

YSS offers substance use recovery program to youth

WHEELING — Youth Services System is offering SMART Recovery Youth & Teens, as well as SMART Recovery Family & Friends, to Ohio Valley youth this fall.

The Youth & Teens program is geared to teens who have a substance use or mental health disorder, while the new Family & Friends program is for youth who have a loved one experiencing a disorder.

YSS Peer Recovery Support Specialist Tucker Riggleman has reached out locally to bring both programs to local schools this fall.

Riggleman attended a training in May on the new Family & Friends model, which he said teaches youth and adults how to cope with a loved one who is struggling.

“It’s all about building your own coping skills and your own self-care,” Riggleman said.

SMART Recovery stands for Self-Management And Recovery Training. SMART Recovery can help people experiencing a variety of struggles, such as depression, anxiety disorders



Photo provided

TUCKER RIGGLEMAN, a certified Peer Recovery Support Specialist, plans to offer SMART Recovery for Youth & Teens and SMART Recovery Family & Friends to local youth in schools and throughout the community this fall.

and substance use disorders. “SMART Recovery is about empowering you to make the right decisions and choices,” said Riggleman, who recently became the second YSS employee to get certified as a Peer

Recovery Specialist through W.Va. Certification Board for Addiction & Prevention Professionals. Unlike 12-step recovery programs, such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon,

SMART Recovery programs do not include a spiritual aspect but rather encourage self-reliance. They are rooted in evidence-based therapies, such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy.

Riggleman has been leading SMART Recovery groups since summer 2020 when he worked

as a peer recovery coach with Tucker County Community Corrections. Riggleman works specifically with ages 12-24 at YSS, so offering SMART Recovery Youth & Teens and Family & Friends is a perfect fit.

Riggleman will provide workbooks and training on topics like change and motivation, self-care and rewards, and inner dialogue.

He has reached out to guidance counselors at several local high schools regarding both programs and will follow up with them after school starts. He also plans to do community groups but is holding off because of the uncertainty of renewed COVID

restrictions.

He also can do one-on-one sessions, which is especially helpful when serving youth in different stages of substance use disorder.

SMART Recovery Family & Friends — whether for youth or adults — is vital because of the need for assistance among the support systems of people in recovery.

“We find that working with people who are still in recovery or active addiction where their loved ones are tired from working with them and react in a negative way — it isn’t helpful for anybody.”

Riggleman said there is a metaphor used in SMART Recovery Family & Friends called the oxygen mask rule.

“If you are on a plane and you hit turbulence, the oxygen masks drop. The instructions show that you are supposed to put the mask on yourself first. If you don’t get that oxygen first, you can’t help anyone else.”

For more information, contact Riggleman at 304-639-4902 or triggelman@ysswv.com.