



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2024.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: _____

Program Title: _____

Program Category: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: _____

Title: _____

Department: _____

Telephone: _____ Website: _____

Email: _____

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

VACO Award: “ I Never Thought I’d Be Me”

“**I Never Thought It’d Be Me**”, is a 90-minute interactive Substance Use Prevention Program presented by the H.A.R.P (Helping Addicts Recover Progressively) Team as part of the Chesterfield County Jail’s Inmate Community Outreach Initiative. This program will leave students with the cold hard facts surrounding drug use of any kind. We tell the real stories of the H.A.R.P. staff and inmates as we educate youth straight about just how easy it is to fall into addiction. This program addresses the following:

- Risk Factors for Addiction
- Why the Teen Brain is at MORE risk.
- Why how you manage Stress matter.
- How we manage pain matters.
- It’s not “just” Pot and Alcohol.
- Fentanyl is in EVERYTHING
- Xylazine
- Importance of Narcan
- Understanding Dopamine & Addiction
- There is no SAFE drug use.

- 93% of all students report that the presentation changed how they thought about and what they knew about Substance Use and Mental Health.

- 91% of students surveyed rated the performance at least a 7 out of 10 with more than 50% rating it a 10.

No one chooses addiction. **No one thinks it will happen to them until it does.** Prevention is crucial.

Problem /Need for the Program:

To say that there is a mental health and addiction crisis in this country is an understatement. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, drug abuse costs the United States more than 740 billion annually in healthcare, wasted productivity and crime. Prevention in the community is a vital aspect of managing and addressing substance use disorders and the hidden costs that come with it. Empowering the community and propagating awareness that drug and alcohol addiction can be treated is also crucial. The leading cause of death for our youth is overdose and it is estimated that 49.5% of our youth will struggle with a mental health disorder in their lives (NIMH). In an effort to address this crisis, on April 19, 2023, the Chesterfield County Community Outreach Initiative, **“I Never Thought It’d be Me”** was born.

The Manchester High School Success Program had reached out asking if we would bring inmates in to share why students want to avoid going to jail. Kerri Rhodes, Director, Behavioral and Mental Health Division, then a trauma therapist in the HARP Program (Helping Addicts Recover Progressively) thought they could do far more than that. She knew all too well the importance of reaching students before they fell into the river of addiction. Kerri lost her own son, Taylor to an overdose following a shoulder surgery and created what she wished Taylor and

other teens had known about mental health and substance use. “I Never Thought it Would be Me”, is a collaborative effort between H.A.R.P staff and the inmates in the male and female H.A.R.P. program. It is an effort to address this crisis and educate kids straight. We are losing 306 people to overdose ([CDC](#)) and 132 people ([AFSP](#)) to suicide each day. There is no price that we as a society or families can put on deaths that are in fact preventable.

The need for programs like “I Never Thought It’d Be Me” are overwhelming. One lost is one too many. The solution to this epidemic lies in prevention. The best use of our resources is to go up-river and make sure our youth never fall in the river of addiction in the first place. That means making sure they have tools to regulate their nervous systems and find calm. Mental health and wellness is about a flexible nervous system and so many of our youth are not given the education or the tools and then find relief in paths that lead to addiction and more dysregulation. After ninety minutes the students we present to leave with a different lens. It’s not Scared Straight, it’s Educate Straight. Using real-people, real-stories and real-life. No one ever thinks it will happen to them until it does. Four hundred and thirty-eight people die from suicide and overdose every day in our county and the numbers continue to climb. We have got to educate our youth before they fall in. I hope you will consider the efforts of our presentation as a worthy step in the right direction.

Description of the Program:

In 2016, Sheriff Karl Leonard asked one question. How many people need to die before we do something? The next day he gathered up everyone in the Chesterfield County Jail that wanted help and recovery. The result of that one brave act is today known as the HARP Program (Helping Addicts Recover Progressively). It is a holistic, multi-faceted therapeutic community in

the Chesterfield County Jail that has garnered international acclaim for the cutting-edge work and holistic approach they use to help people heal from trauma, addiction and find recovery.

