



# The Indian Valley Character Counts! Coalition Newsletter



March, 2020

Helping to keep the youth in our community "Healthy, Safe and Drug-Free"

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

"Welcome to the Indian Valley, a Community where Character Counts." This simple message has greeted our residents and guests for many years as they drive the roads in our community. It has also been the tagline for the Souderton Area School District since 2004. It is one small way we reinforce the importance of character-building for our youth, yet it speaks volumes about who we are as a community.

Our Coalition's mission statement is "To promote positive youth development by providing information, supporting programs and strengthening community relationships that promote the principle of Character Counts! and that build assets to help youth stay healthy, safe and drug-free."

The Coalition's work is primarily focused on prevention, and its members are working hard to delay the onset of the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs among area youth. We aim to achieve this goal through character and asset building activities and, more importantly, by sponsoring evidence-based programs which are proven prevention measures in the fight against substance abuse.

We need your help! Please consider attending one of our monthly general membership meetings to learn more about the Coalition and how you can take part. Please contact our Community Mobilizer, DonnaLea Pyrz, for more information.

## GENERAL MEETINGS

Please join us on the second Thursday of each month at 12:00pm for our general membership meetings held at Souderton Area School District Office at 760 Lower Rd, Souderton.

Visit our website: [www.ivccc.org](http://www.ivccc.org)  
Find us on Facebook: Indian Valley Character Counts! Coalition

## ABOUT US

As an initiative of the North Penn YMCA, the mission of the Indian Valley Character Coalition is to promote positive youth development by providing information, supporting programs and strengthening community relationships that promote the principles of Character Counts! and that build assets to help youth stay healthy, safe and drug-free.

## What's in a vape pen?



- \*Volatile Chemicals
- \*Cancer Causing Chemicals
- \*Nicotine
- \*Ultrafine Particles



- \*Heavy Metals
- \*Nickel
- \*Tin
- \*Lead



- \*Flavoring such Diacetyl, a Chemical linked to a serious Lung disease

## Highlights From the Monitoring the Future (MTF) Survey

- One in four 12th graders say they vaped nicotine in the past month, along with one in five 10th graders, and nearly one in ten 8th graders.
- One in five 12th graders reported that they vaped marijuana sometime in the past year, nearly double the year before.
- When asked why they vape, many teens said they like the flavor, to experiment, for social reasons, or to feel good. Notably, the number of high school seniors who say they vaped because they are "hooked" more than doubled in the last year.

Teens' use of many drugs continues to decline, including misuse of prescription opioids, cigarette smoking, and alcohol use.

Data Found on [www.nida.gov](http://www.nida.gov)

## What you need to know about E-Cigarettes

What's the Bottom Line on the Risks of E-cigarettes for Kids, Teens, and Young Adults?

- The use of e-cigarettes is unsafe for kids, teens, and young adults.
- Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine. Nicotine is highly addictive and can harm adolescent brain development, which continues into the early to mid-20s.
- E-cigarettes can contain other harmful substances/chemicals besides nicotine.
- Young people who use e-cigarettes may be more likely to smoke cigarettes in the future.

**\*\*Bottom Line, the use of e-cigarettes is unsafe for kids, teens and young adults. Talk to your child or teen about why e-cigarettes are harmful. It's never too late!\*\***

Data Found on [www.cdc.org](http://www.cdc.org)

# How Alcohol Affects the Teenage Brain

## Development

The human brain continues to develop until a person is around 25 years old. A huge burst of brain development occurs during adolescence and drinking alcohol during this crucial brain growth period can damage parts of the brain that control memory, judgment and decision making, impulse control and motor control.

## Academics

When a teen abuses drugs or alcohol, there is an increased risk of:

- lower grades
  - school absences
  - dropping out of school
- alcohol use in teens can also result in lower scores on

vocabulary and memory tests as well as visual spatial tests. Alcohol and other drug use disturbs sleep cycles, which again affects learning and memory.

## Violence

Annually, about 5,000 people under age 21 die from alcohol-related injuries involving underage drinking. approximately:

- 1,900 of the 5,000 deaths involve motor vehicle crashes,
  - 1,600 result from homicides
- Approximately 700,000 students are assaulted by other students who have been drinking and about 100,000 students are victims of alcohol-related sexual assault or date rape.

## Relationships

The use of alcohol may disrupt the development of the adolescent brain in unhealthy ways, making it harder for teens to cope with social situations and the normal pressures of life.

Youth under the influence of alcohol are more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviors. In fact, almost one-quarter of all high school students used alcohol or drugs prior to their last sexual experience.

## Mental Health

Heavy and frequent alcohol use may interfere with a young person's capacity to make prosocial choices. Frequent, heavy use of alcohol has been associated with low self-esteem, depression, conduct disorders, antisocial behavior, and anxiety in adolescents.

## Substance abuse

More than 67% of young people who start drinking before the age of 15 will try an illicit drug. Compared to children who never drink, children who drink are:

- 7.5 times more likely to use any illicit drug
- More than 22 times more likely to use marijuana
- 50 times more likely to use cocaine

## Facts You Should Know About Alcohol



\*\*Up to 30% of high schoolers use alcohol and binge drink

\*\*10% of 9 to 10 year olds have already tried alcohol



\*\*More than 20% of underage drinkers begin drinking before age 13 years old



\*\*Nearly 1/3 of all drunk driving deaths happen to people ages 16 to 20



### Data Found:

ojjdp.gov, drugfree.org, Substance Abuse Intervention and Treatment: A Guide for Schools. (2009). Springfield IL: Illinois Division of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse and Prevention First | drugfree.org, cdc.gov, Danice K. Eaton, PhD. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance - United States, 2005. Division of Adolescent and School Health, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion | ojjdp.gov | Brown, S.A., and Tapert, S.F. 2004. Health consequences of adolescent alcohol involvement. In Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility, edited by R.J. Bonnie and M.E. O'Connell. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, pp. 383-401 | the Surgeon general's Call to action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking, a 2007 report from the Office of the Surgeon General | Cigarettes, alcohol, Marijuana: gateways to illicit Drug Use, Center on addiction and Substance abuse, Columbia University, 1994.