

Grand Strand

## Life Skills program aimed at keeping high school students away from drugs and alcohol

By:

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CONWAY, SC (WBTV) - Shoreline Behavioral Services is working to help high school kids stay away from drugs and alcohol through a new program called Life Skills.

This program consist of multiple weekly sessions and they've already implemented it at Coastal Leadership Academy in Myrtle Beach. Jessie Marlowe with Shoreline said they started this program because, previously, they didn't have anything geared toward high school students. She said this is an important age to reach kids because they are more exposed to drugs and alcohol.

"Our studies show that the later they start using drugs or alcohol, the less likely they are to be addicted to substances," said Marlowe. She said students have workbooks and they're learning things like how to keep open relationships with their parents, how to respond to peer pressure from friends, and how destructive drugs and alcohol can be in their lives.

Ashley Johnson is a Social Studies teacher at Coastal Leadership Academy, and she also teaches a Leadership and Personal Development class. She incorporated the Life Skills program into her curriculum, and her students are in the fifth week of a nine-week session.

"I've definitely seen a change since we first started," said Johnson. "It's really exciting to see them actually accomplish their goals and actually know that they're learning a valuable lesson."

She said they have a unit where parents have to get involved with students, so they can also understand what challenges teenagers face when it comes to drugs and alcohol. "We work with students to help them understand that drugs and alcohol they see in media and online is not real life, and there are consequences," said Johnson.

The program was funded to Shoreline by the Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services (DAODAS). It cost about \$5,000 for the necessary materials for teachers and students, but it is free to participate in the program. Marlowe said they've been meeting with the Horry County school district to get the Life Skills program into curriculums at other schools. She said it isn't only for schools, though. If you have a church or youth group you want to be apart of the Life Skills program, you can contact [jessie@shorelinebhs.org](mailto:jessie@shorelinebhs.org).

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