In April of 2023, a local High School asked if the H.A.R.P. program could come and talk to students about not ending up in jail. Kerri Rhodes LPC, LMFT then serving as a trauma therapist in H.A.R.P. thought they could do far better than that. Having lost her own son, Taylor after he struggled with addiction as a result of how his pain was managed following a shoulder surgery. Armed with her work in H.A.R.P., and what she learned in the fire with her son's struggle she set to work to put together what Taylor and the HARP participants wish they had known as young people. The result, the HARP Inmate Outreach Initiative, **“I Never Thought It'd Be Me”**. It is a 90-minute interactive Substance Use Prevention Program presented by the H.A.R.P (Helping Addicts Recover Progressively) Team. The team consists of the Sheriff, HARP Staff and male and female participants in the HARP Program. This program is aimed at educating middle and high school students in Central Virginia about mental health, substance use, how we manage stress and the science of addiction. We don't believe in trying to scare students straight. Instead, we use real stories and real people to educate youth about just how easy it is to fall into addiction and the importance of mental health. The feedback from students and faculty has been incredibly positive. The program director of the Success Program at Manchester High School wrote, “THANK YOU GUYS SO MUCH AGAIN FOR THE LAST 2 DAYS! It truly has been one of the most impactful days of my teaching career”.

Program objectives:

- Risk Factors for Addiction
- Why the Teen Brain is at MORE risk.

- Why how you manage Stress matter.
- How we manage pain matters.
- It's not "just" Pot and Alcohol.
- Fentanyl is in EVERYTHING
- Xylazine
- Importance of Narcan
- Understanding Dopamine & Addiction
- There is no SAFE drug use.

The purpose of this initiative is to arm schools and youth with information about mental health, substance use and save lives. Our prayer as we begin each presentation is that "we reach just one" student. Every life matters, we are losing far too many people to overdose and suicide. The outcome has been that we are reaching students and helping them understand the facts about the choices they are making. They report having a different understanding of how to manage stress, the teenage brain, what puts teens at risk for addiction, why how we manage pain matters, and the truth about the drugs that are out on the street and why understanding dopamine matters.

Jordan Sachs, a person in long term recovery who filmed the video portions of this project. He was compensated for his work. This was a collaborative effort between HARP Staff, The Sheriff and HARP participants.

No one chooses addiction. **No one thinks it will happen to them until it does.**

Advancing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:

Every day we have students across the nation dying in the gaps. This prevention effort targets all middle and high schoolers in Central Virginia. It is delivered at no cost, which increases inclusion and accessibility. We bring a diverse group of presenters who teach the material as well as weave in their own personal stories which are incredibly powerful. They pervade every economic, social, racial, and ethnic group. Because we provide this as a free service, we can reach a diverse group of students from all walks of life. Mental health issues and addiction do not discriminate.

Cost of Program:

The operating costs consists of

\$1000.00 cost of video production

\$250.00 presentation supply costs (Doritos, props, presentation advancement clicker)

Capital Operating Costs:

Two laptops for presentation. (One for our presenters to reference and one to run the presentation at the school.) (We use ones already assigned to our staff)

Transportation costs to get inmates to the school. (gas, vehicle, manpower)

Cost of feeding inmates and staff (schools have donated this historically, but it not we do provide it.)

Two deputies to transport four inmates.

Ankle monitors for inmates.

Clinical and sworn staff out of the building and not providing services in the jail.

Results:

We have done eight presentations since the program began in the Spring of 2023 and have received more than 70 letters from students about how impactful the presentation was. We also ask students to give us something they are taking away from the presentation that they did not have before. Here are just a few:

- A tiny bit of a drug can kill you and it can happen to anyone.
- My first takeaway from the presentation is that I have a much better understanding of addiction and how it affects you as well as so many others around you. It was really insightful to have the information and perspectives from different people who have struggled/are struggling in real life, instead of trying to connect with random people on a screen.
- Think twice about the decisions you make and the people you hang with matter.
- That having Narcan is important.
- That stuff is really real, I never actually took a second to think about everything that was said.
- No matter where you come from it can happen to you.
- Mental health plays a lot into addiction, and what you think is the least dangerous substance, it could be laced with fentanyl.
- My first one was that people in jail or addicts are just real normal people that got put in a crappy situation. I realized that they have a past, they have a story.
- Dopamine
- It is never too late to turn it around.
- That I'm not the only one with problems and that people are there to help me.

93% of students report that the presentation changed how they thought about and what they knew about Substance Use and Mental Health.

91% of students surveyed rated the performance at least a 7 out of 10 with more than 50% rating it a 10.

Executive Summary:

"There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they're falling in."

