

City of Newton



HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Dear Newton South Parents and Guardians,

On April 6th Juniors and Seniors will attend a substance use prevention program during class assemblies. We are fortunate to have former New England Patriot Chris Sullivan and his wife Kathi sharing their powerful stories about mental health, addiction and making good choices. Chris Sullivan talks about his struggles with anxiety in high school and his early beliefs that he was immune from addiction because of his personal strength. Later, as a pro football player, he suffers an injury and becomes addicted to painkillers. He shares his story with humility and honesty and students are riveted by the football hero who values his recovery over his Super Bowl ring. Kathi Sullivan lost her daughter after a she became disoriented from alcohol in the woods at a bonfire party and died. She tells this story in a nonjudgmental and caring manner, demonstrating through her heartbreaking narrative all the opportunities when someone could have made a different choice and that might have resulted in her daughter being alive today. It is a narrative about making positive choices to look out not just for yourself but for the other people in your life too. Kathi connects well with students as evidenced by the line of students who waited after the presentation at Newton North to engage directly with her.

We know that you play the most critical role in guiding young people toward safe, healthy behaviors. We hope you will ask your students about this program and start a dialogue. ***Additionally, we want to encourage you to attend the companion evening program to support your ability as a family to discuss these issues, engage in scenario planning and establish clear family guidelines.*** Sophomores and Freshman are encouraged to attend the evening program along with you as they will not have had a chance to see it at school. But all parents and any teens are welcome (younger children not advised).

Tuesday April 10th
7-9 pm
Newton South Lecture Hall

As parents and guardians, we have a lot to prepare our kids for. Together we can work to prevent the painful and tragic outcomes of the Sullivans' stories and help empower and protect our young people.

We hope you'll join us on April 10th with or without your teenagers. RSVP is requested, not required at www.surveymonkey.com/r/sullivantalk . You can learn more about our substance use prevention and intervention work at www.newtonma.gov/NewtonPath .

Sincerely,

Deborah Youngblood, PhD.
Commissioner of Health and Human Services