

# WELLNESS BULLETIN *for Norwalk Parents*

February 2022

*Dear Parents,*

A normal part of children's growth is learning to handle conflict. However, the pandemic has limited kids' ability to socialize with peers, which is where they typically practice these skills. At home, many of us are also struggling to handle conflicts within our families, as our teens act up and children seek their independence. It's important for us as parents to practice and role-model healthy strategies for dealing with difficult people or situations. We can also actively talk to our kids about how they can handle conflict and give them opportunities to practice.

**This month, our Wellness Bulletin focuses on managing conflict in a healthy way.** We hope you'll try using **restorative questions** to handle conflict with your kids; help your kids practice **active listening skills** and look for nonverbal cues; and practice **strategies for responding to bias** and discrimination. Also check out the Prevention Corner for info about **marijuana** and more.

As always, please share with others! Visit [thenorwalkpartnership.org](https://thenorwalkpartnership.org) and follow us on social!

**Margaret**, [mwatt@positivedirections.org](mailto:mwatt@positivedirections.org)

**Denique**, [dlewis@norwalkacts.org](mailto:dlewis@norwalkacts.org)

Did you miss our parent presentation in January?



Watch it at  
[thenorwalkpartnership.org/parents](https://thenorwalkpartnership.org/parents)



**CENTER FOR YOUTH LEADERSHIP**  
**YOUTH TOWN HALL**  
**TEEN DATING VIOLENCE**

**WEDNESDAY, 2/16/22**  
**7 - 8 PM**

#### YOU ARE INVITED

The Center for Youth Leadership (CYL) at Brien McMahon High School invites students to join an online discussion about Teen Dating Violence. Students will be joined by staff from the Domestic Violence Crisis Center. They will present information on this topic and share where to find supports and resources.

**SCAN QR CODE  
OR CLICK HERE  
TO REGISTER**



#### FOLLOW AND SHARE

 **@NORWALKACTS.CT**  
 **@NORWALKACTS1**  
 **@NORWALKACTSCT**

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This discussion is made possible by Norwalk ACTS. It provides a safe space for youth to come together to share experiences, provide education, and explore equitable actions that can be taken within schools and the community.

**Norwalk ACTS**

9 MOTT AVENUE / NORWALK, CT / 06850  
203.956.0700 / [NORWALKACTS.ORG](https://NORWALKACTS.ORG)

**The Norwalk Partnership**  
PREVENTING SUBSTANCE MISUSE  
AMONG YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

**Norwalk ACTS**



# Using Restorative Questions to Respond to Conflict

*Denique Weidema-Lewis, Norwalk ACTS*



Adults set the tone for young people whether it's within our professional or personal roles as caring role models. As such, it is the adults' response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated, and a person humanized or dehumanized."

Since 2019, Norwalk ACTS has provided both free School Climate and Restorative Practices training to the Norwalk community. This training is for all populations and all sectors – parents, teachers, custodians, all school staff, community-based organization professionals, health care, etc.

Locally, the goal is to embrace restorative policies and practices in our communities, schools, and homes to create a healthier school and community climate. Would you like to

incorporate a restorative tool within your regular routine? Try using restorative/ affective questions when responding to a conflict!

The questions focus on the incident, and allow the person to think about how his/her actions affect others. It encourages empathy, accountability, expression of feelings and thoughts, and problem solving. Restorative questions are also answered by those who were impacted by the incident, to help them process their feelings and determine what they need to make things right. A restorative approach consists in asking the following key questions:

1. From your perspective, what happened?
2. What were you thinking and feeling at the time?
3. What have you thought about or felt since then?
4. Who has been affected by what happened and how?
5. What about this has been the hardest for you?
6. What do you think needs to be done to make things as right as possible?

# Keys to Effective Communication

*Provided by Kelley Meier, Health Educator, Norwalk Health Department*

One of the best ways to avoid or manage conflict is through effective communication skills. Using "Active Listening," paying attention to non-verbal communication, and avoiding "communication stoppers" are all important skills. Practice these skills so you can role model them with your family, and discuss them with your kids!