~ Desmond TuTu

Overdose is the number one cause of death for youth under the age of 25 and in 2023 we estimate that 112,000 people died from overdose and another 48,180 a day from suicide. **"I Never Thought It'd Be Me"**, part of the Chesterfield County Jail's Inmate Community Outreach Initiative is a powerful prevention tool aimed at educating youth. 61.2 million people used illicit drugs last year, one in five teens struggle with depression and 75% of those report severe impairment. Only 20% of the people suffering from mental illness or substance use disorder get any kind of help. The best use of our resources is upstream. **"I Never Thought I'd Be Me"** is an upstream effort with real people, real stories. Our data shows it is impacting students. This program is offered at no cost to the school or community and reaches a diverse group of students across Central Virginia, responding to the cost barriers that often limit access for economically challenged areas. Our team represents a diverse group of individuals consisting of staff and inmates who incorporate a message using real people with real stories to educate youth about the choices they are making. As one student reported, "my first take away was that people in jail or addicts are just real normal people that got put in a crappy situation. I realized that they have a past, they have a story."

The cost of the program is minimal, but the impact is mighty, and any jurisdiction can use its internal resources and model our program. Every life matters and prevention is a vital tool in saving lives. Our motto, one lost is one too many.

Supplemental Materials
VACO Award Submission
“I Never Thought It’d be Me”

Link to Presentation: “**I Never Thought It’d be Me**”. [LINK](#)

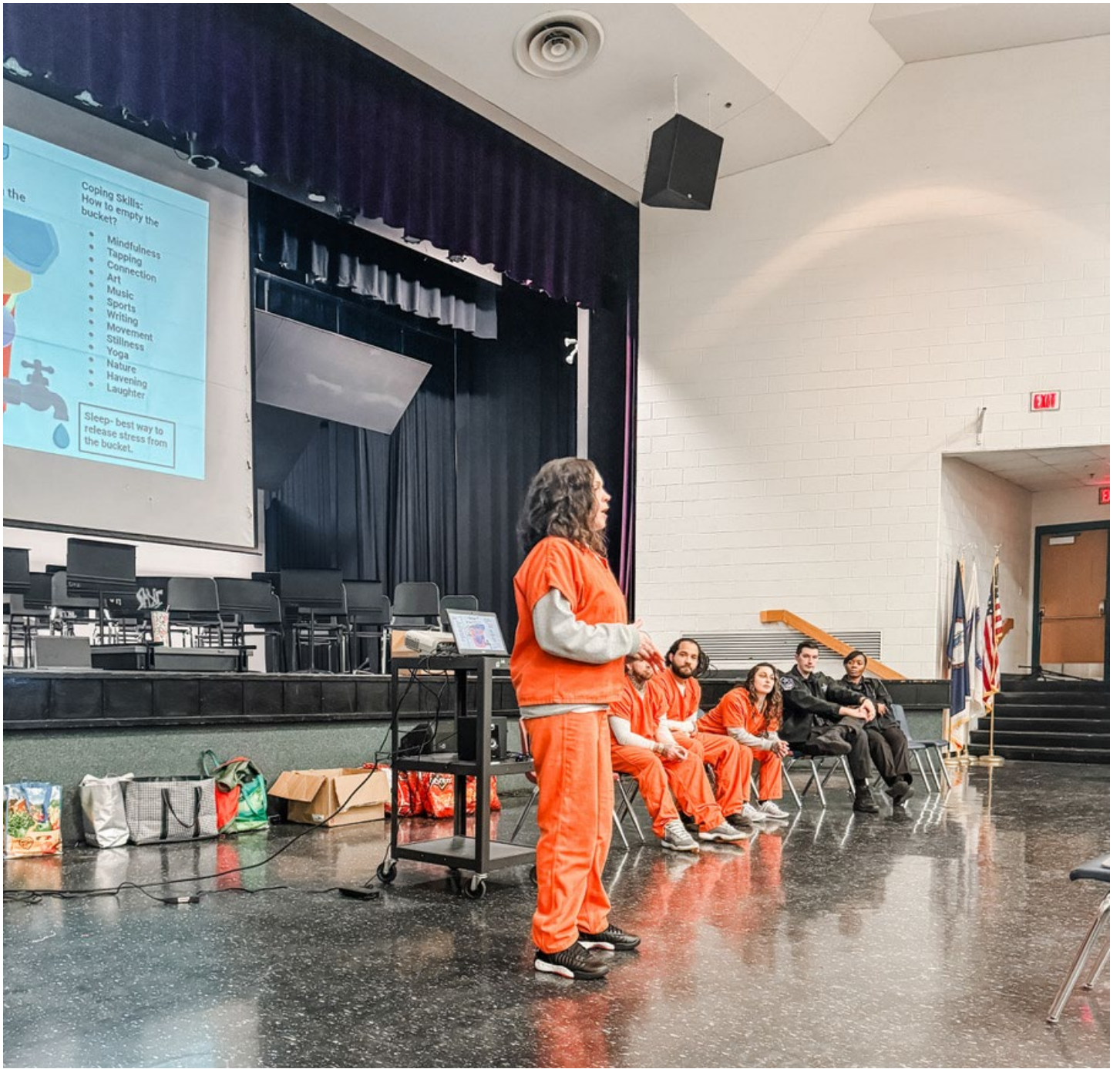
Other materials include:

