

October 26, 2022

The PTSO Evening on Tough Topics focused on NNHS students answering questions ranging from how to balance academics, extracurricular activities, and relationships (it's difficult!) to the importance of parents being available for listening well and asking how they can help (whether with a listening ear or offering solutions).

I'd like to share a few thoughts on a couple questions that we did not have time to answer: how to find one's niche and a query regarding edibles. There are many ways to become engaged at NNHS and we encourage students to check out the possibilities. NNHS has an extensive quantity of clubs and organizations. Tiger block is a great time for students to explore the various clubs and decide which of them they may like to join. There is a [link to the club list](#) on the NNHS website. In addition to the clubs there is an active theater, many sports teams, Model UN, boxing, and becoming a Teacher Assistant.

Alcohol and other drugs are a factor in our community as they are in all communities. The YRBS (Youth Risk Behavior Survey) that students complete anonymously every two years indicated that although there may be a perception that "everyone is doing it", it is a patently false perception. The Survey states that 19% of Newton High School students currently drank alcohol (current=past 30 days) and 10% used marijuana. These percentages are below MA state averages and we will continue to work to decrease the numbers.

If you are interested in the results of the YRBS, please use this link to access more information: [YRBS Newton Survey 2021-22 Executive Summary](#)

With the manufacturing of THC edibles, it is important for parents/guardians and teens to have accurate knowledge of the potency of edibles. Each gummy and/or chocolate bar that is a THC product has a marijuana leaf and THC label on the packaging. The dosage is state-dependent. For instance, in Massachusetts a dosage is 5 mg. This translates into a pre-divided section of a THC chocolate bar. Clarifying the difference between a regular chocolate bar and one that has THC is well worth more than one conversation.

Children, teens, and adults have ended up in the Emergency Department due to taking more than the dosage. The warning labels are in small print and the edibles do look enticing and can be confused with regular gummies or chocolates. As an adult who can legally purchase THC items, please do not leave them around to be easily mistaken for an over the counter candy.

I would like to take this opportunity to also suggest that parents/guardians regularly go through your medicine cabinets and take expired medications (Over the Counter and prescription) to any of the city drop off locations. There used to be one day a year for National Prescription Give Back Day (October 29 this year) but many police stations and pharmacies now accept medications throughout the year.

Keeping expired or no longer needed medications out of your home is one more way to prevent others from taking them. If you do take prescribed medications that may be abused, please do not leave them in an area easily accessed. This is also a preventive measure.

Talk with your children and teens: there are frequent teachable moments. Use them and encourage questions and please, feel free to call or email your teen's school counselor or dean. Together we are all a team for your teen.

Thank you.

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