

# Prevention Professionals of Northern Middlesex



June 18, 2021

Juneteenth is a holiday celebrating the emancipation of African Americans who had been enslaved in the United States. Originating in Galveston, Texas, it is now celebrated annually on June 19 throughout the United States, with increasing official recognition, becoming a federal holiday in 2021. The date represents the moment the last people learned of their **FREEDOM!**

## Have a Proud and Happy Juneteenth!



<https://juneteenth.com/>

Juneteenth commemorates African American freedom and emphasizes education and achievement. It is a day, a week, and in some areas a month marked with celebrations, guest speakers, picnics and family gatherings. It is a time for reflection and rejoicing. It is a time for assessment, self-improvement and for planning the future. Its growing popularity signifies a level of maturity and dignity in America long overdue. In cities across the country, people of all races, nationalities and religions are joining hands to truthfully acknowledge a period in our history that shaped and continues to influence our society today. Sensitized to the conditions and experiences of others, only then can we make significant and lasting improvements in our society.

## Stigma and Discrimination in the LGBTQ+ Community.

<https://www.cdc.gov/msmhealth/stigma-and-discrimination.htm>

Negative beliefs and actions can affect the physical and mental health of gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men, whether they seek and are able to get health services, and the quality of the services they may receive. Such barriers to health must be addressed at different levels of society, such as health care settings, work places, and schools to improve the health of gay and bisexual men throughout their lives.

## WHO ARE WE?

### SAPC

SAPC is a coalition of eight communities working together to help reduce substance abuse with specific intentions for youth below the age of 18.

#### Communities include:

Billerica—Mike Higgins  
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Chelmsford—Amanda Glaser  
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# Be Stigma Free!

<https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Pledge-to-Be-StigmaFree>

Stigma is when someone, or even you yourself, views a person in a negative way just because they have a mental health condition. Some people describe stigma as a feeling of shame or judgement from someone else. Stigma can even come from an internal place, confusing *feeling bad* with *being bad*. Navigating life with a mental health condition can be tough, and the isolation, blame and secrecy that is often encouraged by stigma can create huge challenges to reaching out, getting needed support and living well. Learning how to avoid and address stigma are important for all of us, especially when you realize stigma's effects.

Take the quiz <https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Pledge-to-Be-StigmaFree/StigmaFree-Me/StigmaFree-Quiz-Results>

## Substance Use

<https://www.cdc.gov/msmhealth/substance-abuse.htm>

Studies have shown that, when compared with the general population, gay and bisexual men, lesbian, and transgender individuals are more likely to:

- Use alcohol and drugs,
- Have higher rates of substance abuse,
- Not withhold from alcohol and drug use, and
- Continue heavy drinking into later life.

## Suicide and Violence Prevention

<https://www.cdc.gov/msmhealth/suicide-violence-prevention.htm>

Violence is a serious public health problem in the United States. It can affect all types of people throughout their lives. Those who survive violence are usually left with permanent physical and emotional scars. Gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men are at overall increased risk of violence because of homophobia, harassment, and violent acts directed towards gay persons.

## Mental Health

<https://www.cdc.gov/msmhealth/mental-health.htm>

Having a supportive group of friends and family members is often key to successfully dealing with the stress of day-to-day life and maintaining good mental health. If you are unable to get social support from your friends and families, you can try finding support by becoming involved in community, social, athletic, religious, and other groups. Mental health counseling and support groups that are sensitive to the needs of gay and bisexual men can be especially useful if you are coming to terms with your sexual orientation or are experiencing depression, anxiety, or other mental health problems.

## Carrying Narcan saves lives!

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[mruggiero@tewksbury-ma.gov](mailto:mruggiero@tewksbury-ma.gov) Cell 978-382-4989

