



NEWSLETTER

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OCTOBER 2025

BUILDING A STRONGER COMMUNITY: AWARENESS, BULLYING PREVENTION, AND KINDNESS

Resources

High Point Advocacy (NW Kansas) offers a range of services: evidence-based recovery programs, prevention, education, advocacy, and recovery support for individuals and families. Their mission includes helping people rebuild their lives by supporting mental health, substance abuse recovery, and family healing. They serve people regardless of their ability to pay.
785 W. Webster, Colby, KS
(785) 460-8463
highpointadvocacy.com

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) offers clear, research-based information on substance use, its risks, warning signs, and treatment options. The SAMHSA Learn About Substance Use resource provides guidance for parents, caregivers, and individuals on how to talk about substance use, find help, and better understand recovery. It's also a gateway to prevention tools and treatment locators nationwide. Visit samhsa.gov/substance-use/learn to explore these resources.



WELCOME TO OCTOBER!

October offers us the chance to focus on important themes that affect the health and well-being of our communities: Substance Abuse Awareness, Bullying Prevention, and the practice of Kindness. Each of these areas is deeply connected — when we understand the risks of substance use, prevent harmful behaviors like bullying, and promote everyday kindness, we develop cultures where children, families, and neighbors feel safe and supported.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE AWARENESS MONTH

Substance use and addiction affect many families. Nearly 1 in 5 adults struggle with a diagnosable substance use disorder, and overdose deaths in recent years have risen significantly. Youth are also affected: about 7% of teens report using illicit substances monthly. Opioids, especially fentanyl, are a growing concern in communities where access to emergency resources can be limited.

Awareness is the first step in prevention. Warning signs of substance misuse can include sudden changes in sleep or appetite, withdrawal from friends or family, increased secrecy, or a drop in school or work performance. Families can take practical steps such as safely storing and disposing of prescription medications, learning about naloxone (Narcan) to reverse overdoses, and encouraging open, judgment-free conversations about substance use. Reducing stigma is key to making it easier for those who need help to reach out.



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PRACTICAL TIPS FOR SUPPORTING SOMEONE STRUGGLING WITH ADDICTION

Supporting a loved one through addiction can be challenging, but your involvement can make a significant difference. Here are some practical strategies:

- **Encourage Professional Help:** Gently suggest that they seek help from a healthcare provider or addiction specialist. Offer to assist in finding resources or making appointments.
- **Set Healthy Boundaries:** Establish clear boundaries to avoid enabling behaviors. This means not covering up for them or making excuses for their actions.
- **Be Patient and Non-Judgmental:** Recovery is a long-term process. Offer support without criticism, and be prepared for setbacks.
- **Take Care of Yourself:** Supporting someone with an addiction can be emotionally taxing. Ensure you're also seeking support and practicing self-care.

For more guidance, visit: **HelpGuide - Helping Someone with Drug Addiction.**

SELF-HELP STRATEGIES FOR ADDICTION RECOVERY

If you're struggling with addiction yourself, know that recovery is possible. Here are some self-help strategies:

- **Seek Professional Support:** A healthcare provider can offer counseling and treatment options tailored to your needs.
- **Build a Support Network:** Surround yourself with supportive friends, family, or support groups who understand your journey.
- **Develop Healthy Habits:** Engage in activities that promote well-being, such as exercise, meditation, or hobbies that keep you occupied and fulfilled.
- **Set Realistic Goals:** Start with small, achievable goals and gradually work towards long-term recovery.

For more information, visit: **HelpGuide - Overcoming Drug Addiction.**



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BULLYING PREVENTION MONTH

Bullying remains a serious issue that can leave lasting emotional and social impacts on children and teens. Research shows that young people who experience bullying are at higher risk of developing anxiety, depression, poor academic performance, and even substance use problems later in life. Bullying can take many forms – physical, verbal, social exclusion, and increasingly, cyberbullying. The effects often ripple beyond the individual, impacting families, schools, and communities.

