



Welcome to Project Checkpoint-Colchester!

Checkpoint is a “screening and brief intervention” program designed for students found in violation of the school’s substance use policy. Checkpoint is an option for students to fulfill school policy requirements while also:

- Building skills
- Learning new strategies
- Becoming more informed
- Increasing self-awareness of their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors

Through Checkpoint, students find their motivation, develop new skills, and increase their capacity to make healthier choices and engage in more successful and productive activities.

Checkpoint begins with a *Screening Interview*, followed by 3 weekly group sessions. These *Group Sessions* address a variety of topics, including:

- Decision Making & Problem Solving
- Stress Reduction & Coping Skills
- Power, Self-Control, Accountability, and Responsibility
- Personal Assets Inventory, Resiliency Skills, and Healthy Supports
- Planning for Set-Backs, Unhealthy Influence, and High-Risk Situations

Group sessions focus on practical application and rehearsal of new skills to increase the successful use of these skills in real-life situations. Checkpoint also includes take-home activities to further reinforce ‘real-life practice.’

How do we know if it’s working? Designed as an *intervention alternative* to help prevent the need for greater consequence and sanction (such as school expulsion), Checkpoint also includes quarterly *Administrative Review Hearings*. An initial hearing occurs upon completion of the group sessions, with three follow-up Checkpoint Hearings scheduled over the next 12 months. These Hearings allow for students to share and demonstrate their progress, for the student and their team to identify and address any unmet needs, for a review of academic, performance, and attendance data, and to plan for any next steps.

And what comes next? Through completion of Project Checkpoint, students receive a *Screening Assessment* with recommendations for any ongoing support that may be indicated. For some, participation in Project Checkpoint is sufficient to address their needs. Others receive ongoing assistance through school personnel, participation in co-curricular and youth development activities, or community support counseling. Still others with greater need have access to the broad range of treatment services provided by Centerpoint and other mental health agencies.

Project Checkpoint-Colchester is a collaboration between Centerpoint Adolescent Treatment Services and Colchester High School. Through this partnership, Colchester students have access to a broad array of supports to increase school success, to promote personal health & well-being, and to address life-interfering substance use or mental health concerns.

For more information, contact:

Kate Dearth, Centerpoint Community Support Counselor, 343-3958 or kated@centerpointservices.org
Tim Emery, Colchester High School Assistant Principal, 264-5700 or emeryt@csdvt.org
Justin Brown, Colchester High School Assistant Principal, 264-5707 or brownj@csdvt.org



Frequently Asked Questions:

Is Checkpoint only for students who have a “policy violation”?

Project Checkpoint’s screening and brief intervention programming is primarily designed for students who have violated a substance use policy and face sanctions as a result of that violation. Similar types of services are available through Checkpoint and Centerpoint for those young people who are in need and who may benefit, but do not face similar sanctions or consequences. Project Checkpoint also offers Wellness Programming designed for all students on a school-wide level.

Is there a cost for this program?

There is NO COST to the student or family for participation in Project Checkpoint. Colchester High School has contributed a small amount of ‘Substance Abuse Prevention’ funding to assist with programming. Project Checkpoint is primarily funded through grants received by Centerpoint.

Is this optional or mandatory?

Checkpoint is both optional and an opportunity. This project does not change existing approved school policies, and students may choose to face the existing sanctions as identified in these policies, including School Board Hearings. The Colchester School Board is supportive of Project Checkpoint, and understands student participation in Checkpoint as a demonstration of students’ intent to address their challenges, take responsibility for their behaviors, and work toward healthy and successful young adult living. The School Board expects that some students may choose not to engage in this change-process, and will face policy-guided consequences.

What happens when a student successfully completes Checkpoint?

Many things happen when a student takes advantage of this opportunity and successfully completes the program. Students feel better about themselves and what they can accomplish. Students do better in many aspects of their lives. Adults (including parents, teachers, administrators, and others) experience an increased appreciation for the potential and abilities of the student. And, the student resolves the policy violation.

What happens if a student *does not* successfully complete Checkpoint?

If a student chooses not to successfully complete Project Checkpoint, then their case is referred back to the standard Policy and Disciplinary processes, up to and including School Board review and sanction. If a student’s needs or abilities are best met through a different service, then alternate counseling and support services will be offered (see below).

What happens when a student needs more supports and services?

At any step in the Checkpoint process, from Initial Screening through Administrative Review Hearings, additional services may be indicated. At times, this is as a result of a student’s increased self-awareness and self-directed desire for more individualized counseling. At other times, emotional or behavioral presentations may suggest the need for more intensive or specific services. Through Checkpoint, these needs may be identified (screened and assessed), with recommendations for additional services and assistance to help the student access these services in a timely and effective way.

What if a student doesn't like or "doesn't do" groups?

Sometimes you may hear teens say that they "don't do groups," or perhaps that they "don't have anything in common with other people in group." And we may hear adults or parents say "you shouldn't put teens together in groups – they just learn bad behaviors from other teens." At times each of these statements could be true. It is therefore crucial to match group design, group content, group membership, and even counselor style to insure that the services being offered match the needs, abilities, and capacities of the participants.

When group services are thoughtful and well-planned, when group membership is intentional, and when content and design are based on best-practices, the skillful use of peer influence and group dynamics allows change to occur more quickly and reinforces longer lasting progress.

How big are the groups?

Checkpoint groups typically include 3-6 participants. This small group model is 'large enough' to allow for the peer group dynamic that will support learning and practical application, and 'small enough' to insure that each student's unique needs are met and unique circumstances are addressed.

Where and when are the groups held?

Checkpoint groups are held on campus at CHS in a room that is large enough for the group activities and that maintains sufficient confidentiality to allow students to participate freely without distraction from other school activities. Checkpoint scheduling is adjusted to accommodate the schedules of the students, account for the activities of the school, and to prevent any loss of instructional time.

Who is running the groups?

Project Checkpoint's counseling and support services, including screening services and groups, are primary facilitated by Centerpoint Community Support Counselor Kate Dearth, with additional services from Centerpoint's Admission Coordinator Michael Hunter, and other staff of Centerpoint's Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services. The administrative review hearings include identified school personnel, and may include the Community Support Counselor as indicated.

How are referrals made to Checkpoint?

As a project specifically designed for students who have violated a substance use policy, all referrals are coordinated through school administration. For similar types of services for the general student population, or for specialized services for specific students, the Centerpoint Community Support Counselor is a liaison for service access and admission.

What if I have more questions?

With additional questions or for more information, contact:

Kate Dearth, Centerpoint Community Support Counselor, 343-3958 (kated@centerpointservices.org)

Tim Emery, Colchester High School Assistant Principal, 264-5700 (emeryt@csdvt.org)

Justin Brown, Colchester High School Assistant Principal, 264-5707 (brownj@csdvt.org)

To learn more about Centerpoint's Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services, and how they may benefit Colchester Students, contact:

Centerpoint Admissions Coordinator Michael Hunter at 488-7714 (michaelh@centerpointservices.org) or Centerpoint Director Mitch Barron at 488-7721 (mitchb@centerpointservices.org).