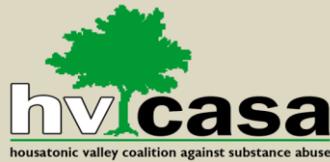


access



Quarterly Newsletter

November 2018 Edition

HVCASA is a coalition of volunteers, citizens, and prevention professionals dedicated to developing and coordinating services that reduce the harmful effects of substance abuse and addiction on individuals, families, and children. We are the Regional Behavioral Health Action Organization servicing the 43 towns that comprise northwestern Connecticut

Healthy use of screens

The use of technology and social media in our culture can be a blessing. It helps us stay connected with family and friends. Sharing photos on Facebook or Snapchat, and texting with our friends is a fast, convenient way to communicate and share what is going on in our lives with those we love. But with these conveniences and luxuries comes some caution. Data is surfacing that is shedding light on the consequences of excessive use of screens- smart phones, tablets, computers and TV. The group hit hardest by the negative consequences are children and teens.

In a 2016 Common Sense Media study, teens reported feeling addicted to their devices, felt the need to immediately respond to texts and social media messages, were distracted, experienced conflict and engaged in risky behavior. Studies have shown that the mere presence of a cellphone, even if it is off or on do not disturb, can be distracting. Overuse can prevent children from developing critical social and emotional skills because of too much communication through a screen.

We can protect our young people from the addiction of screens and social media use by doing the following:

- ❖ Setting limits- rethink the unlimited data and cell minute plans
- ❖ Encouraging activities with opportunities for engagement- sports, art, music, outdoor fun
- ❖ Removing all screens from the bedroom and/or eating areas of the home
- ❖ Modeling appropriate use- don't text your kids when they are at school, don't use your cell phone while driving
- ❖ Planning family outings and leaving devices behind- go to the beach, go hiking, volunteer with a local church or civic group

High-tech business leaders are taking the lead by limiting use with their own kids. In a recent article in the Washington Post, Apple Chief Executive Tim Cook said he would keep children in his life away from social networks. Business Insider reported that in 2007 Bill Gates, the former CEO of Microsoft, capped his daughter's screen time when she started to develop an attachment to a video game. He also didn't allow his kids to have a cell phone until age 14.



The American Academy of Pediatrics Recommendations for Children's Media Use (digital media for entertainment purposes only)

- Birth to age 2- none
- Children age 2-5 years- 1 hour per day
- Children age 6 and up- parents should determine what is acceptable and monitor use.

Up to 2 hours per day is a good guideline and should be permitted after time spent on homework, physical activity, social contact, and sleep.

This goes for adults and children!

Sources: Common Sense Media, American Academy of Pediatrics, NPR, The Washington Post, Business Insider

This edition of access  focuses on the Category of Constructive Use of Time

HVCASA knows that a highly effective approach to prevention focuses on identifying, enhancing, and capitalizing on the strengths/assets of individual young people and the communities within which they live. Research from Search Institute identifies **40 Developmental Assets** that have a powerful, positive impact on young people. These concrete, common sense assets positively influence the choices young people make and thus reduce risky behaviors.

8 Asset Categories :



Support: Young people need to be surrounded by people who love, care for, appreciate, and accept them.



Empowerment: Young people need to feel valued and valuable. This happens when youth feel safe and respected.



Boundaries and Expectations: Young people need clear rules, consistent consequences for breaking rules, and encouragement to do their best.



Constructive Use of Time: Young people need opportunities—outside of school—to learn and develop new skills and interests with other youth and adults.



Commitment to Learning: Young people need a sense of the lasting importance of learning and a belief in their own abilities.



Positive Values: Young people need to develop strong guiding values to help them make healthy life choices.



Social Competencies: Young people need the skills to interact effectively with others, to make difficult decisions, and to cope with new situations.



Positive Identity: Young people need to believe in their own self-worth and to feel they have control over the things that happen to them.

Asset #20 Time at Home

Protecting young people from risky behaviors and helping them develop positive behavior is easier when you spend time together as a family.