- “**I Never Thought It’d be Me**” Program Flyer
- Photos of Presentations in local Schools.









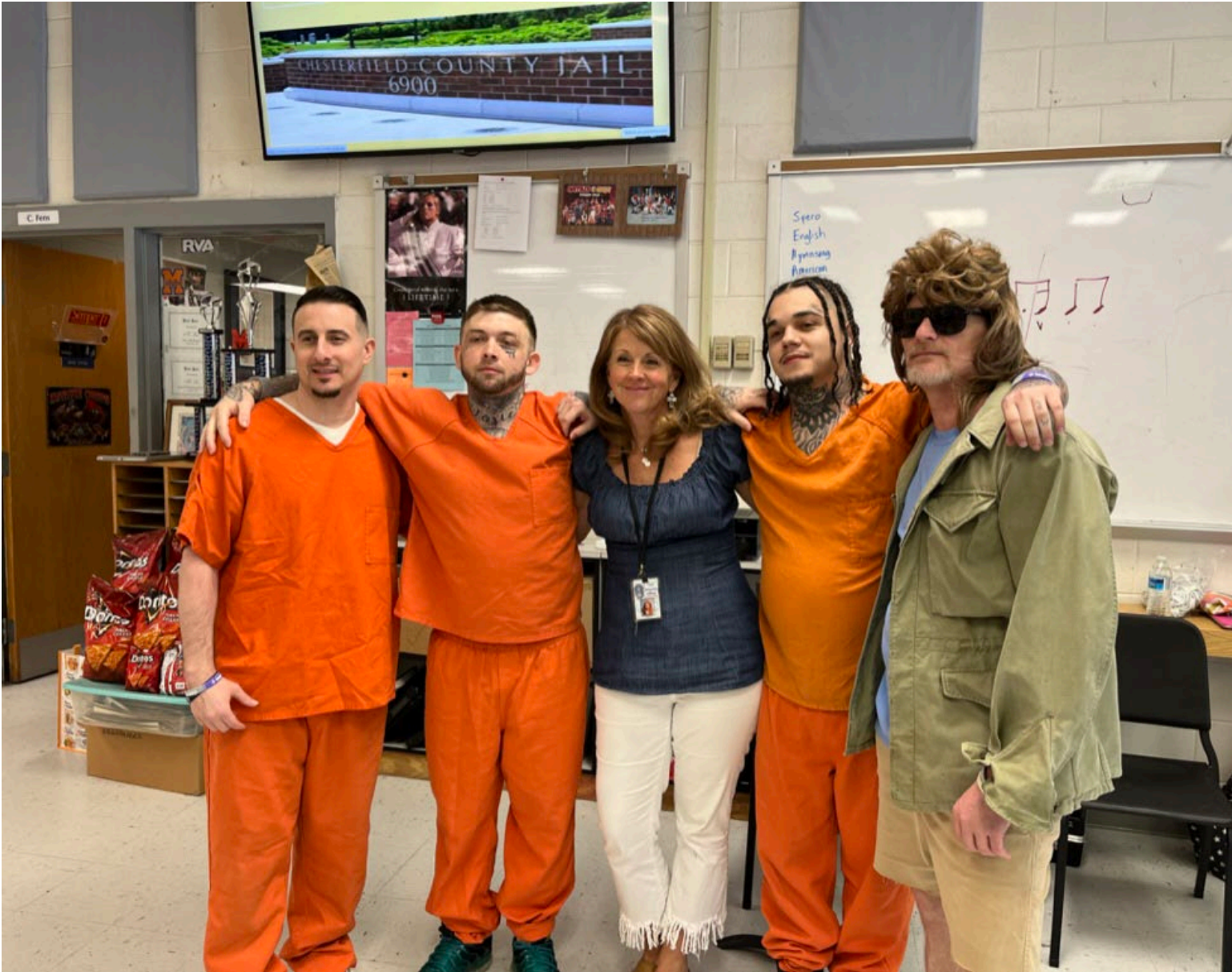
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Coping Skills:
How to empty the
bucket?