More: [gacc.nifc.gov/eacc/logistics/crews/documents/keys\\_to\\_effective\\_communication.pdf](http://gacc.nifc.gov/eacc/logistics/crews/documents/keys_to_effective_communication.pdf)

## Examples of Active Listening

TYPE OF STATEMENT	DESIRED RESULTS	EXAMPLE
Encouraging	Convey Interest	"I see....."
	Speaker continues to talk.	"That's interesting..."
Clarifying or open-ended questions	Obtain more information	"Can you tell me more?" "Is there anything else?" "How do you see the situation?"
	Show speaker that Listener is listening	"As I understand it, your idea is..." "Do you mean, for example, that...?"
Restating	Let speaker know Listener understands facts	"In other words, this is what happened..."
	Show understanding of speaker's view of situation	"You feel that...." "You seem pretty concerned about..." "Sounds like you....." "So you would like to see...."
Silence Or Pause	Encourages reflection, allows speaker to fully express ideas.	
Summarizing	Shows grasp of situation or problem	"These seem to be the key ideas you have expressed..."
	Highlight key facts and ideas.	"Let me summarize..."



## Non-Verbal Communication

65% of the message is sent non-verbally. Become sensitive to non-verbal messages. Look for such things as body position and movement, gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, silence, use of space and time, etc.

- Eye Contact. If you look someone in the eye, they pay more attention to what is being said.
- Posture. Good posture is a sign of confidence and creates a sense of trust in your skills and abilities.
- Gestures. Use only the body movements and gestures necessary to make your point. Excessive motions are distracting to the listener.
- Expression. Your expressions sometimes say more the words you speak. Try to smile and show interest when you speak.
- Voice. Speak with a firm and assertive quality. This tone implies directness and honesty.

## Avoid Communication Stoppers

Behaviors and phrases that often stop a person from communicating:

- ✖ ORDERING "Don't talk like that."
- ✖ WARNING "If you do that, you'll be sorry."
- ✖ MORALIZING "You ought/should...."
- ✖ ADVISING "I suggest that you..."
- ✖ REASON WITH "Let's look at the facts."
- ✖ DIAGNOSING "You feel that way because..."
- ✖ JUDGING "You are wrong about that."
- ✖ NAME CALLING "You are acting like...."
- ✖ DISTRACTING "Let's talk about something else."
- ✖ INTERRUPTING "But what about..."

## Wheel of Choice



Resource  
of the  
Month

## Resource of the Month: Triangle Community Center

*By Cadence Pentheny, Community Educator*

Triangle Community Center is Fairfield County's leading provider of programming and resources to nurture growth and connection within and for the LGBTQ+ community. We offer:



**Triangle  
Community Center**

- Social & Support Groups -- for youth & adults!
- Events & Programs
- Counseling, Case Management, and Social Service Navigation -- all free or low-cost
- LGBTQ+ Trainings & Workshops
- Food Pantry -- including toiletries and hygiene products, coats and clothing basics, and gender-affirming clothing articles like binders
- Community Space

650 West Avenue | Norwalk, CT 06850

Contact: [tcc@ctpridecenter.org](mailto:tcc@ctpridecenter.org) or (203) 853-0600

@ctpridecenter on social media

## TCC CORNER



by Cadence Pentheny  
[cadence@ctpridecenter.org](mailto:cadence@ctpridecenter.org)

### *Bias Intervention Tips & Strategies*

**It can be hard to know what to do when someone around you says or does something biased or prejudiced. Having strategies in mind before an issue even occurs can be a great help to yourself and others!**

#### **BE DIRECT**

- Focus on stating your feelings rather than criticizing the other person by using "I" statements.
- Try this strategy: (1) State your feelings, (2) Name the behavior, (3) State how you want the person to respond. For example: "I'm hearing \_\_\_\_\_, and I'm uncomfortable. Please don't do/say that."

#### **EDUCATE**

- Often, people might say biased or offensive things because they are unaware of their true meanings. Try this response: "Hey, I heard you say \_\_\_\_\_ earlier, and I'm not sure if you know it can mean \_\_\_\_\_. I don't think you'd want to say something like that!"

#### **SILENT STARE**

- Body language matters! You don't always have to speak to communicate.
- An intentional non-response can communicate that you are not validating or supporting the bias experienced or observed.

