snack foods can influence your children's food preferences. Help your child develop healthy eating habits and become media savvy by teaching them to recognize a sales pitch be it on television, websites, or on the product itself. Ask your child why their favorite cartoon character is trying to get them to eat a certain brand of cereal. Explain to them that this is a way for advertisers to make the cereal more appealing to young people so that they ask their parents to buy the product. Companies advertise to children to make money. **We Can!** offers communities a youth program called Media-Smart Youth: Eat, Think, and Be Active!® Sign up your child for this program so they can learn more about becoming media smart.

We Can! is designed to help families achieve a healthy weight by focusing on improving food choices, increasing physical activity, and reducing screen time. For more information, visit <http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov> or call 1-866-35-WE CAN. **We Can! Ways to Enhance Children's Activity & Nutrition, We Can!**, and the **We Can!** logos are trademarks of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS).



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



Mental Health and Social Media

1 Set Limits:

Social media can be addictive and overwhelming, so it's important to set limits on how much time you spend on it.

2 Follow Positive Accounts:

Follow accounts that promote positivity, inspiration, and mental health.

3 Be Selective with Your Connections:

Follow people and pages that are aligned with your values, interests, and goals.

4 Don't Compare Yourself to Others:

Remember that people only post the highlights of their lives, and it may not be an accurate representation of their reality.

5 Take Breaks:

Disconnecting from social media can help you focus on yourself and improve your mental health.

6 Practice Self-Care:

Make time for self-care activities such as exercise, meditation, reading, or spending time with loved ones.

Ideas for Summer: Click on each pic for more info!





SUMMER FLOATIN'





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



Road Trip BINGO

