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Spokane County Community Coalition COVID-19 Support for Families

Spokane, WA: As the COVID-19 crisis halts school, many businesses and gatherings, local community coalitions are engaging in a variety of innovative ways to continue providing support and substance use prevention services for families. From social media, to virtual parenting courses and meetings, Community Prevention and Wellness Initiative (CPWI) coalitions across Spokane County are working to help their school districts and local organizations endure. CPWI is funded by the Washington State Health Care Authority.

While this may not look like traditional substance use prevention, local coordinators and coalitions want to make sure they're still a trusted resource for the community. Their goal is to promote healthy family communication and relationships during this difficult time.

Coalition Coordinators recommend you take the time to talk to your children about COVID-19 in developmentally appropriate ways and use the time to also talk to them about substance use. Parents and caregivers are the number one influence on their kids, and right now is the perfect time to have family meetings to set those clear standards.

Talking to kids about COVID-19:

- While children are at a low risk for being infected, they may still be vulnerable to its emotional impacts. Visit <https://www.facebook.com/StartTalkingNowWA/> or <https://www.starttalkingnow.org/> for tips.
- Parents should take care of their own mental health right now during this stressful time and model those healthy habits. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) - Taking care of your behavioral health: Tips for social distancing, quarantine, and isolation during an infectious disease outbreak <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/tips-social-distancing-quarantine-isolation-031620.pdf>
- Have an honest conversation with your children about COVID-19. Tell them if you're scared or tell them you're not scared. Tell them the truth: <http://SADD.org/news/covid-19>.

Substance Use:

- Have a conversation, not a confrontation. Visit <https://drugfree.org/> for direction, personalized help and step-by-step tips for guiding your children through the tough conversations.
- Download the FREE "Talk. They Hear You." App from the Apple Store, Google Play or Windows Store to practice the important conversations about underage drinking and

- substance use. Practice bringing up the topic and learn the right questions to ask.
- Visit <https://www.starttalkingnow.org/our-efforts/practice-talking-your-kids-new-mobile-app>
Visit <https://notmykid.org/> for parent guide's about drug use, alcohol, depression, bullying and even internet safety.

About Spokane County Prevention Coalitions: Spokane County is home to five community prevention coalitions. Coalitions use a variety of strategies to promote substance use prevention in their communities based on the current needs. This includes programs like parenting classes, youth activities at local high schools, and large public awareness campaigns including prescription drug takeback events.

For more information about the five Spokane County Community Coalitions, please visit <https://spokaneprevention.com/> to access the coalition Facebook pages and receive resources regarding parenting, grocery shopping and other food assistance, childcare, etc. To contact the Spokane County Coalition Coordinators email SpokanePrevention@gmail.com.

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