Asset # 17 Creative Activities

Being creative—singing, playing the piano, drawing, or acting—can be fun, and helps young people improve basic and advanced thinking skills. Performing and creating works of art helps young people develop cognition (intellectual comprehension), cultural understanding, communication, and creativity.

Research shows that young people who spend three hours or more a week in music, theater, or other arts are more likely to grow up healthy. Only 21 percent of young people, ages 11–18, do so, according to Search Institute surveys. It's important to help young people find creative outlets that are fun, teach them about themselves, and provide a way to relieve the stresses of everyday life.

How do we build these assets?

Make time for family meals- Prepare and eat dinner together. Talk about your day and make plans for fun outings and vacation. Encourage the kids to invite their friends to dinner. **Coaches and youth program directors-** avoid scheduling practices or meetings during dinner hour.

Do art projects at home- have supplies readily on hand for creative fun. Visit art museums and attend music and theater events in your local community or city. **In schools or youth programs-** integrate music into the school day or at meetings. Let students pick the genre!



In this segment, HVCASA shines the spotlight on individuals who are doing good work in their community.

On September 13 2018, HVCASA held its Annual Meeting at The Leir Retreat Center. The following individuals and organizations were recognized at this event for their partnership with HVCASA and exemplary service to their communities:

Jen Sperazza- Award of Recognition for her years of service to the New Fairfield Prevention Council, most recently as President. NFPC was a recent grantee of the State Targeted Response Opioid Prevention grant, they have put together great prom messaging for students and parents about underage drinking and consent, and they have been our ambassadors of Project Purple.

Tizzie Mantione- Award of Recognition for her contribution to Ridgefield Prevention Council as the author of their bi-monthly Prevention Plus articles in the Ridgefield Press. She has been writing these for over a year now with a focus on prevention, the 40 Developmental Assets, and promoting RPC efforts.

Bill Gillotti- Distinguished Service Award for his contributions to our opioid workgroup, his efforts on the HVCASA Board of Directors Development Committee, and his support of HVCASA Teen Advisory Board

ANNUAL CARL BAILEY COMMUNITY ASSET BUILDER AWARD

Lauren Dalton

Executive Director of Danbury Grassroots Academy

At the Danbury Grassroots Academy, an after-school program, they are building assets every day- creating a supportive environment with adult role models, empowering youth, building a commitment to learning, motivating kids to achieve, and building self-esteem and a sense of purpose.



Bill Gillotti, Kathy Hanley, Allison Fulton



Allison Fulton, Kathy Hanley, Carl Bailey, Lauren Dalton

From the desk of Allison Fulton, CPS, Executive Director....

Over the past few months there have been many articles about the effect of “screen time” on brain development, teen ADHD, and relationship skills in children. Interestingly, there are almost as many tips for what adults should be doing, as there are strategies for managing the behaviors of youth. I really like the information at the website below which is sponsored by the American Academy of Pediatrics. It includes a template for creating an individual “media plan” for each child.

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/media/Pages/default.aspx>

You can also try these **Positive Discipline** tools to help manage your family’s screen time, so it doesn’t manage you!

1. **Have a Family Meeting.** Get the whole family involved in a plan for reducing screen time. Part of the solutions should include things to do in place of screen time. It is more difficult to give something up when you don’t have plans for what else to do.
2. **Create a “parking lot”** for electronics—have a basket or charging station in a central location in the house at which family members “park” their electronics during certain times of day.
3. **Establish new routines.** Start with one time of day to be screen free (such as dinner) and periodically add on other times of day.
4. **Stay close with your child with Special Time.** Children will listen to your limits about screen time when they feel understood and that you “get” them. Spend regular one-on-one time together to keep your relationship strong.
5. **Hold limits with Kindness and Firmness.** Changing a screen time habit is hard; be ready for disappointment, anger, and sad feelings. Hold your limits by empathizing with a child’s feelings and sticking with the limit you’ve set.