

Eastbrook Junior High Incorporates New Life Skills Program

Posted By: Allison Redmond on: November 21, 2018



Eastbrook Junior High School is introducing Botvin, a life skills training program into their curriculum.

Jordan Steiner, a school counselor at Eastbrook Junior High said that Botvin is also a substance abuse prevention program.

"It is prevention-based," he said. "It's not intervention, but it is prevention."

According to www.lifeskillstraining.com, Botvin is proven to reduce drug use by up to 75 percent, alcohol use by up to 60 percent, and tobacco use by up to 87 percent.

Steiner said the program can be taught seamlessly from elementary to high school and is said to have four to six years of effect with the students.

"I do look forward to it having a good impact with our students who are middle schoolers," he said. "Based on the program, (the students) should have success of being out of the drug scene, being opioids and alcohol, in high school."

Sue Jackson is the Health and P.E. Teacher at Eastbrook Junior High. She said her hope for this new program is that students will learn about decision making.

"When I taught health before ... we did a whole unit on decision making," Jackson said. "So it's similar to (Botvin), just teaching them how to make wise decisions, And hopefully that will carry over into all other aspects."

Steiner said his hope is that students will find a resistance to even want to try drugs and an acceptance of wanting to resist it.

"Research shows that you don't just jump in and are addicted," he said. "It's a progression of being around it, being okay with it, being around seeing others do it ... and then you try and then something happens in your life, and then you try more and you become addicted."

Steiner said that drug use hasn't been prominent at the student level. He said he's seen drug use affecting student life more from outside the school.

It's more of the outside the high school and parent level," he said. "(Their) parents are incarcerated, parents are currently users or parents lost custody of their children ... that's the effect that I've seen with drugs and the county."

Elizabeth Duckwall is the Eastbrook Junior High Principal.

"We certainly see those effects from other users and it definitely has an impact on the students when they're being removed from their parents in the home and then placed with, sometimes, people they don't know at all," she said. "We've had cases where the student may have to move to a completely different area of the country because of drug use."

Drug prevention in Eastbrook schools is also accomplished through the random drug testing of students.

Two years ago, a policy was put into place at Eastbrook schools that any students that participate in athletics, co-curricular activities or high school students that want to drive to school submit to random drug testing.

"That doesn't mean that every student is tested, but they have to be in the pool. Our goal with that is to be proactive," Duckwall said.

Duckwall said she hopes this will give students the opportunity to make better decisions when presented with the opportunity to abuse alcohol or drugs.

Eastbrook Junior High also encouraged student attendance at the Marion General Hospital Health Fair earlier in the year.

"That's something that we would welcome even more of: defined community resources that might help," Duckwall said.

Throughout the various forms of drug prevention in Eastbrook Junior High, Duckwall said she hopes this will spread to the communities around their students.



"I would hope that even beyond (students) not being users, if they could spread that message to those around them, whether it be younger siblings, friends, some cases even adults around them ... sometimes having those conversations can be positive."