# PREVENTION CORNER

The Norwalk Partnership (TNP) is Norwalk's community coalition to prevent underage substance use. Get info, tips, and data at [www.thenorwalkpartnership.org](http://www.thenorwalkpartnership.org)



## What Parents Need to Know about Today's Cannabis (Marijuana)



### CANNABIS (Marijuana, Weed) IS BAD FOR THE DEVELOPING TEEN BRAIN. 10 FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW:

1. Possession of cannabis is now legal in CT for people **over age 21 only**--same as alcohol and vaping.
2. Cannabis **cannot** be used in public spaces like restaurants, beaches or parks. The City will identify a single location where cannabis can be used in public.
3. **Driving** under the influence of cannabis, alcohol or any drug is dangerous & illegal. Cannabis affects judgment, reaction time, vision and other important driving skills.
4. The cannabis **plant** has been genetically engineered to have MUCH more THC and much less CBD than in the past. Plus, today many people use **concentrates** (dabs, wax, oil, shatter). Concentrates can be up to 96% THC--the pure psychoactive drug.
5. THC is **addictive** for adults but more so for teens. 1 in 10 adults becomes addicted, but 1 in 6 teens because it affects the developing brain.
6. Cannabis affects the part of the brain that is still maturing up to age 25. As a result, teens who use weed a couple of times a week can permanently **lose up to 8 IQ points**.
7. Today's high-THC products increase (not relieve!) anxiety and can cause **Cannabis-Induced Psychosis** and in some cases schizophrenia, particularly among teen users. CT hospitals had a 300% increase in psychosis from 2016 to 2019 associated with cannabis.
8. It is very easy to **overdose on edibles**, because they can take 1.5- 2 hours to take effect. Kids and pets are at particular risk.
9. **Lock up** any cannabis products you may have. CT's Social Host Law says that if a minor uses cannabis (or alcohol) on your property, YOU as the adult are liable.
10. **Talk to your kids** about the risks to their brain and tell them not to use any substances until they are of legal age. They listen! In Norwalk, only 3% of kids who believe their parents disapprove used marijuana last year, vs 25% of kids who think their parents don't disapprove. (Overall, most kids DON'T use drugs.)

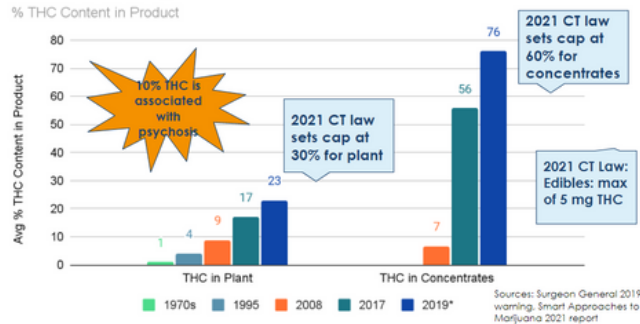
# PREVENTION CORNER



Today's Marijuana has been Engineered  
for Maximum THC Content

(THC = the psychoactive drug from the plant)

Increase in Strength of Cannabis Over Time



## SKILLS TRAININGS

**LEARN ABOUT VAPING, OPIOIDS, AND GET TRAINED TO SAVE A LIFE WITH NARCAN!** The Norwalk Partnership can provide training on all these topics. Reach out to Diamond at [dsead@hscct.org](mailto:dsead@hscct.org) or Margaret at [mwatt@positivedirections.org](mailto:mwatt@positivedirections.org) to organize a training for your group. We will be providing opioids/Narcan training to CGS faculty this month.

**LEARN TO PREVENT SUICIDE: 13% of our middle & high school students reported contemplating suicide last year. Do you know how to recognize signs someone could be considering suicide? Do you know what to say and do?** Take a free Question-Persuade-Refer (QPR) training online & learn the skills to save a life.

- The Hub is offering QPR trainings on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month from 9am-10:30am. Register at [www.thehubct.org/events](http://www.thehubct.org/events)
- Looking for an evening QPR training, QPR in Spanish, or want to bring QPR to your PTO or other group in Norwalk (live or online)? Contact Margaret at [mwatt@positivedirections.org](mailto:mwatt@positivedirections.org)

### Get Involved with TNP's Work!

The Norwalk Partnership is a coalition of volunteers and agencies working together to prevent substance use & promote mental wellness in our youth & young adults. Interested? Join our coalition or committees, listed below! RSVP to Margaret, [mwatt@positivedirections.org](mailto:mwatt@positivedirections.org):

- **TNP coalition** meets online on the last Wednesday of each month from 2-3:30pm.
- **TNP alcohol committee** meets 2nd Wednesdays of the month from 4-5pm.
- **TNP marijuana/vaping committee** meets 1st Thursdays of the month from 4-5pm.
- We are planning a **Freshman Forum** for 9th graders & parents and would love your help!

