



overdoses are up 30% and suicides 19%. Therefore, we at MVPASAP continue to advocate for services and act as the leading resource in the Merrimack Valley to those in need.

MVPASAP members are here. If you or a loved one is struggling with addiction, please contact us immediately. "Treatment of One, is Prevention for Many"!

We are in this together!



MVPASAP IS STAYING BUSY ...

In the month of January, MVPASAP:

Provide Services:

Assisted (10) individuals/families with treatment services.

Made available to community members: **DETERRA Drug** bags are powered by patented MAT12 Molecular Adsorption Technology, the environmentally friendly system has been proved to neutralize pills, liquids, and patches: 46 pills OR 6 oz. of liquid OR 6 patches.

Education:

Hosted “resource night” with over 35 community members in attendance.
Hosted (2) LIVE Facebook shows with over 4,500 views and 650 individuals engaging:

Human Trafficking Awareness

From Incarceration to Recovery

Created Podcasts of “The Empty Chair a podcast For the Addict That Died Today Not Knowing Recovery Was Possible” for community members that do not have access to FACEBOOK.

Outreach:

Attend TMF Family Dinner for homeless



FEBRUARY IS MARIJUANA AWARENESS





February is Marijuana Awareness Month. Marijuana is a hot button topic in America these days. While it is still illegal for recreational use in many areas, a few states have legalized it. It is up to us to continue medical research, and create awareness around those results, to form our own opinions. The BIG question for many is, “marijuana addictive and a gateway drug to addiction”?

Marijuana can be addictive. Despite contrary belief, repeated marijuana use can lead to addiction, which means that people often have trouble stopping use of a drug when they want to, even though it is having a negative impact on their lives. Research suggest that about 9% of people who use marijuana develop an addiction. The rate nearly doubles to 17% when use begins during teen years.

Some Facts from National Institute on Drug Abuse about Marijuana:

- Unsafe if you’re behind the wheel.
- Is linked to lower grades, school failure, and poorer quality of life.
- Is linked to some mental illnesses.
- May cause respiratory problems.
- Affects the brain.

In the Merrimack Valley, it has been reported of teens having severe reactions to marijuana and edibles. Some reports show psychotic behaviors and overdoses. As parents and educators, **it is our job to have the conversation with our children about the risks of drug use and the possible outcomes that could lead to addiction or death.**



Is Marijuana a Gateway Drug?

There is an ongoing debate about whether the use of marijuana opens the door for people to go on to use other, “harder” substances. A report from the CDC indicates that while marijuana is not a gateway drug for many people, more research is needed to develop a concrete conclusion. According to the Drug Policy Alliance, the issue is one of accessibility. This organization notes that marijuana is the most popular and easily accessible illegal drug in the U.S. today, so people who have used less accessible drugs (heroin, cocaine, LSD) are likely to have first accessed marijuana and other more accessible drugs, including alcohol.

Robert DuPont, the president of the Institute for Behavior and Health and a former director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, uses the transition from marijuana to heroin as a key example of the gateway drug theory: “Like nearly all people with substance abuse problems, most heroin users initiated their drug use early in their teens, usually beginning with alcohol and marijuana. There is **ample evidence** that early initiation of drug use primes the brain for enhanced later

responses to other drugs.”

DuPont’s conclusion is troubling: “Establishing (marijuana) as a third legal drug, along with tobacco and alcohol, will increase drug abuse, including the expanding opioid epidemic.” After all, people who are addicted to marijuana are three times more likely to be addicted to other, harder drugs, such as heroin.

Even if the CDC and other organizations downplay marijuana’s role as a gateway drug, statistics provide clear and convincing evidence that marijuana use is likely to open the door for many people to use other drugs. With this reality in mind, does it really make sense to legalize marijuana amid a devastating opioid epidemic?

DJ Beauregard ~ MVPASAP Board Member

Our goal at MVPASAP is to educate on the possibilities of “marijuana” being the gateway drug to addiction. Based on personal experiences, and individuals sharing their stories how marijuana was the first drug they used that led them to harder drugs, our information is for viewers to decide and form their own opinion.



WHEELS OF HOPE IS BACK !!

"Hope is Here"

~ Wheels of HOPE began transportation to treatment on January 21, 2021.

~

If you have a spot at a detox or residential treatment program or sober housing, Wheels Of Hope can provide transportation to any program in Massachusetts.

And if your starting medication for addiction treatment (MAT) Wheels of Hope will provide up to a week of transportation at the start of treatment to any provider within the Merrimack Valley ~ #800-327-5050



Hope is on the horizon.

Wheels of Hope provides free, safe, and confidential transportation to people in the Merrimack Valley seeking treatment.

If you have a spot at a detox or residential treatment program or sober housing, Wheels of Hope can provide transportation to any program in Massachusetts. And if you're starting medication for addiction treatment (MAT), Wheels of Hope will provide up to a week of transportation at the start of treatment to any provider within the Merrimack Valley.

When you're ready for treatment, we'll take you there.

HelplineMA.org/WheelsOfHope

**Need a ride to treatment?
We'll take you there.**

Call: 800.327.5050

  **HELPLINE**
HOPE IS HERE.



La esperanza está en el horizonte.

