

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

More Than 50 Students Registered: Registration Is CLOSED!

More than 50 Howard County students registered for our next series of Life Skills classes. The 15 FREE weekly classes are scheduled to run from this Wednesday, January 27 thru early May.

The evidence-based curriculum is designed for students in grades 6-9. The integrated approach helps youth learn to avoid risky behaviors and develop personal, interpersonal, and drug resistance skills.



If you missed out on this series of Life Skills classes, HC DrugFree plans to offer another free series this coming summer. Registration updates will be shared in future newsletters.

Funding provided by the Howard County Health Department, the Maryland Department of Health and SAMHSA.

Elton John: Zoom AA Meetings Have 'Been A Lifesaver'

"Elton John is 'Still Standing' thanks, in part, to Zoom. 'I'm a recovering alcoholic so I have an AA meeting from this house every Sunday,' John said from his home in England. 'I connect with my friends who I've known for over 30 years in the program, and that's great. If it hadn't have been for Zoom, I don't know what we would've done, I really don't, without Zoom,' he continued. 'It's been a lifesaver.'" [Read more.](#)

6 Tasks To Help You Bounce Back From Pandemic Living

There's no doubt that 2020 was difficult for everyone and tragic for many...months of anxiety, grief, and loneliness can easily create a spiral of negativity that is hard to break out of. That's because chronic stress changes the brain. And sometimes when we're low, we have no interest in doing the things that could actually make us feel better.

To enjoy our lives in 2021, we need to snap out of destructive habits and get our energy levels back. In some cases, that may initially mean forcing yourself to do the things that will gradually make you feel better. [Learn how here.](#)

Maryland Mental Health Update

In a Mental Health Association of Maryland update released on January 25, the public health threat from drug- and alcohol-related intoxication continues to grow. **Americans are now more likely to die from opioid overdoses than car crashes.** Maryland has made progress in recent years to address this epidemic, but we are still in the midst of a crisis that is devastating families across the state. **Maryland overdose deaths jumped by more than 18% in the second quarter of 2020 as compared to the same period a year earlier, including a 30% increase in opioid-related deaths.**

Better Care For Adults With Comorbid Chronic Conditions

Early intervention is critical in both physical and mental health care, to reduce costs, improve quality of life for those in care, and achieve better clinical outcomes. As adults age, they are more likely to develop multiple chronic conditions, and early intervention and effective care management become even more important.

Mental Health America (MHA) released a new report today, “Creating Better Care for Adults with Comorbid Chronic Conditions,” which explores the experiences of adults with co-occurring physical and mental health conditions and provides recommendations for providers to address barriers to initiating treatment, improve patient engagement, and create better care. [Download the Report. Learn more here.](#)

Alcohol Plays Role In U.S. Cancer Cases, Deaths: Report

Alcohol plays a significant role in cancer cases and deaths in the United States, researchers say. [Read more.](#)

Pharmacists Say Walmart Ignored Red Flags As Opioid Sales Boomed

Walmart is facing a public reckoning over its role in the nation's deadly opioid epidemic, which killed about 450,000 Americans from 1999 to 2018, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [Read more.](#)

CDC: Adverse Childhood Experiences, Overdose, and Suicide

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), overdose, and suicide are urgent and

related public health challenges that have consequences for all of us. These challenges are preventable if we adopt a coordinated approach that focuses on addressing today's crises while preventing tomorrow's. [Learn more here.](#)

Are You A Friend Of HC DrugFree?

As a nonprofit organization, HC DrugFree depends upon the generosity of individuals, organizations and businesses in the community to support the free education and prevention services that help keep our great community safe.

Please consider becoming a Friend of HC DrugFree by making a donation in any of the following amounts:

- \$10 student
- \$25 individual
- \$50 family
- \$50 nonprofit organizations
- \$100 business
- Sponsors starting as low as \$500.

[Please make your tax deductible gift to HC DrugFree today!](#)



Events

Teen Advisory Council Meeting - Open to High School Students

HC DrugFree's next TAC Meeting will be held on **Monday, February 8** from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. [Click here to register for Zoom meeting](#)

Save the date for the March 1 meeting too. TAC is open to all Howard County High School Students. Public School, Private School, and Homeschool students are encouraged to join! To access the 2020-21 school year registration form please [click here](#). Email your registration as well as a photo to admin@hcdrugfree.org or mail a hard copy to: **HC DrugFree**, 5305 Village Center Drive, Suite 206, Columbia, MD 21044

Howard County Drug & Alcohol Family Forum

Please join HC DrugFree and our partners for this virtual family forum on Thursday, **February 18** at 7:00 PM and hear from local organizations about available treatment options, prevention, and how to get support for your loved one and yourself. [Learn more & register here.](#)

Parenting Corner

Signs Of Teen Drug Use

How can you tell if your child is using drugs or alcohol?

Teens are known to have mood swings. However, some behavior may indicate more serious issues, such as abuse of drugs and alcohol. Here are some of the warning signs of drug use. [Read more.](#)

Additional Resources

Help for Depression, Suicidal Thoughts or Other Mental Health Issues

If you need help, please contact:

Grassroots Crisis Intervention: 410-531-6677

The Maryland Crisis Hotline: Dial 211 and then choose option 1

The Crisis Text Line: Text 741741 and a trained counselor will respond

The National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-8255

The Howard County Health Department: 410-313-6202

Emotional Support Human presented by [The Horizon Foundation](#)

When someone you care about is hurting, it's natural to want to help them. But, that person might not always tell you something is wrong—and you might be unsure about how to reach out. Sponsored by the Horizon Foundation. [Learn how to be an Emotional Support Human here.](#)

Gambling with Your Future

Call, text or chat 1-800-GAMBLER for free confidential, compassionate help with gambling problems.

Medication Disposal

To safely store and dispose of prescription and over-the-counter medication and sharps (needles, syringes and EpiPens), [please visit our website](#) for more information.

For more information, contact

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