

DESTIGMATIZING MENTAL HEALTH

By Belinda Ballah, Director, Hood River County Prevention Department
541-387-6890 / Belinda.ballah@co.hood-river.or.us

Addressing mental health issues can be hard. It is hard for the person who is experiencing them, it is hard for the ones who care about them and sometimes it difficult for the community to understand what a person is displaying.

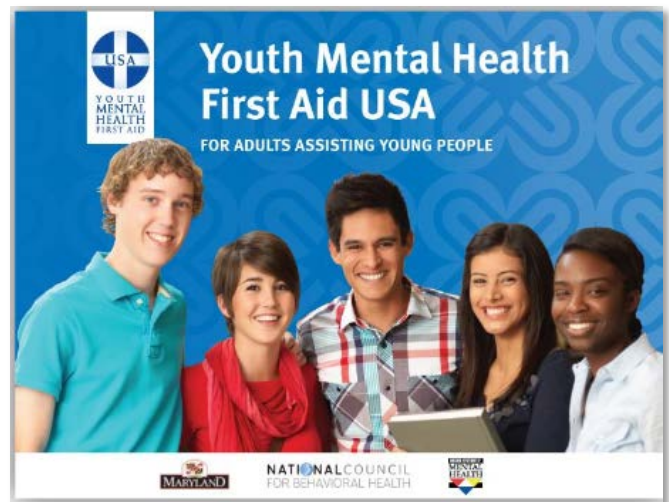
In October, we brought together a group of community members who are survivors of suicide loss. These brave people came to share their stories and gain courage and strength from the others in the room. Not only did they find that they are not alone in this grief, but they found strength and a desire to do more. The group is looking at organizing a Survivors Support group. More details to come.

Also in October, the film "*Cultivate Compassion*" was launched at the Columbia Center for the Arts. The film tells the story of 6 community members who have struggled with mental health. Their stories help to understand what it means to live with mental health issues. You can view this film in English or Spanish at <http://www.gorgewellnessalliance.org/expl ore>.

On January 28, 2020 will be another opportunity to learn more about mental health. The Prevention Department will be offering a Youth Mental Health First Aid

training. This training will prepare participants to interact with a person experiencing a mental health crisis. The cost is \$20 for the manual. Space is limited so please reserve your spot by going to Hood River Prevents Facebook page or contact the Prevention Department.

There are many ways to destigmatize mental health. Join a support group, watch the film of real people sharing their journeys and come to a training to learn how to recognize and assist someone who needs assistance.



MOCK TEEN ROOM

By Kathy Smith, HRCPD Office Manager

541-386-2500 option 3 / kathy.smith@co.hood-river.or.us

When you go into your teens room do you suddenly feel sensory overload? Is there so much going on, posters on the walls, laundry scattered across the floor and overflowing the laundry basket, books, laptop, pencils, pens, highlighters, soda cans and water bottles, and open and unopen snack bags and Pringles, you just shake your head and walk out?

What looks like a normal messy teenagers room may be hiding drug use right in plain sight. A water bottle for example could hide a 'stash' of drugs or drug-related paraphernalia as a 'diversion safe'. What looks like a flash drive could be a vaping device. The stuffed lion on the bed has a zippered pouch which can hold pills or pot.

Hood River County Prevention Department has a 'mock teen room' interactive learning

experience for parents and other caring adults. The mock teen room is not just about spotting cleverly hidden stashes, but also about educating parents to be pro-active in determining if their child might be experimenting with drugs or alcohol by identifying indicators of substance misuse.

The Prevention Department will be giving Teen Mock Room presentations February 25th, March 18th, and April 22nd.



STOP WORKS

By Kathy Smith, HRCPD Office Manager

541-386-2500 option 3 / kathy.smith@co.hood-river.or.us

In October we started the fourth and final year of a federal Sober Truth On Preventing (STOP) Underage Drinking Act Grant. The goal of the STOP grant is to prevent and reduce alcohol use among youth and young adults ages 12-20. This is the second STOP grant we have received. One thing we have noticed is that STOP grant funded activities, enhanced education and messaging really does work.

We track many different types of data to see if what we are doing is having the effect we hope to achieve. We look at student surveys conducted by the State at 6th, 8th and 11th grade levels. We can see that from 2016 8th grade 30-day alcohol use has significantly dropped from 19.5% to 7.9% in 2019. At the 11th grade level we can see a slight drop in 2016, from 31.3% to 29.6% in 2019.

