

Wellness Committee



BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SPRING 2018

The Bedford Public Schools are committed to providing a school environment that enhances learning and the development of lifelong wellness practices.

The Wellness Committee's vision is to maximize community and school resources to improve the quality of life for students, staff and families of the Bedford Public Schools through education, activity-centered programs and the development of a school environment that supports physical and emotional wellness and proper nutritional practices and provides students with opportunities to learn and practice a variety of physical activities within the school curriculum and encourage the pursuit of physical activities for enjoyment and a life-long wellness.

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Rabies Awareness

Rabies is a very serious disease that affects the central nervous system and brain of mammals. The Rabies virus is in the saliva of infected animals and is spread when the infected animal bites or scratches another person or animal, releasing its saliva. It can also be spread if the saliva gets into an open wound, eyes, nose or mouth of a person or animal. Rabies is most common in wild animals such as raccoons, skunks, bats, woodchucks and foxes.

It is important to be cautious with any wild animal. If an animal (wild or pet) has been exposed to rabies, possible symptoms may include unexplained aggression, impaired locomotion, varying degrees of paralysis, and extreme viciousness. However, not all animals show symptoms, and can look normal. The only way to test if any animal has rabies is to capture it, euthanize it and test the head/brain after it is deceased.

Wild Animal Contact. You should contact the Bedford Board of Health and your Primary Care Physician immediately if: 1) you find a bat in a room with a previously unattended young child, mentally impaired person or a pet, 2) someone in your household was sleeping and awoke to find a bat in the room, or 3) someone was bitten and/or scratched by a wild animal. The Board of Health is able to send bats and other wild animals suspected to have rabies into the State Laboratory for Rabies Testing. The animals must be captured, euthanized, and the head/brain fully intact. State Lab will not accept live animals for testing. Call the Board of Health Office at 781-275-6507 for additional information on wild animal testing.

Human and Pet Contact. You should contact the Bedford Animal Control Officer (ACO), Veterinarian and/or Primary Care Physician if a person or pet was bitten or scratched by a pet such as a dog, cat, ferret or small pocket pet. The ACO will assist with acquiring rabies vaccination status and quarantining and/or testing the biting and bitten pets. Your Primary Care Physician is the best contact to discuss options like Rabies Immune Globulin and Rabies Post-Exposure Prophylaxis.

Tips to Protect Your Children. Teach children to stay away from unknown animals, even if they appear friendly. Report any animals that you see behaving oddly to Bedford Animal Control at 781-275-1212. Do not keep wild animals as pets, and only enjoy them from a safe distance. Ensure your pets are vaccinated and rabies vaccinations are kept up to date. Do not leave pet food or water outside, it might attract wild animals. Do not let pets roam freely or unattended. Keep your chimney capped and repair holes in attics, cellars and porches to help keep wild animals like bats and raccoons out of your home.

Tips if a Bat is in Your Home. Try to confine it to one room, by closing all doors and windows. Call a pest company to capture the bat, or capture it yourself if you are able to safely do so with gloves on. Bats must be euthanized before contacting the Board of Health Office for rabies testing of the animal. It is very important that the brain or head of the bat is not injured in the capturing process. If captured over a weekend, do not freeze the bat; keep in the refrigerator and contact the Board of Health office at 781-275-6507 as soon as possible.

Bedford residents are invited to attend a Rabies Vaccination Clinic for cats and dogs on Saturday, March 24, 2018, from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at the Carlisle Town Hall, 66 Westford Street, Carlisle, MA. The cost for vaccination is \$10 and proof of past vaccination will be required. See the Bedford Board of Health website (bedfordma.gov/heath) for more information about this clinic.



Rabies spreads
through animal bite

VAPING

The battle to acquire accurate health information persists. The conclusive long-term health consequences of vaping are unknown and rightfully so; the products have only been on the market for about a decade. However, we do know that re-



peatedly inhaling chemicals heated at a high temperature is not exactly a preprogrammed human behavior needed for physiological maintenance. This is especially true considering propylene glycol and glycerol, two components of the vaping liquid that when heated, inhaled, and processed in our body produces a well-known carcinogen, formaldehyde (1). Yet, the behavior continues and when we, in the pub-

lic health field, try to implement policy and environmental changes to stop it we continue to hear that main counterargument, “well, it is better than smoking cigarettes.” Hearing that leaves us at a standstill as there inconclusive evidence to say that vaping is better than cigarettes; however, like with many cause and effect relationships, time will tell. In the meantime we want the behavior to cease because of other irrefutable evidence. We know vaping changes the complex neurotransmitter system in our brains that may make us more prone to other addictions and alters our reward brain pathways. We know it is an expense that could be used toward other things. And, it is unsightly and impactful to nearby, non-vapers. While we wait for the data, is there a way to impart behavior change?

