

SW Florida Public Service Academy Drug and Alcohol Policy

SW Florida Public Service Academy (SWFPSA) encourages healthy living habits for both students and employees. Eating healthily, getting sufficient sleep, regular exercise, and time for family and friends are important for assuring success in your program. In addition, we want students and staff to experience life free from dependence on drugs and alcohol.

The effects of drug and alcohol abuse can be devastating to individuals and families. Listed below are some of the health risks associated with drug and alcohol abuse:

- Psychological dependence. This is a mental or emotional adaptation to the effects of the drug that leads the abuser to believe he/she cannot function normally without the drug.
- Physical dependence. This is an adaptation whereby the body learns to live with the drug and becomes able to tolerate increasing doses. Eventually, the abuser suffers withdrawal symptoms if deprived of the drug.
- Medical complications: Nervousness, anxiety, sleep disorders, muscle aches, spasms, vomiting and other gastrointestinal disorders, mental abnormalities, and changes in blood pressure/temperature/breathing rate, changes in heart rate/rhythm, cardiac arrest, convulsions, hallucinations, stroke, death, or many other dangerous conditions.

Of particular concern to students should be the learning disorders that can occur as a result of substance abuse:

- Interference with memory, sensation, and perception. Normal experiences can be distorted, and the abuser can experience a loss of self-control that can lead him/her to self-harm.
- Interference with the brain's ability to take in, sort, and synthesize information. Sensory information can run together, providing new sensations while blocking normal ability to understand the information received.
- Experiencing a false sense of functioning at one's best while under the influence.

Preventing Drug and Alcohol Abuse

- Be firm about saying no. You do not have to explain your reasons. People who care about you will respect and support your decision. You never know when your decision will persuade someone else to change his/her behavior.
- Surround yourself with people who think like you do. Give yourself the opportunity to find common interests with people who live healthy, active lifestyles.
- Avoid temptation. Remove substances from your home. Stay away from places where they are used or sold. Find recreational activities that allow you to maintain your commitment to living a drug-free life. Take up a new hobby or sport, volunteer, spend more time with your children, do those projects you have been meaning to do around the house.
- Take seriously the responsibility all adults have to set a good example for children.
- Take the money you spend on unhealthy activities and save toward something special you and/or your family has been anticipating.
- Find productive ways to manage the stress in your life.

Drug and Alcohol Counseling, Treatment, or Rehabilitation Programs

Many resources are available to help students and employees who want to seek help. Shown below are local resources for students and staff who decide to seek addiction counseling. These resources also have assistance for the friends and family members of those seeking help.

- Employees
 - Refer to the School Board Policy Manual, Section 5.37 (9)
 - Consult the SWFPSA Sharepoint page under “Shared Documents,” Employee Assistance Program
- Students and employees:
 - Alcoholics Anonymous, Fort Myers, 239-275-5111, www.leecountyaa.org
 - Al-Anon/Alateen, Fort Myers, 239-274-1353, <http://www.al-anon.alateen.org/al-anon-in-florida/54-fort-myers>
 - David Lawrence Center, Naples, 239-455-8500, www.davidlawrencecenter.org
 - Narcotics Anonymous, 24-hour Help Line: 1-866-389-1344, <http://www.nagulfcoastfla.org/meeting-list-1>
 - Grace Church – Celebrate Recovery, North Fort Myers, 239-574-7161
 - Salus Care, Fort Myers, 239-275-3222, www.saluscareflorida.org
 - Light House Addiction Services, Cape Coral, 239-540-8011
 - Lutheran Services Florida, Inc. (services for adolescents/families), Fort Myers, 239-275-1126 or 239-278-5400
 - Teen Challenge (for 18+), 239-275-1974 (Men); 239-939-7705 (Women)
 - The Salvation Army Crossroads (for men only), 239-334-3745