We accomplished this by working with Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC), the City of Hood River Police and Hood River County Sheriff to conduct youth compliance checks, also known as decoy missions. Our youth Health Media Clubs made PSAs on preventing underage drinking during peak events such as Christmas, Super Bowl, Prom, and 4th of July, designed theater ads, posters, and conducted Sticker Shock Campaigns.

HEALTH MEDIA CLUBS STAY BUSY

By Nubia Contreras, Prevention Specialist, Health Media Club Coordinator
541-387-7031 / nubia.contreras@co.hood-river.or.us

As we finish 2019, we want to highlight some of our Health Media Clubs accomplishments and some of our future plans for the school year.

For the Wy'East Middle School Health Media Club (HMC), going to Radio Tierra to share the dangers about smoking cigarettes and electric cigarettes/vape pens was one of their favorite activities so far. We had another trip planned to downtown Hood River but, due to weather conditions, that wasn't possible; we are hoping to reschedule that trip in the early spring.

Hood River Middle School HMC wrote Letters to the Editor regarding safe holiday drinking. At both middle schools planning for CARES week, a week-long event that will take place in March, is happening.

At Hood River Valley High School HMC, one of their accomplishments has been the planning of the first ever Youth Prevention Summit, which will be April 28, 2020. Along with other youth groups in the Gorge, they are coming up with workshop ideas to present at the Summit. We are also getting ready for our Super Bowl Sticker Shock campaign that will take place before the Superbowl as a reminder to not drink and drive or give alcohol to minors. The HMC members are also getting ready for their school dance fundraiser that will take place in February.

All three clubs have finished their wearable media designs; all three designs are unique and show the different dynamics of the clubs. There are plenty of activities left to do this year and we couldn't be happier to work with such caring and talented students.

CDC VAPING RESPONSE HAS A CONFIRMED CAUSE

By Ross McLeod, Prevention & Education Specialist
541-387-7030 / ross.mcleod@co.hood-river.or.us

Research by the Center for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) has confirmed the main culprit of the vaping epidemic is from Vitamin E acetate. 51 samples were analyzed in a lab and 48 of them have contained Vitamin E Acetate. Vitamin E Acetate is most common in THC liquids (Tetrahydrocannabinol, a crystalline compound that is the main active ingredient of cannabis). The chemical is used to provide a desirable taste or aroma. It also lowers the cost of production and thickens the solution. Vitamin E Acetate is not intended for consumption by smoking. This can increase fluid retention within the lungs. The new cases

have been gradually decreasing. The CDC recommends no vaping until all products have been investigated. For information on the use of e-cigarettes and / or vaping products:

https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/severe-lung-disease.html

<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa1916433>

UPCOMING EVENTS

JANUARY:

- 8 - Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Drug Coalition Meeting (China Gorge @3:30pm)
- 8 - Toddler 2 Tween (T2T) Boost Camp - Spanish (FISH Food Bank @ 6pm)
- 22 - Toddler 2 Tween (T2T) Boost Camp - English (FISH Food Bank @ 6pm)
- 28 - Youth Mental Health First Aid Training (FISH Food Bank - all day)

FEBRUARY:

- 5 - Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Drug Coalition Meeting (China Gorge @3:30pm)
- 12 - Toddler 2 Tween (T2T) Boost Camp - Spanish (FISH Food Bank @ 6pm)
- 25 - Mock Teen Room “Hidden in Plain Sight” Presentation (Wy’east Middle School Room 57 @ 6:45pm)
- 26 - Toddler 2 Tween (T2T) Boost Camp - English (FISH Food Bank @ 6pm)

MARCH:

- 4 - Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Drug Coalition Meeting (China Gorge @3:30pm)
- 11 - Toddler 2 Tween (T2T) Boost Camp - Spanish (FISH Food Bank @ 6pm)
- 18 - Mock Teen Room “Hidden in Plain Sight” Presentation (Wy’east Middle School, Room 57 @ 6pm)
- 25 - Toddler 2 Tween (T2T) Boost Camp - English (FISH Food Bank @ 6pm)



Please reach out to our office with any questions, comments, suggestions, or concerns. You can reach our main office line at 541-386-2500.

We look forward to connecting with you!