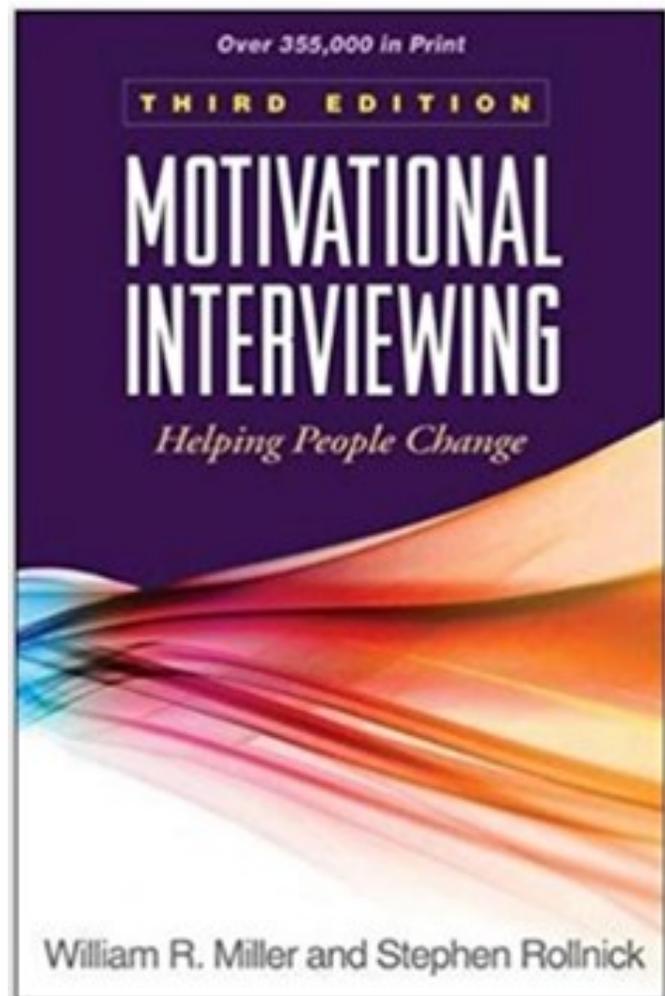
The impasse between working with someone to change their behavior and the corresponding resistance/challenges can be unnerving and exhausting. Research has shown that lecturing and “guilting” to create a behavior change is highly ineffective as resistance is built to match the level of lecturing. Research shows that removing images of e-cigarettes from media reduces the likelihood of use, but removing all images is difficult to control. We could add consequences to the behavior, which might help, but may add unyielding levels of tension. So then, what other tool(s) could be used to change behavior?

Individuals who routinely work to change behavior are likely to be regular users of the Motivational Interviewing (MI) technique. It is likely we have been exposed to or have used elements of MI without realizing it. MI is, “designed to find a constructive way through challenges that often arise when a helper ventures into someone’s motivation for change....it is about arranging conversation so that people talk themselves into change, based on their own values and interests,” (2). There is process to it; asking open questions, affirming, reflecting, and summarizing. MI is an art, a philosophy, and needs a requisite for patience as using the technique takes practice in addition to the actual work of making a positive behavior change on someone else. While the technique is mainly geared toward clinicians, anybody can use it and effects are typically profound. Using MI could make vaping go up in smoke.

In the next edition of the Wellness Newsletter, we will provide some MI techniques and strategies for implementation.

1. **Rigotti, Nancy and Kalkhoran, Sara.** E-cigarettes. *www.uptodate.com*. [Online] Wolters Kluwer, January 02, 2018. [Cited: March 09, 2018.]

2. **Miller, William and Rollnick, Stephen.** *Motivational Interviewing: Helping People Change*. New York : The Guildford Press, 2013.



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Handwashing

The Bedford school nurses want to remind everyone that the flu season is still among us! Handwashing is the best way to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to other people.

According to the CDC, studies have shown that hand washing can prevent 1 in 3 diarrhea related illnesses and 1 in 5 respiratory infections such as the cold or flu. Norovirus is the most common cause of gastroenteritis (nausea/vomiting and diarrhea illness), and it is highly contagious! Spreading easily in places where people are sharing spaces at home, schools, hospitals, and dorms.



Wash your hands:

- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before eating food
- Before and after caring for someone who is sick
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After using the toilet
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- After handling pet food or pet treats
- After touching garbage

Avoid touching your face- eyes, nose and mouth

Most viruses are spread by person-to-person contact, for example, if you touch your face after a common handshake and then inadvertently touch your face, viruses can gain entrance into the body via the eyes, nose or mouth. Germs can easily be transferred onto other objects such as handrails, doorknobs and tabletops and then transfer to another person's hands. People frequently touch their face often without even realizing it - up to 200 times a day!

How to wash your hands

The CDC has developed recommendations for handwashing and hand sanitizer use based on several studies.

