

Press Release

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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: Dr. Stephen Dewey on the Adolescent Brain

On December 17th at the Glen Cove High School auditorium, the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition concluded their 2018 "Keeping Glen Cove SAFE Opioid Awareness Campaign" with a presentation by Stephen L. Dewey, Ph.D., Neuroscientist on how the adolescent brain differs from the adult brain. The direct effects of various drugs of abuse, specifically opioids, including legal drugs like caffeine, alcohol, and stimulants like Ritalin, on brain metabolism and chemistry, and examined how the environment influences the addictive process and how particular cues produce relapses to drug seeking behavior was explained in detail.

State-of-the-art medical imaging techniques used to non-invasively investigate brain chemistry was discussed comparing healthy brains to those of a substance abuser. One of the most salient points mentioned was that individuals addicted to opioids are destroying the natural dopamine in their brain. Dopamine receptors give us the ability to feel. A brain of an individual who is addicted has no ability to feel pleasure and their behavior changes. The brain therefore becomes suppressed. The pineal gland has both dopamine and serotonin and when that gets destroyed opioid abusers "stop giving a damn", making it extremely difficult to treat because they simply have no feelings to care. The behavior to feel 'normal' again becomes a vicious cycle. Making an addict self-medicate and feel as if they need the opioid.

The evening concluded with questions and answers and the intention of hearing more of Dr. Dewey in the upcoming year via continued collaboration with the Glen Cove School District.

The SAFE Glen Cove Coalition is conducting an opioid prevention awareness campaign entitled, "Keeping Glen Cove SAFE," in order to educate and update the community regarding opioid use and its consequences. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit SAFE's website to learn more about the Opioid Epidemic at www.safeglencove.org

