

## Student Assistance Program Newsletter

# MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS



### TAKE A PEEK!

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## SELF CARE

### SELF CARE FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLERS

Families will benefit from carving out space for quiet time. Incorporating a "slow down" time in your routine can help a child make mindful choices. Spend some time reading a book together, listening to music, or doing a kid-friendly YouTube meditation.

Create a "cool-down box" that can include items such as stuffed animals, stress balls, bubble wrap, and fidget toys. Encourage children to utilize the items in the box to help with emotional regulation.

### SELF CARE FOR MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOLERS

'Leave it at the door' self-care exercise: Whenever you arrive home, remind yourself to leave the past behind and stay focused on the present.

During a stressful event, practice self-compassion by acknowledging the difficult moment, acknowledge that stress and suffering are a part of life, and ask yourself, "what can I do to be kind to myself?"



## HOW TO START A CONVERSATION ABOUT EMOTIONS

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Sharing your feelings, successes, failures, and challenges with your child in a way that is age-appropriate can demonstrate to them that it is safe to discuss feelings.

Talk with your elementary school-aged children about how there can be changes in their bodies that are connected to their thoughts and feelings. For example, our hearts can race when we are nervous. Helping children understand these concepts and getting them to think about how feelings and thoughts are connected to behavior, we can then start to discuss how a combination of things affect mental health.

School-age children may ask more questions about emotions and behaviors. To continue this conversation, answer questions directly and honestly, and give them reassurance that their concerns and feelings are heard.

High schoolers may talk more openly with friends and peers than with their parents. Teenagers respond more positively to an open dialogue which includes give and take. Having a discussion about mental illness can help decrease *Stigma and Lead* to improved recognition.

**"What mental health needs is more sunlight, more candor, more unashamed conversation."**

**Glenn Close**



## COVID-SAFE SUMMER ACTIVITIES

Get out in nature and visit local parks and nature trails. Fresh air, vitamin D, and physical activity can do wonders for our mental health.

Pack up some food and go to your backyard or local park for a picnic!

Check out a drive-in movie theater near you!

## JOIN THE MONTCO TRAIL CHALLENGE

MAY 1 - DECEMBER 5

REGISTER YOURSELF AND  
HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

PRINT THE MONTCO TRAIL CHALLENGE  
CARD AND VISIT ANY OF THE 15  
PARTICIPATING TRAILS.

TO LEARN MORE GO TO  
[WWW.MONTCOPA.ORG/TRAILCHALLENGE](http://WWW.MONTCOPA.ORG/TRAILCHALLENGE)

# COPING WITH TRANSITION



## TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- Encourage your child to discuss the future transition by asking questions such as "what have you been thinking about your new school?"
- Let your child know it's natural to feel apprehensive. Share your own childhood memories of times when you were worried.
- Empower your child by discussing what to do if a problem arises.
- Be available after school starts: your child may need extra time, attention, and support.
- Role-play a situation with your child that is causing anxiety and problem solve with him or her.

## TO MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Accompany your child on campus tours and orientations.
- Ease any loneliness in the early weeks of school by helping your child arrange weekend social activities.
- Talk about traits that make a good friend.
- Talk about social interactions. Discuss how words and actions can affect other people.
- Practice skills needed for difficult social situations.



## TO HIGH SCHOOL

- Get to know the school space; familiarity helps to reduce anxiety. Tour the school halls in advance and help your teen identify key spaces in the school
- Identify clubs and interest groups. These groups can offer an opportunity to explore interests in a safe environment.
- Help with planning and organizing, adolescence is a time of cognitive growth, higher order thinking, planning, and foresight can take time to develop.
- Monitor stress, settling into a new environment can be difficult, and high school is a big change. Check in and make sure your child is coping and see where they need support.





# MAY IS NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

*Join Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services  
in spreading Mental Health Awareness!*

***You're invited to Virtual  
Q.P.R. Gatekeeper Training!  
(Question, Persuade, Refer):***

3 simple steps that **anyone** can learn to  
help save a life from suicide.