Prevention starts with creating safe spaces where children feel comfortable talking about their experiences. Parents and educators play a critical role by modeling respect, teaching empathy, and encouraging open dialogue. Clear expectations and consistent policies in schools and youth programs help set the standard for behavior. Bystander intervention also makes a difference – when peers speak up or report bullying, it reduces the likelihood that the behavior will continue. In addition, families can help children develop practical skills to respond to bullying and build healthy relationships:

- **Teach Assertive Communication:** Encourage children to calmly and confidently tell a bully to stop, using clear statements like “I don’t like that. Please stop.” Practicing these phrases at home can make it easier for them to use in real situations.
- **Encourage Reporting to Trusted Adults:** Remind kids that it’s okay to reach out to teachers, school counselors, or parents after they have tried to tell the bully to stop and it has been unsuccessful. Reporting is not tattling – it’s seeking help to protect themselves and others.
- **Promote Empathy and Conflict Resolution:** Help children understand how their words and actions affect others, and teach ways to resolve disagreements without aggression. Role-playing scenarios at home can reinforce these skills.
- **Foster Healthy Friendships:** Encourage children to spend time with peers who share positive values, include others, and practice kindness. Children who feel connected to supportive friends are more resilient to bullying.
- **Model Respect and Kindness:** Children learn by example. Demonstrating empathy, active listening, and respect in daily life helps reinforce the behaviors you want them to adopt.

988

SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

The 988 Lifeline offers 24/7 support for anyone experiencing emotional distress, suicidal thoughts, or a mental health crisis. Call, text, or chat online at 988lifeline.org to connect with trained counselors. Friends or family concerned about someone can also reach out for guidance and important resources.





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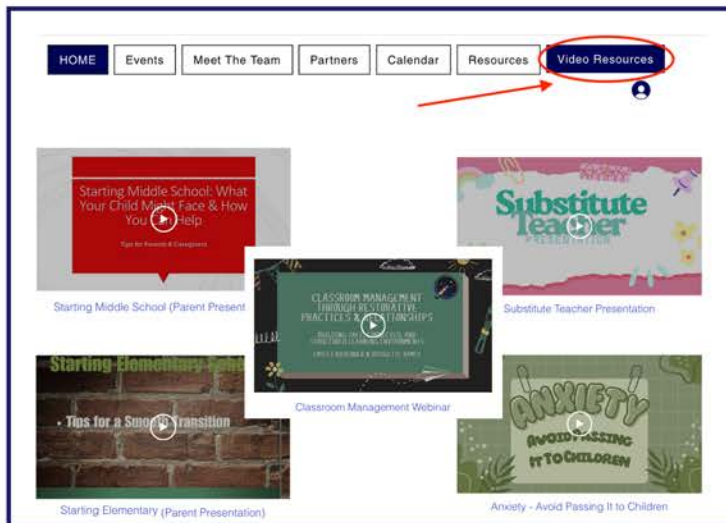
THE POWER OF KINDNESS

While substance abuse and bullying highlight challenges, kindness represents the positive force that helps prevent and heal both. Research shows that simple acts of kindness – offering a helping hand, showing appreciation, or including someone who feels left out – can boost mental health, strengthen social bonds, and build resilience in children and adults alike.

Communities that emphasize kindness experience fewer incidents of bullying, greater cooperation, and stronger overall well-being.

Families, schools, and organizations can actively promote kindness this month by incorporating simple, meaningful actions into daily life. Consider writing a note of appreciation to a coworker or boss, spending one-on-one quality time with your child, giving a genuine compliment to a spouse, helping a neighbor with a small task, or simply listening attentively to someone who needs support. Even small gestures – a smile, a thank-you, or a kind word – can brighten someone's day and create a ripple effect of positivity. Practicing kindness consistently helps build stronger relationships, models empathy for children, and fosters a more supportive environment for everyone around you.

PROJECT FRONTIER: VIDEO RESOURCES



We're excited to announce a new Video Resources tab on the [Project Frontier website](https://www.projectfrontier.org)! We've just launched this section with a few pre-recorded webinars available, and more on the way. These videos cover a range of topics designed to support families, educators, and community members. If there's a topic you'd like us to cover in future webinars, we'd love to hear from you – reach out to our team at projectfrontier@nkes.org with your suggestions. These webinars are a convenient way to access practical information anytime, anywhere.

CONCLUSION: October is more than just the start of fall activities; it is an opportunity to strengthen our communities by raising awareness about substance use, standing up against bullying, and committing to everyday kindness. Each of these efforts supports the others: prevention reduces harm, awareness saves lives, and kindness creates the foundation for safer and healthier communities. Together, we can continue to create a culture where families thrive, children feel supported, and neighbors care for each other.