

#weekly WISDOM

April is Alcohol Awareness Month & National Child Abuse Prevention Month

This week's message of #WeeklyWisdom is brought to you through a partnership between Alcohol & Drug Council of Tompkins County and the Advocacy Center, proud partners of the Community Coalition for Healthy Youth. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact us via the information provided. Thank you in advance for sharing this information!

April is both Alcohol Awareness Month and National Child Abuse Prevention Month. During the #COVID19 pandemic, many people have found themselves at home with their families for more time than they are used to. Some are consuming more alcohol than they would during "normal" life. This is, in part, a response to many stressors that have arisen as a result of the pandemic, including financial concerns, boredom, difficulty balancing work, homeschooling, parenting, and other responsibilities. While we understand that the desire to use alcohol as a coping mechanism in the short run might make sense, it is important to understand what effect this may have on our children who may be more attuned to our behaviors in this stressful time. In addition, we know that some people are able to use alcohol in a low risk way, but others may be exhibiting behaviors that fall into a high-risk category and the consequences of that may extend beyond this pandemic. It is important to teach children healthy coping mechanisms for times of stress, rather than turning to substance use. We encourage folks to seek out ways of managing stress that do not involve substance use. There are many healthy, alternative options, like exercise, meditation, yoga, or calling a loved one.

Alcoholism has long been viewed as a risk factor for child abuse because of the way the substance interacts with the brain. Alcohol can cause violent/aggressive behaviors in some people, and can inhibit effective parenting or interactions with partners. According to the American Addiction Centers, parents who struggle with substance abuse are less likely to parent as effectively for a number of reasons including: physical/mental impairment; difficulties with regulating emotions; trouble controlling anger and impulsivity; and a shift in attention and priorities from the children's needs to the parent's need for alcohol and/or other drugs. (<https://americanaddictioncenters.org/blog/the-link-between-child-abuse-and-substance-abuse>) Consequently, children and partners of domestic abusers may be at an increased risk of abuse. There are several local resources available in Tompkins County to support anyone in need, including people suffering from alcoholism, abuse, or childhood trauma.

www.alcoholdrugcouncil.org/

If you're struggling with alcohol or drug addiction, Alcohol & Drug Council is still here to help 7 days a week, with clinical and Open Access services. If you're worried about relapse, withdrawal, or just need someone to talk to, the compassionate team of counselors is available by phone or video chat. ADC's medical team is here for you and can prescribe medication for addiction. The Council is also offering free phone or video Narcan trainings and Narcan kits. Call 607-274-6288 for more information or to schedule an appointment.

www.actompkins.org/get-help/covid-19-agency-updates/#

During this stay at home/stay in place time some children, teens and adults are in situations which have increased their risk of abuse. The Advocacy Center is here to help, by offering crisis, advocacy, support, and shelter services to victims and survivors of domestic violence, dating abuse, sexual assault, and child sexual abuse in Tompkins County. Anyone who has concerns about the safety or well-being of a child can call the Advocacy Center 24-Hour Hotline (607-277-5000) to discuss ways to protect children while physical distancing guidelines are in place.

We are all in this together. Take care and be well.

#PCATompkins #AlcoholAwarenessMonth #ChildAbusePreventionMonth #StaySafeTompkins



Our Community Partners: Alcohol & Drug Council of Tompkins County, Tompkins County Youth Services, TST BOCES Youth Development Program, Tompkins County Health Department, The Advocacy Center, Cooperative Extension– Tompkins County, Catholic Charities– Tompkins/Tioga