

2025 Public Service Announcement Contest

PSA Topic: Why I Choose to Be Drug-Free



Cape Assist

3819 New Jersey Avenue
Wildwood, NJ 08260

P: (609) 522-5960

F: (609) 522-4074

www.capeassist.org

Email: info@capeassist.org

Ideas: In this PSA, you could explore how having **goals** and working toward achieving them plays a big role in making **good decisions** and staying **drug-free**.

In addition to having goals, knowing the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol helps people make good decisions. Below is some information on the risks.

- Drugs and alcohol affect children and adolescents in a much more negative way than adults. It is because the brain of a young person is not fully developed until the age of 25 years old.
- All drugs will affect a person's judgement, ability to form new memories, learning, reaction time, impulse control, and decision-making.

Marijuana

- It is illegal to buy or use marijuana under the age of 21. It is also illegal for adults to provide marijuana products to those who are under 21.
- Marijuana is a mind-altering (psychoactive) drug produced by the Cannabis plant. THC is the main chemical ingredient that produces the psychoactive effect (makes someone 'high').
- THC disrupts the brain's ability to form memories and learn new things.
- Marijuana can have permanent damaging effects on developing brains. It can lower a person's IQ if they use it regularly in their teen years.
- Students who use marijuana tend to get lower grades and are more likely to drop out of school.
- Marijuana is highly addictive. 1 in 6 youth marijuana users becomes addicted.
- Frequent marijuana use has been linked to depression, paranoia, and anxiety.
- Playing sports or video games? – marijuana can affect timing, coordination, movement and weaken someone's performance.
- Longtime marijuana users report being less satisfied with their lives, having memory and relationship problems, poorer mental and physical health, and less career success.
- Drivers who test positive for marijuana are over 2 times more likely to be involved in a crash.

Alcohol

- It is illegal to buy or consume alcohol under the age of 21. It is also illegal for adults to provide alcohol to those who are under 21.
- If a person drinks alcohol before the age of 15, they are 5 times more likely to be alcohol dependent than someone who waited until the legal age of 21.
- Alcohol impairs judgment and can lead someone to making decisions they wouldn't normally make.
- Research shows that teens who drink score lower on tests than those who don't and are more likely to perform poorly at school or even drop out of school.
- Alcohol consumption lowers speed, endurance, strength, and concentration - all key factors in an athlete's success.
- One time getting drunk equals 14 days of lost training effects (for sports). One person's individual decision to drink alcohol would affect the entire team.
- Underage drinking can result in other negative consequences such as alcohol poisoning, alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes, other injuries, legal problems, etc.
- Alcohol consumption is linked to an increased risk of developing cancer.

Tobacco and Vaping

- The legal age to purchase tobacco or vape products is 21.
- Teenagers who vape and use e-cigarettes (electronic cigarettes) are more likely to try cigarettes and other tobacco products.
- Nicotine in either tobacco or vaping liquids is very addictive.
- A person can start feeling addicted after smoking only a few cigarettes or after smoking or vaping only for a few days. People who start smoking/vaping when they're young have the hardest time quitting.
- There are thousands of toxic chemicals in cigarettes and in vaping products. They affect the health of a person's lungs, and some of the chemicals can cause cancer.
- Teens who smoke have many more colds, coughs, throat and nose problems than those who don't.
- Smoking cigarettes and vaping are major risk factors for a heart attack.
- Smoking causes bad breath, stains teeth and tongue, and helps tartar build up on teeth.
- Teens who smoke or vape are more likely to have panic attacks, anxiety problems, and depression.

Environmental Impact of Vaping - Don't Puff Away Our Planet

The growth of the vape industry has created a new environmental hazard to our planet. Vaping devices contain two types of waste which makes them extremely difficult to dispose of safely. Each vape contains electronic waste from the battery in the device and hazardous waste from the chemicals in the vape liquid. These two types of waste are ending up in landfills where they decompose and pollute our soil and water supply. In addition, the batteries can explode and cause fires at the landfills where they end up. Finally, vape devices are also made from non-recyclable plastic that further pollutes our planet.

Visit www.cmchcc.org/psa for more information and to submit your PSA.

If you have any questions, contact Natalia Leusner – natalia@capeassist.org



Cape May County Healthy Community Coalition

3819 New Jersey Avenue
Wildwood, NJ 08260

P: (609) 522-5960

F: (609) 522-4074

www.cmchcc.org

Email: hcc@capeassist.org