

## **A Safer Naper**

### **Our New Focus in 2020**

The start of a new year often brings with it resolutions to change, to do better or to reinvent oneself in the 12 months ahead. At the Naperville Police Department, we welcome change and continuously encourage our staff to embrace innovative ways to enhance or increase the efficiency of the services we provide to the community.

It is important to remember, however, that progress is most successful when there is a strong foundation to support the change. We have spent decades building a solid foundation of programs and services to meet the various needs of our community, and we intend to use our monthly Safer Naper program in 2020 to reintroduce these existing programs to the community.

### **Connect for Life**

In January, we start our focus on existing programs with Connect for Life, which was launched in 2016 in response to the nationwide opioid epidemic. Through this program, we use our network of partners to assist individuals and their families struggling with addiction (any addiction, not just opioids) get immediately connected to treatment or other support services. This service is offered to anyone with a desire to seek help for their substance use, regardless of their ability to pay or insurance status.

Anyone who contacts the Naperville Police Department, either in person at 1350 Aurora Ave. or by phone at (630) 420-6666, and asks for help with their addiction is immediately screened into the Connect for Life initiative by a licensed mental health professional. Additional support is also provided by recovery coaches, who guide the participant through the treatment and recovery process. We will even dispose of drugs and paraphernalia for Connect for Life participants without criminally charging the individual for possessing and turning in these items. Any outstanding warrants, however, must be quashed prior to obtaining services.

Visit our Connect for Life webpage [link [www.naperville.il.us/connectforlife](http://www.naperville.il.us/connectforlife)]

### **Addiction Myths and Facts**

**Myth:** People with severe substance use disorders are ‘bad’ people.

**Fact:** People with severe substance use disorders have a unique brain disease that causes them to think, feel, and act in ways that are often outside of their deep-down character and values.

**Myth:** If I bring in drugs or paraphernalia, the police will arrest me.

**Fact:** The Naperville Police Department will dispose of drugs and paraphernalia for Connect for Life participants without criminally charging the individual for possessing and turning in these items. Any outstanding warrants, however, must be quashed prior to obtaining services. Services are still offered, and encouraged, to those who are arrested for drug related offenses.

**Myth:** I have tried everything else, there is no way the Connect for Life Program would work for me.

**Fact:** The Connect for Life Program works with several different agencies in the area to offer a wide variety of treatment services. Support is also provided by Recovery Liaisons who have experienced similar situations as you, so you are not alone.

**Myth:** I can only use the program if I am using prescription opiates or heroin.

**Fact:** The Connect for Life Program accepts all forms of addiction, not just opiates or heroin.

**Myth:** If I don't have insurance or have Medicaid, I won't be able to get help or I'll just be put on another wait list.

**Fact:** The Connect for Life Program is offered to anyone with a desire to seek help for their substance use, regardless of their ability to pay or insurance status. There are also additional funding supports that might be available to support your treatment needs.

**Myth:** The Naperville Police Department doesn't care about me and my addiction. Why even bother?

**Fact:** The Naperville Police Department has recognized that we cannot arrest our way out of this epidemic, so we are offering an alternative for support to positively change the impact of addiction in our community. We care about your health and wellbeing and are happy to help you achieve your sobriety goals.

**Myth:** Police officers are scary. I don't know if I feel comfortable talking to them about my personal issues.

**Fact:** Remember that police officers are also mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters and have personal struggles themselves. Our officers will work hard to help you and will treat you how they would want their loved ones to be treated.