

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

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May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Learn Everyday Wellness Tips

Often, we think of health in physical terms, but mental wellness is just as important. Mental health plays a big role in our day-to-day mood and quality of life, which becomes very obvious when we're feeling sad, stressed, or anxious. But it also is apparent when we're feeling happy, calm, and confident.

So, this May, let's celebrate Mental Health Awareness Month by paying closer attention to our mental health, and doing more of the things that keep us mentally well!



Learn more:
[Wellness Tips - Wellness Every Day](#)



National Prevention Week

Creating Hope

National Prevention Week (NPW) is a national public education platform bringing together communities and organizations to raise awareness about the importance of substance use prevention and positive mental health.



Through National Prevention Week, people become more aware and able to recognize the signs of mental health and substance use disorders. Community members learn how they can help build community, strengthen resilience, and create hope to keep those around them healthy and safe.

May 8-14

Learn more:

[National Prevention Week, SAMHSA](#)



NAMIWalks Your Way Ventura County - May 21

Join Our Team



By joining or donating to our VCBH All Stars Team you are

contributing to increasing awareness of and raising funds for mental health. United we are stronger and together we can help to build and serve a stronger community.

Please see link to support our VCBH team.

[NAMIWalks Your Way Ventura County](#)



Spotlight: Just Not Worth It Prevention Campaign



The newly launched “Just Not Worth It” prevention campaign is targeted toward teens and young adults who may be at risk for trying and continuing to use drugs illegally. This encompasses both illicit drugs (like heroin and meth) legal drugs taken illegally—typically cannabis and prescription medications.

The goal of the campaign is to educate teens and young adults on the risks to their health, well-being, life-opportunities, and

relationships. However, as a critically important component of any campaign targeting young adults, the mood and method of the messaging is purposefully constructed to avoid triggering the reflexive opposition so common to young adults. Instead, the campaign's messaging allows them a way to choose a different path without losing face.

Instead of blame, the campaign addresses the issue from the perspective of friends that love and miss the person that is currently using. By showing only love and despondence on their friends' part, there is no negative accusation to push back against.

As a secondary goal, the campaign serves as a discussion platform for adults to discuss illegal drug use with young adults in their care.

View the Just Not Worth It websites and videos:

[English](#)

[Spanish](#)

Out & About

Community Outreach Happenings

*By Alma Ixta and Erika Fernandez,
Community Services Coordinators*

Here are some of the places and people we've met recently. We had resource tables and presentations on substance use awareness and prevention in English and Spanish. We look forward to seeing more of you in the coming year.



- Mexican Consulate, Oxnard
- Diversity Collective, Ventura College Resource Fair
- Oxnard High School Parent Presentation
- Oxnard Union High School District Career Expo

Photo: Alma Ixta, Mexican Consulate



Words from Erika

Substance Use Impacts Us All

By Erika Fernandez, Community Services Coordinator

In my personal experience with substance use issues in my family, it is easy to focus on the person using drugs and often forget to check in with the people around them. Having a loved one who is addicted to substances can be a difficult experience and can affect one's mental health.

It is hard to watch the people you care about make bad choices that are negatively affecting their life. It's tough to know what to do or what to say in these situations because you can't tell someone what is best for them or what to do. All you can do is do what is best for yourself. You can still like the person but not the habit or choices they are making, and you don't have to put yourself at risk to show that you love and care for this person.

I learned that It is important to not feel guilty for a loved one's substance use, as this is their problem to solve. Finding support is important and help is available. Counseling, peer support, and self-care helped me learn the best choices for my life. See our latest campaign that encourages smart choices and discourages illegal drug use.

"I have a good friend who is doing drugs and I wish they'd stop. It can be very hard to watch someone you care about make bad choices. But it is also difficult to tell someone what's best for them. People mature at different ages, and sometimes you are ready for what's next in life, but your friends are not."
—Just Not Worth It campaign

Learn more:

www.justnotworthitvc.org
[Al-Anon Family Groups](#)

Just for Fun

Delightful Recipes - From the Kitchens of Alma & Erika

Chilaquiles Verdes

Chilaquiles Verdes is a traditional Mexican breakfast made with fried tortillas drenched in a homemade green sauce and served with queso fresco, cream, and onions. It is an amazing dish because you can add so many different sides and toppings, fried eggs, avocado,



refried beans, cilantro, and any type of meat or chicken. You can get as creative as you want. Here is a simple recipe to enjoy your next Sunday brunch!

Ingredients

- 10 corn tortillas (cut into triangles)
- Oil for frying
- 2 cups of homemade tomatillo salsa or store bought
- 1 cup of queso fresco
- ½ cup chopped onions
- Mexican crema
- 4 fried eggs

Instructions

1. Make the tomatillo salsa if homemade.
2. Cut the tortillas into triangles. Heat oil in a medium pan. Working in batches fry the tortillas, flipping until brown and crisp. Remove fried tortillas to a plate lined with a paper towel to absorb the oil.
3. Remove oil from the pan where you fried the tortillas leaving about 2 teaspoons. Make sure heat is medium-high, pour in the sauce. Simmer for a couple of minutes until salsa slightly thickens.
4. Add the tortilla chips and mix to coat evenly. Cook for 1 minute, not more, or your chilaquiles will become soggy.
5. Plate chilaquiles, garnish with queso fresco, chopped onions, and crema. Add fried eggs on the side.



