

Young Adults and Risk-Taking Behavior

Parents of teenagers and young adults often ask about risky behaviors that young adults and teens engage in. They are often worried that their children might engage in risk-taking behavior. Young people often believe they are invincible and that nothing can stop or hurt them. Parents naturally want the best for their children, even as they become adults.

One study discussed in *Monitor on Psychology* (October 2008, Vol. 39, No. 9) discusses a study conducted by Kim Fromme, PhD., of the University of Texas at Austin on the negative effects of turning 21 as it relates to young adults' alcohol consumption.

Students at the university were asked to record their behaviors for two weeks prior to and after turning 21. The study found that "44 percent experienced blackouts, with 30 percent not remembering how they had gotten home, and almost 5 percent reported having unprotected sex..."

Women drank an average of eight drinks per night, while men drank an average of 12. Further 15 percent admitted to drinking after driving following their birthdays, a four percent increase in this behavior than prior to their birthdays.

How can parents help?

Talk with your children early about the harmful effects of risk-taking behavior. Provide statistics of consequences for activities such as drunk driving and unprotected sex. Further, education on peer pressure is necessary. Explain that just because your son or daughter's friends all take part in potentially harmful situations or events doesn't make it right.

Discuss healthy decision-making and foster an environment of open communication where your son or daughter can feel he or she can always come to you with questions. Don't be intimidated if you don't know all the answers; do not let this stop you for communicating with your child. It's ok if they know that you don't know all the answers, but that you can be a resource and that you will make every effort to find answers to their questions.

If you are concerned that your child may be considering or currently partaking in risky behavior, do not wait until it is too late. Contact a professional who will be able to assist in assessing the severity of your concern and provide appropriate solutions.

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My private practice is located in North Scottsdale, within the offices of PsychArizona. I work with children (ages 6 and older), pre-teens, adolescents and adults. I work with individuals, couples and families with issues of anxiety, depression, trauma, grief and loss, career, academic and workplace issues, relationship issues, LGBT concerns, personal growth and spirituality.

I use various therapeutic approaches depending on the needs of the client. These approaches include developmental, humanistic, cognitive-behavioral, existential, family-systems, mindfulness-based, transpersonal, and EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing). EMDR is a model used for the treatment of trauma, and has also been found to be successful in the treatment of various other disorders as well.

I have experience providing professional counseling in clinical, business, and school settings.

Apart from my private practice, I am also a Reiki Master and have a great appreciation and respect for alternative as well as conventional treatment approaches.

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