Want to focus on mental wellness?

- Norwalk ACTS **Social-Emotional Health committee**. RSVP to [dlewis@norwalkacts.org](mailto:dlewis@norwalkacts.org)

# PREVENTION CORNER

## Norwalk Strong Clubs: Teen Share Opinions on Vaping

by Rebecca Oliveira, TNP coordinator

Our **Norwalk Strong** clubs gave us their feedback on the ongoing teen vaping epidemic. We followed the **Seven Strategies for Prevention**, and our club members brainstormed possible solutions. Some of their ideas included teaching students how to quit, implementing support groups for those with substance use disorders, and increasing the consequences when students are vaping in the schools. These ideas are meant to help teens get the help they need in order to quit. All of their ideas were shared at this month's TNP Coalition Meeting!

Our club members hope to organize activity tables this month to bring more awareness on the dangers of vaping.



## How can kids join Norwalk Strong?

**BMHS:** Wednesdays from 2:30-3:30 PM, Room 1207. Contact Sof, the BMHS club leader, at [sramos@positivedirections.org](mailto:sramos@positivedirections.org) or text him at: 203-945-9012

**NHS:** Thursdays from 2:30-3:30 PM in the Public Forum Room. Contact Grace, the NHS club leader, at [ggaleano@positivedirections.org](mailto:ggaleano@positivedirections.org) or text her at 203-952-4699

### Access:

Security checks  
Bathrooms: cutting  
Proper vape detectors.  
Vape detection system to silently detect vaping locations

### Consequences:

2-3 day suspension  
Sitting in the hall  
How to attend classes/program that educates you about age and how to quit  
When a student gets caught, they receive a 2-week suspension (all are aware of who has been caught vaping and to keep off of ops)  
Based on record of behaviors (detentions, suspensions, ops)  
Teaching (all students) about the dangers of the day, so they can learn schedules  
Teaching (all students) about the dangers of the day, so they can learn schedules

### Physical Design:

Vape prophylaxis

### Information: Vaping

Vaping: Affects the brain, lungs, and heart  
Clear info of social networks - where they go instead  
Awareness  
Make people aware of resources  
Not enough I hear them about it

### Skills:

Health: How to quit  
Teaching coping skills for addiction  
Social media: Influencers on vaping  
Teach kids how to intervene if they see a friend of theirs vaping

