FACTS ABOUT SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS AND RECOVERY:

- Over 20 million people in the United States are in recovery.
- Substance use disorder is defined as when the recurrent use of alcohol and/or drugs causes clinically and functionally significant impairment, such as health problems, disability, and failure to meet major responsibilities at work, school, or home.
- Drug overdose is the number one cause of injury deaths in the nation with an accidental drug overdose death occurring every 8 minutes, surpassing deaths from motor vehicle accidents or gun homicides. On average, 130 Americans die every day from a drug overdose.
- The Florida State Attorney’s Office reported that, in 2018, there were 326 deaths in Palm Beach County—a 41% decline from the previous year, attributed to awareness, legislation demanding standards for care in the recovery community and the distribution of naloxone, and opioid overdose medication that reverses the fatal effects of an opioid poisoning.
- In 2017, we lost 70,859 Americans to opioid overdoses, and 100,000 Americans to alcohol related deaths. In other words, last year (one year), we lost 3 times the number of Americans to substance use disorders than we did during the entire 10-year Vietnam war.

FAQ’s:

Is “addiction” or “alcoholism” really a disease?

- The “Disease Concept”, refers to the primary nature of substance use disorders, meaning it is not the result of some other problem. This does not mean that stressful issues cannot contribute to a substance use disorders (such as pain). A substance use disorder is primary, progressive and predictable, like those conditions that we accept readily as “diseases”.

What are the “signs” that someone is struggling with substance use?

- There are many “red flags”, depending on patterns and the substance. The signs can include: physical changes or problems; financial consequences; academic or occupational consequences; health consequences; strained or impacted relationships; mood swings and an inability to modulate emotions/emotional outbursts.

Is it hereditary?

- It is now assessed that close to 60% of those diagnosed with Substance Use Disorders have a family history of the same, other compulsive disorders or mental health issues. This is however not always the case, especially with the potency of illicit substances today and the patterns of physicians’ prescriptions of opiates over the last decade.

How can we prevent substance use?

- The best defense and prevention for risk of problems with substance use is education, communication and awareness. In coordination with JFS, JFS CARES partners with local congregations, recovery community organizations, community mental health centers, county coalitions, and our local task force to reach those families and individuals who are struggling as well as facilitating prevention initiatives wherever they may be lacking.

They say, “once an addict, always an addict”. How long do they have to stay stopped?”

- Important research has been done over the last 60 years exploring alcoholism and addiction. Today, we have evidence-based models of treatments that include the best practices for helping those that struggle with substance use disorders. The scientific and behavioral health community has only just begun to study and gather data on what follows treatment – recovery. The consensus in the mental and behavioral health fields is that the 2 most crucial ingredients for sustained recovery are community and a continuum of care. The research has shown that, (as is typical with chronic diseases), 5 years in “remission” (recovery), significantly decreases the likelihood of “relapse”, or a reoccurrence of substance use.

RESOURCES:

There are support groups hosted by Jewish Communities in Palm Beach County that provide a place for those trying to understand how to help those who have been through the same experience.

Ruth & Norman Rales Jewish Family Services (JFS) has created “JFS CARES”. The JFS CARES program acknowledges all those who have been affected by substance use disorders. The overall goal of this program is to be a resource for the Jewish Community in South Palm Beach County for education, prevention, awareness and communication relating to substance use issues. The JFS CARES project will serve families and their loved ones, helping to connect them with available resources locally and nationally.

There are support groups hosted by Jewish Communities in South Palm Beach County for families of, and those dealing with substance use issues. For a list of these resources, please visit ralesjfs.org/jfscares, or contact Sharon Burns-Carter, CAC at 561.702.7603 or email at SharonB@ralesjfs.org.