Partner Resources

Stay Informed of Recent News & Research

HHS's New Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Benefit Resources Will Help People Seeking Care to Better Understand Their Rights

"The parity law is a critical component to accessing lifesaving treatment for those with mental health conditions and substance use disorders, and the publications issued today will help ensure that individuals are aware of this important law and its protections," said U.S. Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh.

Learn more:

[SAMHSA](#)

Prenatal Alcohol exposure is associated with an increased risk of miscarriage, stillbirth, prematurity, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), as well as fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD). The Alcohol and Your Pregnancy brochure provides answers to frequently asked questions about alcohol and drinking during pregnancy and describes conditions associated with prenatal alcohol exposure.

Learn more:

[National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism \(NIAAA\)](#)

Tobacco smoking rates are decreasing in people with major depression and substance use disorder

Significant reductions in cigarette use were found among U.S. adults with major depression, substance use disorder, or both from 2006 to 2019, according to a new study.

“This study shows us that, at a population-level, reductions in tobacco use are achievable for people with psychiatric conditions, and smoking cessation should be prioritized along with treatments for substance use, depression, and other mental health disorders for people who experience them,” said Nora Volkow, M.D., director of NIDA and co-author of the study.

Learn more:

NIDA. 2022, April 26. [Tobacco smoking rates are decreasing in people with major depression and substance use disorder.](#)

Investing in Prevention Makes Good Financial Sense

Dr. Nora Volkow, Director, NIDA

You can’t put a dollar value on the losses American families have suffered due to the addiction and overdose crisis. A life lost to overdose is irreplaceable, and the costs to happiness, success, and well-being of those living with addiction are similarly overwhelming and incalculable. Yet, funds are finite, and public health decisions do carry cost implications. When policymakers and community leaders can translate the human benefits of effective treatment and prevention measures into some quantifiable return on that investment, it can be a lever to shift public health policies.

Primary prevention—including screening and intervention before negative health outcomes occur—is relatively inexpensive, and the higher-risk behaviors it is designed to reduce are so costly to the healthcare system that it is staggeringly wasteful not to make sure that screening and treatment referral are readily implemented and faithfully reimbursed by insurers and that interventions are convenient for parents and their children.

Prevention is needed now more than ever. Fentanyl is permeating the illicit drug supply and causing ever-greater numbers of

overdose deaths. It is increasingly found in counterfeit prescription pills, which are liable to be taken by youth and other people with no previous exposure to opioids. In 2020, for the first time, fentanyl overdose deaths in teens spiked to nearly double the rate it had been in previous years.

While investment in prevention doesn't show immediate returns, playing the long game and investing in prevention interventions can save lives and dollars.

Learn more:

NIDA. 2022, April 28. [Investing in Prevention Makes Good Financial Sense](#)



Calendar

We will keep you posted on upcoming events in each newsletter.

Circle of Care Monthly Meeting

1st Wednesday of every month at 1:00 PM

Contact: Ana Rosa Rizo-Centino, anarosa@myonestep.org

Oxnard Police Department Outreach Coordinator Meeting

1st Wednesday of every month at 10:30 AM

Contact: Teresa Telles, teresa.telles@oxnardpd.org

Community Insight Coalition Meeting, GCHP

1st Thursday of every month at 10:00 AM

Contact: CommunityRelations@goldchp.org

NAMIWalks Your Way Ventura County

Saturday, May 21, 2022 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

[Register](#)

Parents and Caregivers: Powerful Partners in Prevention Webinar

May 24, 2022 10:00 AM

Northeast & Caribbean PTTC

[Register](#)

Talking Effectively with Youth About Substance Use

May 25, 2022 1:00 PM (ET)

Central East PTTC

[Register](#)

Parents and Caregivers: Powerful Partners in Prevention Peer

Sharing Call
Jun 1, 2022 10:00 AM
Central East PTTC
[Register](#)

The Ongoing Opioid Epidemic Part 1: The Current Landscape
June 7, 2022 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM
Central East PTTC
[Register](#)

The Ongoing Opioid Epidemic Part 2: Lessons Learned and Looking Ahead
June 14, 2022 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM
Central East PTTC
[Register](#)

Racial Disparities In Substance Use Prevention
June 15, 2022 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM
Central East PTTC
[Register](#)



Helpful Resources

If you are looking for resources in the community, check out our websites. We continually add news, campaigns and more.

Ventura County Limits
www.venturacountylimits.org

Ventura County Responds
venturacountyresponds.org
[COAST Opioid Data Dashboard](#)

Vaping FactCheck
www.vapingfactcheckvc.org

Social Determinants of Health
www.healthequityvc.org

Ventura County Behavioral Health
vcbh.org

Follow us on Social Media
www.facebook.com/VCBehavioralHealth
www.facebook.com/venturacountylimits
twitter.com/vclimits

Check out our Newsletters

www.venturacountylimits.org/community-connections

www.healthequityvc.org/newsletters

www.coastventuracounty.org/newsletter

About Us

Supporting Health – Preventing Harm

Ventura County Behavioral Health, Substance Use Services - Prevention, works upstream to reduce alcohol and drug-related problems in our community. Initiatives are aimed at limiting harms related to impaired driving; underage and binge drinking; marijuana and vaping, especially as it relates to harms to youth; prescription drug abuse; and addressing health disparities among vulnerable populations.

A primary goal is to delay the onset of first use of alcohol and or other drugs by youth. We collaborate with schools, parent groups, government agencies, medical partners, law enforcement and community-based organizations.



Contact Us

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Photo: Alma Ixta and Erika Fernandez



