

A NOTE FROM YOUR PREVENTION COUNSELOR

A REMINDER TO PARENTS AND TEACHERS... That Ms. Diane Maring will again be available at Cobbles every Thursday for the upcoming school year.

I am a Prevention Counselor from Delphi Rise (formerly known as Delphi Drug and Alcohol Council), which is a community agency that assists individuals and families that have been affected by substance abuse. If a significant person in your child's life suffers from alcoholism or other addictions, be assured that it can have a profoundly negative impact. Children are often left reeling in the wake of the unpredictability, confusion, and conflict that generally accompany addiction. One of my roles is to provide support and education to children within the school setting. Because it is a sensitive and sometimes frightening issue to address, it is all too often left as an unspoken source of pain and confusion for many children, with a long-lasting emotional impact.

Through the years, children have reported that once they are able to freely speak out about their concerns and feelings, they are often relieved of guilt and other confusing emotions. Research has shown that children of alcoholics (or other substance abusers) generally feel that they have somehow caused their parents alcoholism/addiction. They also tend to feel responsible for fixing it, and when they can't, they are left feeling helpless and hopeless. In addition, these children often feel very alone and are at a much greater risk for alcohol and other drug use, delinquency and depression, and not performing to their academic ability.

Successful intervention includes educating children about substance abuse as an illness that can be managed with treatment, if the addicted person is willing. It is also about assuring children that they are in no way responsible for causing it or for fixing it. Work is done to assist children with identifying, sorting out, and learning strategies to manage their own emotions. In addition, some children (with parental permission) choose to participate in a small group setting with other peers who share similar concerns and feelings. This is beneficial in that they come to realize that they are not alone. Statistically, about 25% of children live in a home (or have a separation/divorce situation) where at least one adult suffers from alcoholism or other substance abuse problems.

Regardless of whether or not your children have been affected by substance abuse, other significant sources of unresolved conflict and/or excessive stress in any child's life may put them at higher risk for substance abuse. So, though I support children in understanding addiction, I also work with them for a variety of other reasons.

I will also be visiting all the classrooms throughout the school year to have our ongoing discussions about tobacco, alcohol and other drugs. You will receive a note from me before these visits occur so that you know what to expect.

If you have any questions regarding my counseling services, which are confidential, or if you have questions about the classroom education, feel free to contact me at 249-6500 x8544 or email me at dmaring@penfield.edu

Sincerely,
Diane Maring
Prevention Counselor, Penfield Elementary Schools