1. Wet your hands with clean running water (warm or cold) and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap.
3. Scrub all surfaces of your hands, including the palms, backs, fingers, between your fingers, and under your nails. **Keep scrubbing for at least 20 seconds.** Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song twice. Rinse your hands under clean, running water.
4. Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them

The CDC recommends that hand washing is more effective than using hand sanitizer. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in some situations, but sanitizers do not eliminate all types of germs and might not remove harmful chemicals.

How do you use hand sanitizers?

1. Apply the product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
2. Rub your hands together.
3. Rub the product over all surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry.

References

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/index.html>



SAFE HOMES PROGRAM

The Safe Homes program is a support network for Bedford parents with children in grades 6-12 who are concerned about alcohol and drug use at pre-teen and teen parties and gatherings. Families who join SAFE HOMES promise to provide a safe and supervised home for teen parties. You can sign up online for Safe Homes by going to the Bedford Youth and Family Services (BYFS) website www.bedfordma.gov/youth (Click on Safe Homes). Participating families will receive a directory booklet containing contact information of others who have joined. The directory will be mailed in late fall to all families that have signed up

For more information or questions about the Safe Homes Program please call BYFS Prevention Coordinator Jessica Wildfong at [781-275-7727, x262](tel:781-275-7727) or email jessicaw@bedfordma.gov

Mental Health at College and Beyond

College can be a time of exciting changes and new experiences. It's also a time when those at risk are likely to experience a first episode of bipolar disorder.

This relatively common mental disorder is associated with severe mood swings, difficulty sleeping and loss of touch with reality. But, because episodes are not predictable and there are many symptoms that are connected to bipolar disorder, it can be challenging to recognize bipolar disorder in oneself and others. Accurate diagnosis is an important step to finding the right treatment.

While the cause of bipolar disorder is not fully understood, stress, substance abuse, biological conditions and genetics may all play a role in its development. Trauma can also be a mitigating factor.

The experience of bipolar disorder can be lonely and frightening, but mental disorders in college students are not as uncommon as you might think. Studies show that one in three college students report having prolonged experiences of depression, and one in four students have suicidal thoughts or feelings.

Though only about half of those with bipolar disorder receive treatment for their condition, help and effective treatment is available. So, this March 30, World Bipolar Day, why not take a free, brief online screening to learn if symptoms you or someone you care about may be consistent with bipolar disorder and find some resources where you may be able to get treatment. **Bedford Youth and Family Services** offers the screenings at www.bedfordma.gov/youth under the "screenings" section where you will also find local resources.

SAVE THE DATE

Thursday, July 12 -SUMMER CONCERT AND WALKABOUT

Please join us for the first night of the 2018 SUMMER CONCERT SERIES at the Town's Activity Complex, 12 Mudge Way, featuring the Party Band! This event will include a lively concert and walkabout with lots of room for dancing, seating, picnicking and activities. The venue is surrounded by a playground, outdoor basketball courts, tennis courts, a walking track, a skate park and numerous athletic fields. Bands perform on a slightly elevated stage. This event is co-sponsored by Recreation, Economic Development and Healthy Bedford, along with the Bedford Chamber of Commerce. Stay tuned for more details. Contact healthybedford@bedfordma.gov if questions.

Massachusetts Walk and Bike to School Day

Massachusetts Walk and Bike to School Day will take place on Wednesday, May 2, 2018. Hundreds of celebratory events will occur all over the state, with thousands of students and their families walking or riding their bikes to school. These events to help increase the visibility of walking and biking in Massachusetts while showcasing the benefits of active transportation in our community.

Massachusetts Walk and Bike to School Day is a statewide event organized through the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS). Last year, the Commonwealth set a record with nearly 300 schools participating in events throughout the state.

Walk or Biking to School is an option to consider on almost any day, but event days are extra special. Please visit www.bedfordma.gov/healthy-bedford for walking and biking route ideas, including 2 new maps/routes which illustrate popular routes students can walk or bike to Lane School.

Leave the Driving to the DASH!

The DASH is Bedford's portal to portal shuttle service currently running Monday through Friday 11AM to 6PM, and available to all those who live and work in Bedford. The DASH is a 14 passenger WIFI enabled, fully handicapped-accessible vehicle that will travel throughout Bedford and also to Lexington, Billerica, and Burlington all week days, and to Concord on Mondays and Tuesdays. Fares are \$2 for adults ages 18-65 in town and \$4 out-of-town; Medicare Card Holders, Veterans, disabled persons, and seniors age 65+ pay \$1 in town and \$2 out-of-town. Youth under 18 pay \$1 in town and \$2 out-of-town. Discounted prepaid ticket books are available for purchase.



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If you have questions about the DASH, visit www.bedforddash.com or call 781-275-DASH(3274).