- Mindfulness
- Tapping
- Connection
- Art
- Music
- Sports
- Writing
- Movement
- Stillness
- Yoga
- Nature
- Havening
- Laughter

Sleep- best way to
release stress from
the bucket.











Our ask as we begin each presentation is to help us reach just one student. One lost is one too many.



The Chesterfield County Sheriff's
Department H.A.R.P. Community
Outreach Initiative Presents:

"I Never Thought It'd Be Me"

"I Never Thought It'd Be Me", is a 90-minute interactive Substance Use Prevention Program presented by the H.A.R.P (Helping Addicts Recover Progressively) Team as part of the Chesterfield County Jail's Inmate Community Outreach Initiative.

**Overdose is the
leading cause of death
for youth under 25.**

This program will leave students with the cold hard facts surrounding drug use of any kind. We tell the real stories of the H.A.R.P. staff and inmates as we educate youth straight about just how easy it is to fall into addiction.

No one chooses addiction.

No one thinks it will happen to them until it does.



**The program
educates middle &
high school students
about substance use
focusing on:**

- Risk Factors for Addiction
- Why the Teen Brain is at MORE risk.
- Why how you manage Stress matters
- How we manage pain matters.
- It's not "just" Pot and Alcohol.
- Fentanyl is in EVERYTHING
- Xylazine
- Importance of Narcan
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- There is no SAFE drug use.

Contact **Paige Cattler**, LCSW-r cattlerp@chesterfield.gov or **Bailey Hilliard**, LCSW-r Hilliardb@chesterfield.gov if you are interested in a presentation for your school or organization. There is no cost to the school for this presentation. No one chooses addiction. No one thinks it will happen to them until it does.



The Chesterfield County Sheriff's
Department H.A.R.P. Community
Outreach Initiative Presents:

"I Never Thought It'd Be Me"

Presentation Requirements

Our presentation is an hour with a 30-minute Q and A afterward with the inmates and Clinical staff. You can provide us with questions before the presentation or you can allow your students to ask questions.

We can do two presentations in the same school day. (Morning and afternoon)

Q and A:

QR code if you would like us to use that. (We can screen questions in real time and students can remain anonymous.)

Student Participation: (school can pick these students or we can pick out of the audience at random)

- 3 Students: Overdose Risk demonstration
- 5 Students: Dopamine demonstration (small bags of Doritos will be thrown into the crowd)

Technology Requirements:

Need access to School WIFI with Password.

Powerpoint slides used throughout the presentation. Embedded Videos

2 Small Tables-

- One on stage so our presenters can see the slide they are presenting.
- One table for our staff to run the presentation from depending on your auditorium set-up.
- 10 chairs that can be put on stage on the side for our team to sit during the Q and A.

We require at least one of your School Counselors/Intervention Specialist at our presentations given the nature of subject matter and to provide local resources.

Survey:

After the presentation we ask that students, later that day or the next day, take a short survey that helps us understand what they take away from the presentation. The survey is anonymous and no information that identifies the student is collected. (Survey QR provided to school staff)

Question can be emailed to:

Paige Cattler catterp@chesterfield.gov
Phone: (804) 706-2909

Bailey Hilliard HilliardB@chesterfield.gov
Phone: 804-706-2034

H.A.R.P Team

- H.A.R.P Mental Health and Program staff
- We will have four inmates and two Sheriff's Deputies for security.

Contact **Paige Cattler**, LCSW-r catterp@chesterfield.gov or **Bailey Hilliard**, LCSW-r Hilliardb@chesterfield.gov if you are interested in a presentation for your school or organization. There is no cost to the school for this presentation. No one chooses addiction. No one thinks it will happen to them until it does.