### Support: to quit

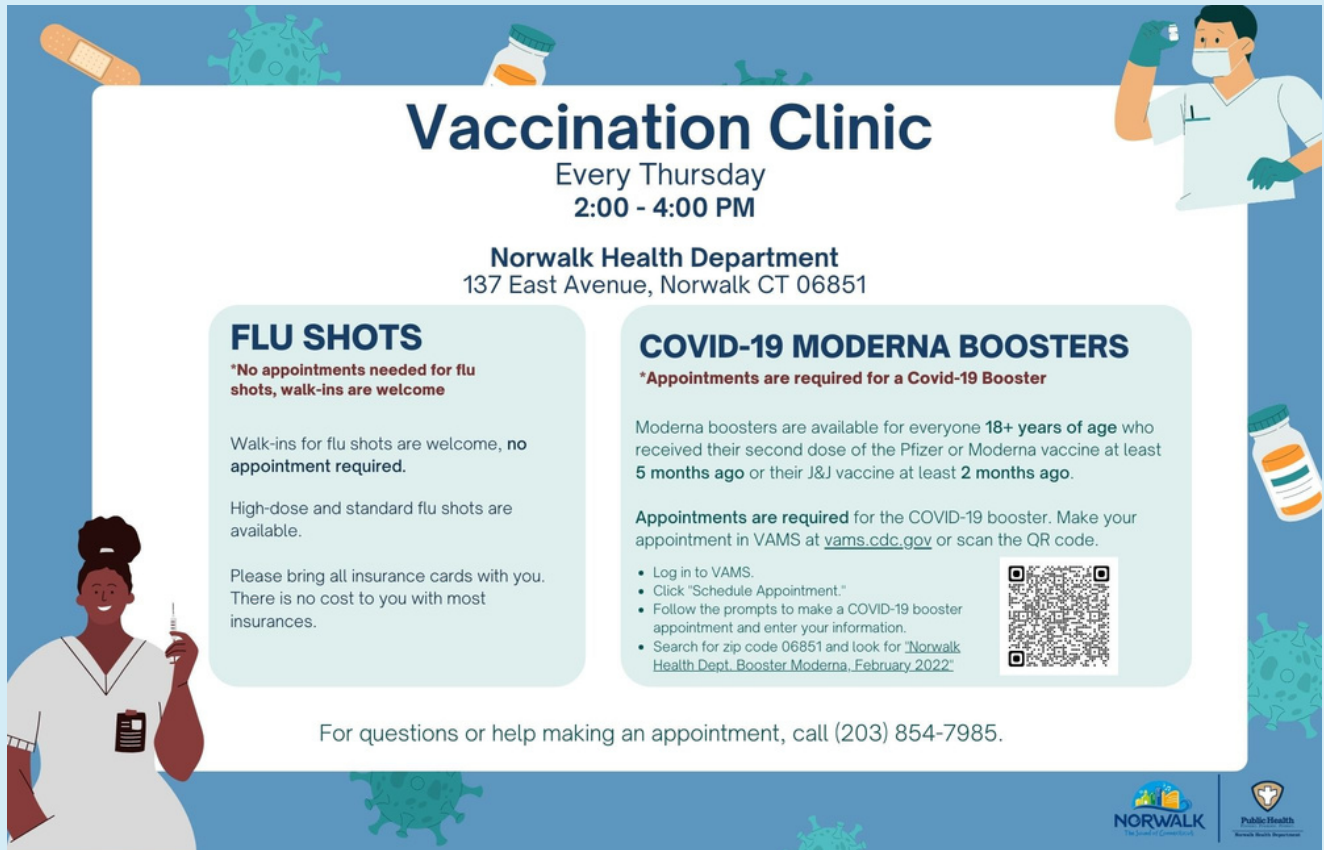
offer help without punishment - kids will do it more if supported  
Stepping Support groups & mentors for people who vape  
Support group during class (if not just on campus)  
Kids need support after support (some might need specific needs)

### Policy Change:

What security oversight? Security is really biased  
NEW GUARDS  
More female guards. It's harder to catch due to zero female guards  
Enforce rules  
Nothing, barely anything. It's annoying to me.  
Enforce policies/consequences equally  
Better enforcement on vape use - affecting the other students

# Norwalk Health Department News

*By Kelley Meier, Health Educator*



## Vaccination Clinic

Every Thursday  
2:00 - 4:00 PM

Norwalk Health Department  
137 East Avenue, Norwalk CT 06851

### FLU SHOTS

**\*No appointments needed for flu shots, walk-ins are welcome**

Walk-ins for flu shots are welcome, **no appointment required.**

High-dose and standard flu shots are available.

Please bring all insurance cards with you. There is no cost to you with most insurances.


### COVID-19 MODERNA BOOSTERS

**\*Appointments are required for a Covid-19 Booster**

Moderna boosters are available for everyone **18+ years of age** who received their second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine at least **5 months ago** or their J&J vaccine at least **2 months ago**.

**Appointments are required** for the COVID-19 booster. Make your appointment in VAMS at [vams.cdc.gov](https://vams.cdc.gov) or scan the QR code.

- Log in to VAMS.
- Click "Schedule Appointment."
- Follow the prompts to make a COVID-19 booster appointment and enter your information.
- Search for zip code 06851 and look for "Norwalk Health Dept. Booster Moderna February 2022"



For questions or help making an appointment, call (203) 854-7985.

**NORWALK**  
Public Health  
Norwalk Health Department

## Fun Opportunities for Kids

Do your kids claim they have nothing to do? The **Recreation & Parks website** lists beaches, walking trails, and upcoming events. They're offering High School Hoops and other programs now, and summer camps will be listed during February.