Ruedas de Esperanza proporciona transporte gratuito, seguro y confidencial a las personas en el Valle del Merrimack que buscan tratamiento al principio de su recuperación.

Si usted tiene un lugar en un programa de desintoxicación o tratamiento residencial o una casa de sobriedad, Ruedas de Esperanza puede proporcionar transporte a cualquier programa en Massachusetts.

Y si usted está comenzando el medicamento para el tratamiento de la adicción (MAT, por sus siglas en inglés), Ruedas de Esperanza proporcionará hasta una semana de transporte al inicio del tratamiento a cualquier proveedor dentro del Valle del Merrimack.

Quando está listo para el tratamiento, lo llevaremos allí.

HelplineMA.org/RuedasdeEsperanza

¿Necesita que lo lleven al tratamiento?

Llame al: 800.327.5050

  **LÍNEA DE AYUDA**
HAZ ESPERANZA.





The Empty Chair would like to **THANK** our 2021 sponsors for your continuous support and your generosity in supporting our mission:

Andover Cares, Alternative Home Health Care, Celebrate Recovery Plaistow NH, Circle of Hope, Century 21 McLennan & Co., Cornerstone Services, Enterprise Bank, Essex Companies LLC, Haven of Hope, Lawrence Methuen Community Coalition, McClennan Century 21, MethuenEvents.com, Michaud Insurance, RCA – Recovery Centers of America, The Law Office of Arthur J. Broadhurst, and Topsail Recovery.

The Empty Chair is a 60-minute LIVE podcast that brings **HOPE** of recovery to many by having guests share their experience and strength of overcoming addiction and their path to continuous sobriety. **MVPASAP will be LIVE** on Thursday evenings, 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm:

February 4th

February 18th

March 4th

March 18th

April 8th

April 22nd

May 6th

May 20th



RESOURCES

Circle of Hope –Family Support Meeting
Meets EVERY Monday evening *(except for Holidays)*
6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/701528090?
pwd=WTZ0Y2FrRIJnM0N0aU1QaVBDRTBLQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/701528090?pwd=WTZ0Y2FrRIJnM0N0aU1QaVBDRTBLQT09)

Meeting ID: 701 528 090

Password: 924 656

Fran & Phil Lahey facilitators - The Circle of Hope which is a SAFE place for individuals and families to come together for support and to look for direction, guidance, and resources from those who share their experience. Newcomers are welcome to join us!

If you have any questions about this group, please reach out:

Phil & Fran # 978-886-2949



SUPPORT RESOURCE LIST:

Suicide Lifeline - # **1-800-273-8255**

Be Well At Black Barn Farm – Teens & Young Adults Nature Based Therapy

617-313-7975 www.bewellatblackfarnfarm.com

SouthBay Community Services - #978-688-4830

www.SouthBayCommunityServices.com

Massachusetts Substance Abuse Information Helpline Toll-free:

1-800-327-5050

ONLINE MEETINGS:

NAMI – National Alliance on Mental Illness

During COVID-19, Please join one of NAMMI remote Connection support groups:

Mondays, 10:30 am -12 pm

<https://bostonmedicalcenter.zoom.us/j/955331152>

Call: 1-646-558-8656, Meeting ID: 955 331 152

Mondays 6:30 pm

Call in number: 508-206-8720 (no password required).

Tuesdays 7:00 pm

Call in number 425-436-6392 and enter access code number 119410

Tuesdays 10 – 11:30 am

Call in number 508-206-8720 no password required.

(for women of color and their allies)

Wednesdays 7:30 pm

Call in number: 508-206-8720 (no password required).

Saturdays 10:00 am

Call in number: 508-206-8720 (no password required).



ONLINE MEETINGS:

Alcoholics Anonymous



**aa-intergroup.org/directory.php
aaonlinemeeting.net**

onlinegroupaa.org

Narcotic Anonymous



**virtual-na.org
WEB**

na.org/meetingsearch *for country select



Smartrecovery.org/smart-recovery-toolbox/smart-recovery-online



Addictioncampuses.com/alcohol/apps-for-recovery

Sobergrid.com/howitworks Intherooms.com/home



As we continue to create ways to stay connected to our community, PLEASE know MVPASAP Board Members are here to assist you and your families. We know that emotional distress can happen before and after a disaster and it's important to find healthy ways to cope during Covid-19 pandemic.

If you are need of services or want more information, please contact your local MVPASAP Board Members:

Andover & North Andover: Beth Blazonis # 978-223-5044

Tom Donovan # 603-339-5906

Lawrence: Evelyn Rodriquez # 978-242-6679

Michael Gorman # 978-697-9691

Methuen: Cole Welch Caffrey # 603-205-4752

Dean Brouder # 978-273-4812

Phil Lahey # 978-886-2949

Haverhill: Lisa Ferry # 978-376-9891

Christina Traficanti # 978-397-9682

Katie Ryan # 978-804-5848



IF you have any upcoming events or information that you would like to share in our Newsletters, please email to: mvpasapgroup@gmail.com or call # 603-205-4752

Marijuana Resource:

[The Impact Of Covid-19 On Suicide Rates \(psycom.net\)](https://www.psycom.net)