



DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

Why Substance Use Prevention Matters During the Holidays

The holiday season can be an especially vulnerable time for substance use risks. With disrupted routines, higher stress, and more social gatherings where substances may be present, it's important to focus on prevention and understand what may increase emotional or behavioral triggers. When we know why we're feeling overwhelmed, we can respond with healthier choices. *If we can name it, we can tame it.*

Common Holiday Triggers

- **Pressure:** Expectations to be cheerful, socialize, spend money, or “just have one drink” can feel intense. This pressure can lead to impulsive decisions around substance use.
- **Nostalgia:** The warmth of memories can also bring grief or sadness, making some people more vulnerable to using substances to cope.
- **Complicated Relationships:** Being around family or familiar settings may pull us back into old patterns, including being encouraged to use substances or encountering others who are struggling.
- **Lapse vs. Relapse:** Stress, memories, and social environments may increase urges to use. A lapse is a brief slip; a relapse is returning to a pattern. Neither is a failure. Both offer insight into what support is needed moving forward.



Check In With Yourself

Early awareness is key to prevention. Look for changes in mood, energy, or behavior, such as irritability, sleep/appetite changes, withdrawal, risk-taking, or feeling like you “need” a substance to get through events. Teens especially may show overlapping signs of emotional distress and substance use, so regular check-ins matter.



Skills To Protect Your Peace (and Your Prevention Goals)



Boundaries: Protect your needs by setting limits around conversations, time, or exposure to substances. Start small and lean on trusted supports.

Coping Ahead: Plan for situations that may be stressful or high-risk. Keep routines and identify skills like breathing, taking breaks, or staying close to supportive people.

SEEDS: Support prevention by caring for your basic needs: Sleeping, Eating, Exercising, Doctors, and Self-care/Sobriety.

HALT: Check whether you're Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired—meeting these needs reduces substance use urges.

Acceptance: Acknowledge what is in your control, including how you care for yourself. Acceptance isn't approval; it's a grounding tool.

PAUSE: Slow down when urges arise. Be Proactive, build Awareness, Understand what's happening internally, use Supports, and Engage in healthy choices.

Grounding Techniques: Use tools like 4x4 breathing, a short break, 5-senses grounding, connecting with a pet, or temperature changes (cold water, ice, warm drink) to regulate stress and reduce risk.



You're Not Alone. Help is Available.

**988 Suicide &
Crisis Lifeline**

988 or 988Lifeline.org

Veterans Crisis Line
Dial 988 (press 1)

**SAMHSA's
National Helpline**
1-800-662-HELP (4357)

**Disaster Distress
Helpline**
1-800-985-5990

FindSupport.gov

FindTreatment.gov

SAMHSA

Saginaw Community Events December 2025

12/1-12/3: Great Elf Hunt
@ Castle Museum

12/2-12/16: Saginaw Breastmilk
Circle
@ Butman-Fish Library

12/5: Santa's Holiday Hike
@ Imerman Memorial Park

12/7: Winter Party on McCarty
@ Saginaw Township Soccer
Complex

12/11: Baby/Preschool Storytime
@ Castle Museum

12/17: Breakfast Storytime with
Santa
@ Chick-Fil-A (Tittabawassee Rd.)

12/31: New Year's Eve Countdown
Blast!
@ Mid-Michigan Children's
Museum

❄️ = Event is free to public.

WOC Spotlight

Meet the Team



Name: Vicki Hill, *The Gospel Lady*

WOC Position: Vice Chairperson

Time with WOC: 16 Years

Ms. Vicki Hill is the mother of two children, Marcus Hill and Schronda "Punkin" Hill, and the proud grandmother of Harlynn Hill, a competition dancer. Known throughout the region as *The Gospel Lady*, Ms. Hill has been a beloved radio announcer on KISS 107.1 WTLZ for 32 years. Each Sunday, thousands tune in to hear her words of encouragement and her curated blend of contemporary Christian and traditional gospel music. She is known for showcasing both national and local artists, often giving unsigned artists their very first platform. Over the years, countless listeners have reached out to her for prayer, comfort, and guidance—both on the air and in her personal time—and she has continued to minister to them with compassion and grace.

Ms. Hill has been the driving force behind Gospel Fest, an annual event on Ojibway Island that draws thousands. Gospel Fest brings together people of all backgrounds for music, worship, and community healing. Featuring nationally recognized artists, choirs, quartets, mime dancers, local charities, food, games, and more, the event offers something for everyone. In 2010, Ms. Hill was honored with the Stellar Reach Award at the Grand Ole Opry, one of many awards she has received during her 32-year radio career.

Deeply committed to service, Ms. Hill raises funds for those in need and speaks at youth conferences, schools, and community programs. She has mentored youth at the Saginaw Juvenile Detention Center and taught the evidence-based prevention program Prime for Life at Holy Mission, the Compass Center, RCO Men's Shelter, and Tri-Cap. She also leads Women of Colors' Warm A Child for Winter project, which provides coats to more than 800 underprivileged children each year. Her community forums have addressed difficult topics such as domestic violence, homosexuality, and suicide—issues affecting both men and women in crisis.

When called upon, Ms. Hill travels to churches, conferences, and workshops to present, support, and uplift others. She is known for her generous spirit, and if she is available and the purpose is meaningful, "no" is simply not an option. She continues to invest in her craft by attending industry workshops and conferences, often at her own expense, including the Gospel Music Workshop of America and the Gospel Industry Network.

Ms. Hill retired after a 40-year career in the financial field, including 29 years as a Branch Manager at Jolt Credit Union in Bay City, Michigan. She currently serves as Vice Chair of Women of Colors. In 2012, she was named Woman of the Year for the Great Lakes Bay Region for her dedication and service. In August 2020, she was appointed to the Board of Directors for the Saginaw Temple Theatre and the Saginaw Art Museum, and she now serves on the supervisory board at Family First Credit Union. She has received countless awards, proclamations, and even the Key to the City from the late Mayor Wilma Ham. Despite all of her accomplishments, *The Gospel Lady* seeks no credit. The love and trust she has earned in the community reflect her lifelong mission: to help as many people as she can. Her work truly speaks for itself.



Top Left: Harlynn Hill; Top Right: Marcus Hill
Bottom: Vicki & Schronda Hill



Evelyn McGovern
President/Co-founder

President's Corner

As we wrap up another year, I want to take a moment to thank each of you for being part of our vibrant community. The holidays are a time for joy and connection, but they can also bring stress, isolation, and triggers. Please remember to care for yourselves and look out for one another. Take safe, intentional steps to enjoy the season, and know that support is always here if you need it.

From all of us, we wish you warmth, laughter, and meaningful moments with loved ones. May the new year bring health, hope, and countless reasons to celebrate together.

Did you know?

The song 'Jingle Bells' was originally intended to be a Thanksgiving song. Originally titled 'One Horse Open Sleigh', composer James Lord Pierpont wrote the song for a Sunday School choir. The song's theme of sleigh racing was a popular New England activity during the Thanksgiving season.

Women of Colors is grateful for the continued support of our partners, community members, and friends who make our mission possible. Your encouragement helps us create meaningful programs that strengthen families and uplift youth across our community. This month, we'd like to give special recognition to Midstate Health Network for their partnership in helping us share prevention resources and awareness through this newsletter. Together, we are building a healthier, stronger future.

MSHN
Mid-State Health Network



Get In Touch

Have questions or donations?
Want to get involved?
We'd love to hear from you!



womenofcolors.org



1 (989) 270 - 1682



3057 Davenport
Saginaw, MI 48602

**Let's Make A Difference
Together!**