*Gatekeeper Training* prepares  
attendees to:

- Recognize the warning signs of suicide
- Ask someone about suicidal thoughts
- Offer and connect to help

## **Cheltenham CTC**

4/27/21 ~ 7PM - 9PM ~ Register [HERE](#)

## **Upper Merion CAST**

5/4/21 ~ 6:30PM - 8:30PM

Register [HERE](#)

## **Lower Merion/Narberth**

5/11/21 ~ 6:30PM - 8:30PM

Register [HERE](#)

## **Norristown Area CTC**

5/13/21 ~ 7PM - 8:30PM ~ Register [HERE](#)

## **Project Live Upper Perk—In Person**

5/17/21 ~ 7PM - 9PM ~ Register [HERE](#)

Upper Perkiomen Valley YMCA—Gym B  
1399 Quakertown Road Pennsburg, PA 18073

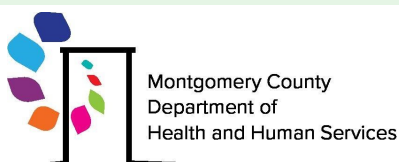
## **HOPE 4 TOMORROW**

**For Middle and High School Aged Youth (14-18)**

**May 5, 2021 from 3:30pm - 5:30 pm**

Join a virtual conversation examining how stress and mental wellness  
affect our daily lives and how to seek help! Register [HERE](#)

To ask any questions please contact Ty Williams at [twilliams@accessservices.org](mailto:twilliams@accessservices.org)



# THE TROUBLE WITH ALCOHOL & TEENS

Join us online! 7 to 8 pm

Thursday, May 6, 2021

Register: [convo.zone/montco1](https://convo.zone/montco1)

or

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

Register: [convo.zone/montco2](https://convo.zone/montco2)

These programs will not be recorded, so be sure to join us live!



Parents are the most important influence in their children's lives. When we have open, honest and informed conversations we can help our kids to grow into healthy adults.

We'll have a conversation about underage drinking that will support parents with valuable information, as well as guidance for creating an atmosphere of trust and open communication.



Montgomery County  
Office of the  
District Attorney



Montgomery County  
Office of Drug & Alcohol



be a part of the  
**CONVERSATION**  
[convo.zone/montco](https://convo.zone/montco)



# *Mindfulness for Addiction Recovery and Pain*

May 11

**Introduction to Mindfulness**

May 18

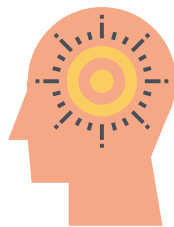
**Review and apply foundational mindfulness skills**

**Both sessions: 6 pm - 8 pm**

Join us for this free, virtual event with Michael Gawrysiak, Ph.D. from West Chester University, Michael will guide participants through the science and practice of mindfulness for addiction recovery and pain.

**REGISTER IN ADVANCE HERE.**

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.



- Learn basic principles of mindfulness and mindfulness meditation
- Participate in guided mindfulness meditation exercises
- Gain familiarity with common challenges related to pain and drug misuse
- Gain familiarity with using mindfulness as a tool to cope with stress, pain, and cravings related to drug misuse

# Parenting in an Age of Uncertainty

PRESENTED BY:

DR. KEN GINSBURG

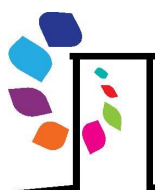
ADOLESCENT MEDICINE, THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF PHILADELPHIA  
DIRECTOR, THE CENTER FOR PARENT AND TEEN COMMUNICATION  
AUTHOR, BUILDING RESILIENCE IN CHILDREN AND TEENS

*These are uncertain and complex times.  
Join Montgomery County in a conversation about how to  
strengthen your family and prepare your children to gain  
critical lifelong resilience skills.*

MAY 25, 2021  
6:30 PM - 8 PM  
REGISTER [HERE](#)

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Event questions may be directed to  
Charlene Artillio:  
[cartillio@montcopa.org](mailto:cartillio@montcopa.org)



Montgomery County  
Department of  
Health and Human Services