Sign-ups start in March. Be on the lookout!

<https://www.norwalkct.org/275/Recreation-Parks>

Also, check out:

- **Norwalk Art Space** on West Avenue: Changing art exhibits, cafe, free art and jazz classes for high school students.
- **Youth Business Initiative** in SoNo: Entrepreneurship and more for teens.



**City of Norwalk**  
**FAMILY NAVIGATOR PROGRAM\***

A trusted relationship to connect individuals and families to community resources.

**OPEN TO ALL NORWALK RESIDENTS!**

*Bilingual Staff & Other Languages Available Upon Request*

Get help with identifying resources for food, housing, workforce, mental health, or other community-based services

**Please click and complete the following referral form**

**<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FAMNAVREF>**

**or**

**Call (203) 854-7999**

**Issues with link, please email: [humanservices@norwalkct.org](mailto:humanservices@norwalkct.org)**

Family Navigators are knowledgeable about the Norwalk social services systems, benefits, and supports available. They assist with making connections with resources and answer any questions.

**\*The FAMILY NAVIGATOR PROGRAM IS A FREE SERVICE for Norwalk Residents. Programs referred may require eligible requirements.**



Save these numbers in your  
and your family's phones!

# MENTAL HEALTH OR SUICIDE CRISIS?

**FREE HOTLINES ARE  
AVAILABLE 24/7!**

## National:

- Crisis Text Line: Text 741741
- National Suicide Lifeline: Call 800-273-8255  
(Starting July 2022, just dial 988)

## LGBTQ:

- The Trevor Project: Text 678678
- Trans Lifeline: Call 877-565-8860

## CT Resources:

- Kids in Crisis (ages 0-18): 203-661-1911
- CT's Action Line (mobile crisis): 2-1-1, option 1
- Domestic Violence SafeConnect: 888-774-2900
- JoinRiseBe Young Adult Warmline: Talk to a young adult peer specialist 12pm-9pm daily: 800-6-HOPENOW

## Local:

- First Responders: 911 (ask for a CIT officer)

# Peer Support for Teens

## Feeling Down? Struggling to Cope? We've Got Your Back.

TurningPointCT.org: Online resources & supports,  
created by young people in CT for their peers



TurningPointCT.org was developed by young people in Connecticut who are in recovery from mental health and substance use issues.



Guiding the search  
for mental wellness

**TurningPointCT.org**  
CT's online community on mental health & substance use, developed by young people in recovery for their peers

## THE TURNINGPOINTCT PODCAST: BY & FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN CT

Teens and young adults from CT talking about things that really matter.

Relationships, mental health, drugs & drinking, self-care, life, stress, and more!

**NEW EPISODES EVERY OTHER FRIDAY!**

Or find us @TurningPointCT on Spotify, Google Podcasts & Apple Podcasts

[TURNINGPOINTCT.ORG/PODCASTS](https://turningpointct.org/podcasts)

Instagram Facebook Twitter YouTube Messenger TikTok

9/21

## FREE PEER SUPPORT WITH ALLY! For young people in their teens & 20s

Need to talk to someone who gets what you're going through?  
Want help figuring out next steps?

Connect with Ally Kernan, Peer Support Specialist at TurningPointCT!  
In-person or virtual, Tuesday & Thursday mornings... or by request.  
Call or text: 203-858-1819



Provided by TurningPointCT.org,  
the mental wellness community  
by & for young people in CT



# SUPPORTS FOR NORWALKERS

*Struggling with isolation, stress, depression, or substance use? Help is here.*

## 24/7 HOTLINES

- **CT's Mobile Psychiatric Crisis:** Dial 2-1-1, select option 1
- **CT's Substance Use Access Line:** 800-563-4086
- **Kids in Crisis 24/7 Helpline:** 203-661-1911 (local)
- **Crisis Text Line:** Text Hello to 741741 (national)
- **National Suicide Lifeline:** 800-273-8255 (starting July 2022, just dial 988)
- **Trevor Project (LGBTQ):** Text 678678 or call 866-488-7386 (national)
- **Trans Lifeline:** 877-565-8860 (national)

## CITY SERVICES

- **Community Services:** Info, referrals, family navigators. 203-854-7999
- **Youth Services Bureau:** Care coordination, referrals, Juvenile Review Board, life skills. 203-854-7785

