



# The Allegan County Atlas



Catch the latest buzz on substance abuse information in Allegan County

Volume 2, Issue 1

September 1, 2010



## Grant Status for Allegan County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition (ASAP)

By Heidi Denton, ASAP Coalition Chair

The changing of the season from summer to fall is often a time of change in the field of Prevention. Fall marks the end of one fiscal year, and the start of the next. Often there is the looming possibility that our funding will be reduced, and even end completely. It is with great pleasure that I can announce this will not be the case for the next 5 years! We just received official notification that our application for the Drug Free Communities grant was accepted. This grant will allow us to focus on issues concerning alcohol, tobacco, prescription/over the counter drug abuse, methamphetamine and any other substance abuse issues that arise in Allegan County.

The announcement of this new funding source came at a good time. The current grant (SPF) that ASAP has been working with is ending September 30 of this year. The SPF grant provided funding to work toward the reduction of underage drinking as well as reducing alcohol related traffic crashes. With this funding the last three years ASAP has been able to address several goals and objectives concerning alcohol as outlined in the strategic plan.

ASAP will expand on the progress made in addressing alcohol related issues, and focus our efforts on the recent trends such as prescription/over the counter drug abuse and so on.

If you would like more information about the grant please plan to attend our next coalition meeting on September 23rd from 12p-2p at the County Services Building. RSVP required for lunch- call or email Heidi 269-673-6617 #2714 or [hdenton@accmhs.org](mailto:hdenton@accmhs.org).

### Mission Statement of ASAP:

**"Uniting the community to identify and solve substance abuse issues"**



[www.alleganmeth.com](http://www.alleganmeth.com)

Welcome to the fall edition of our newsletter! Look for the next edition in December.

#### In this issue:

Dealing with resistance in substance abuse treatment

Update on retailer compliance rates

Prescription drug drop offs

#### Upcoming topics:

- \* Update on Smoke free Michigan
- \* Medical Marijuana
- \* Grant updates



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**Food for thought:** Family meals are the perfect time to talk to your kids and to listen to what's on their mind. The more often kids eat dinner with their families, the less likely they are to smoke, drink or use drugs.



## Dealing with Resistance in Substance Abuse Treatment

By Kevin H. Neuman, LMSW, CAAC

If you have ever worked in the field of providing substance abuse treatment, then you know that clients entering treatment have various levels of motivation. A majority of the time, clients are not motivated to be in treatment. Many come to our offices at the recommendation of someone else: the court system, a probation officer, a lawyer, an employer, CPS, a doctor, a spouse, or a parent. It can be a rude awakening for the social worker/counselor who first got into the field in order to help, only to find out that in the substance abuse field, the clients we encounter initially would rather not seek services with us. In my experience you will encounter three types of clients during their first visit. They are as follows:

The first is the **compliant client**. This could be someone who is on probation and is referred to treatment by their probation officer. On their initial visit this type of client is outwardly friendly, respectful, etc. Although they would rather not attend treatment, they mask any initial displeasure at coming to see you. Generally, they are willing to participate in the recommended treatment knowing it is a requirement. They may or may not acknowledge having a substance abuse problem.

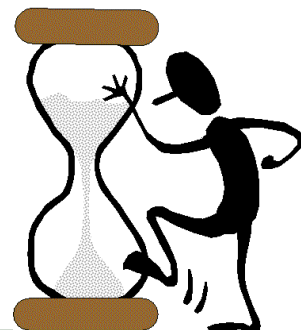
The second type of client is the **resistant client**. The difference between the compliant client and the resistant client is that outwardly, no effort is given to hide how they really feel about coming to your office. They overtly challenge the logic of being referred to you, question your credentials, refuse to give you a straight answer during the assessment and they may conclude that you are part of a big conspiracy to not only wreak havoc on their lives, but to make a buck in the process. I mean, isn't that the real reason we got into the helping field? We saw an opportunity to take advantage of others and join the likes of other social workers getting rich, right? I have had many clients tell me in the beginning that "this is all about the money" as to the reason that they are in my office. It hurts when someone challenges your motivations for doing what you do, especially when you know you got into the field to make a positive difference in the lives of others.

The third type of client is the **motivated client**. They enter your office with a genuine desire for the services you provide. They acknowledge having a substance abuse problem and want to make the necessary changes to live differently. These are the types of clients that I expected to work with when I entered the field of social work. Using the above definitions, in my opinion, about 90 percent of clients are compliant, 5 percent are resistant, and 5 percent are motivated during their initial session. However, as clients become more comfortable in treatment and realize that you do have their best interest at heart, we can see a major change. The compliant and resistant clients can begin to engage in treatment by opening up about their struggles.

I know my day goes smoother and I find more enjoyment in my work when I deal with clients who are in the motivated category. In spite of all strategies I have been trained in, I still find the resistant client very challenging. However, it is my responsibility to work with them no matter what level of motivation they are currently having. I generally find that the client's resistance doesn't last long if I develop a good therapeutic alliance with them.

Here are some suggestions that I have learned from others and through my own experiences on how to deal with a resistant client and develop a good therapeutic alliance.

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1. Don't be easily offended. Many clients are hurting and say things out of anger or fear. If we recognize this, then we may not take offense.

2. Seek to understand their feelings. Sometimes our main job is to just listen.

3. Validate their feelings vs. arguing with them. We do this by communicating to them that we understand. I recall one trainer saying, "tell them, that makes sense...it makes sense why you are frustrated about having to come here".

4. Remember that this individual likely has someone in their life that is hoping they can make a change. If we can hang in there with them, then possibly many can benefit.

5. Find something about this individual that pulls at your heart strings and focus on that.

6. Ask for their preference in treatment by telling them the different options available.

7. Be welcoming. If they feel welcomed, they are likely to come back.

8. Attend a training on the philosophy of Motivational Interviewing and Stages of Change.



### Compliance Rates for Allegan County

#### Alcohol

As of May 1, 2010 Allegan County retailers have an **88%** success rate at refusing sales to minors attempting to purchase alcohol at party stores, gas stations, restaurants and golf courses throughout the county.

#### Tobacco

As of May 1, 2010 Allegan County has an **87%** success rate (for the current year) at refusing sales to minors attempting to purchase tobacco. The Sheriff's Department completed 92 undercover "sting operations" in March resulting in 12 sales to minors.



Allegan County kids are trying alcohol at age 12.

[TalkSooner.org](http://TalkSooner.org)



**NO CIGS FOR OUR KIDS**

Responsible Tobacco Retailing  
Campaign of Allegan, Berrien,  
Muskegon, and Ottawa Counties.

Prescription drugs are being misused and abused at alarming rates throughout the United States. As part of the National efforts to address this problem, Allegan County will be collecting potentially dangerous expired, unused, and unwanted prescription drugs for destruction on **Saturday, September 25th from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.**, all over the County. The service is free and anonymous, no questions asked. Local locations TBD. Check [www.alleganmeth.com](http://www.alleganmeth.com) for specific locations in Allegan, or

call Heidi 269-673-6617 #2714.

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If you would like to contribute an article to future editions of this newsletter please contact Heidi at  
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