## FREE IN-SCHOOL SUPPORT

- **Mid-Fairfield School-Based Clinical Services:** Mental health counseling at BMHS and NHS. Call 203-299-1315, ext. 6175.
- **School-Based Health Centers:** Behavioral health, telehealth, medical, physicals. BMHS: Room 1209. NHS: Room C301. Also NHMS, Ponus & WRMS.
- **Teen Talk:** Free crisis counseling provided by Kids in Crisis. BMHS: 203-852-9488, x11319, Room 11319. NHS: 203-838-4481, x13279, Room 218E. Or call 24/7 helpline: 203-661-1911

## FREE PEER SUPPORT

- **Alcoholics Anonymous:** Meetings in English & Spanish. [ct-aa.org](http://ct-aa.org)
- **Alanon/Alateen:** Support for people affected by someone's substance use. Adults: Call Karen at 203-962-5427. Teens: Call Peter at 203-856-1614; meet at NHS on Thursdays.
- **Courage to Speak Foundation:** Parent support group, education. 877-431-3295
- **Lighthouse Program:** LGBTQ teen support group run by Kids in Crisis, meeting Tuesday nights from 5-7pm online. Call or text 203-461-3409.
- **NAMI:** Support groups for young adults & families, training programs by & for families with a loved one with mental illness. [namisouthwestct.org](http://namisouthwestct.org)
- **RIPPLE:** Late-night online support groups & more. [RockingRecovery.org](http://RockingRecovery.org)
- **SMART Recovery:** Support & skills building to quit bad habits & make positive changes in your life. Local groups: [turningpointct.org/smart](http://turningpointct.org/smart)
- **TurningPointCT:** Online mental health community by & for teens and young adults in CT at [TurningPointCT.org](http://TurningPointCT.org). One on one peer support with Ally: 203-858-1819.

# SUPPORTS FOR NORWALKERS

*Struggling with isolation, stress, depression, or substance use? Help is here.*

## NONPROFIT TREATMENT AGENCIES

- **Catholic Charities:** Mental health counseling, all ages. English & Spanish. 203-750-9711
- **Child & Family Guidance, ACRA program:** Substance use treatment for teens ages 12-24. English & Spanish. 203-810-4404
- **Child Guidance of Mid Fairfield County:** Mental health services ages 5-21, including home based. English & Spanish. 203-299-1315
- **Community Health Center (Day Street):** Mental health & substance use, all ages. Must be medical client of CHC. Multiple languages. 203-854-9292
- **CT Counseling Centers:** Behavioral health for adults, including IOP and opioid treatment. English & Spanish. 203-838-6508
- **CT Renaissance:** Behavioral health for ages 13 through adult, including gaming/gambling. 203-866-2541
- **Family & Children's Agency:** Psychiatric services for children & teens, including IICAPS; mental health & substance use for adults. 203-855-8765
- **High Focus Centers:** Intensive mental health & co-occurring for ages 10 through adult, including IOP and PHP. 877-670-5120
- **Keystone House:** Residential rehabilitation program for people with a psychiatric disorder. 203-855-7920
- **Liberation Programs:** Drug & alcohol counseling for middle school through adults. 855-542-7764
- **MFAP Drug User Outreach:** Outreach, Narcan, syringe exchange. 203-855-9535 x107
- **Norwalk Community Health Center:** Mental health & substance use counseling, all ages. Must be medical client of NCHC. English, Spanish, Haitian Creole. 203-899-1770 x1203
- **Norwalk Hospital:** Behavioral health treatment for adults, including IOP, PHP and inpatient. 203-852-2988
- **Positive Directions:** Mental health & substance use treatment, prevention, recovery support, ages 13 through adult. Free time-limited 1:1 peer support for teens and young adults with Ally from TurningPointCT. English & Haitian Creole. 203-227-7644
- **St. Vincent's:** Mental health & substance treatment, all ages, including IOP in Norwalk and inpatient / detox in Westport. 203-221-8899
- **Services in Nearby Towns:** [TheHubCT.org/treatment](https://TheHubCT.org/treatment)
- **Triangle Community Center:** LGBTQ+ center offering counseling (individuals, couples and families), case management, support groups, and education. 203-853-0600