

# School Social Work Newsletter

*"Children must be taught how to think, not what to think."*

— [Margaret Mead](#)

*"Accept the children the way we accept trees—with gratitude, because they are a blessing—but do not have expectations or desires. You don't expect trees to change; you love them as they are."*

— [Isabel Allende](#)

*"Nothing you do for children is ever wasted."*

— [Garrison Keillor](#)

## 100 Most Dangerous Days of Driving

Spring is in the air and young teen drivers are obtaining their licenses and exploring the roads with a sense of zeal that requires caution on everyone's part. It's that time of year when it's warm and people are thinking about the pool, the bay or ocean, hanging out with friends, graduation, and parties. It's hard for everyone to focus on the task at hand, especially new teen drivers! Summer is fast approaching and we want our teens to be as prepared as possible to face the "100 MOST DANGEROUS DAYS OF DRIVING". According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, "**Memorial Day through Labor Day**" is the most dangerous for drivers 15 to 20 years old, resulting in more teen traffic deaths than any other time of the year. **Distractions** like texting, the radio, too many passengers, or eating while driving, can all lead to crashes. Teens particularly are prone to accidents, (4X more likely), largely due to their inexperience behind the wheel. Parents can help ensure their teens are safe on the road by setting a good example. **A full 80% of teen drivers say they learn what to do while driving from their parents. Being self-aware is the first thing you can do to ensure your teens safety!** Parents can also set some **firm ground rules** before handing over the keys such as:

- Always buckle up
- Don't text and drive (it's not only dangerous, but illegal)
- Maintain a safe distance behind the cars in front of you
- Avoid having too many passengers in the car
- Settle on a radio station before hitting the road

Did you know that **80% of all crashes involve driver "inattention" within 3 seconds of the crash** or that **reaching for the phone while driving makes you 9X more likely to crash** and that **texting while driving makes you 23X more likely to crash**? Not my kid you say? **49% of all teen drivers state texting is their biggest distraction!** **As parents and adults, there is much we can and should do to help make the "100 most dangerous days of driving" a bit safer for our Teens!**

## GAMBLING: A HIDDEN ADDICTION

Approximately 85% of adults in the United States have gambled at least one time in their lives. The National Council on Problem Gambling reports 2 million adults in the U. S. meet criteria for pathological gambling and 4.6 million would be considered problem gamblers. Pathological or obsessive gambling includes an uncontrollable preoccupation and urges to gamble and despite negative consequences the individual continues to gamble. Problem gambling includes dedicating more time, thought and money to gambling that goes beyond participating for entertainment purposes. Gambling addiction can be called a hidden addiction as there are no physical signs to help identify the problem and because gambling is a culturally acceptable activity.

- It is for entertainment
- It can be easy money
- It can be a lucrative fundraiser for important causes

**The definition of gambling is "to stake or risk money on anything of value on the outcome of something involving chance or any matter of thing involving risk".**

## GAMBLING: A HIDDEN ADDICTION Cont.

### Upcoming Events



Mental Illness Awareness  
Month May, 2014



Annual  
OBEN PTA Bullying  
Committee Poster Contest  
Begins 03/28/2014

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There are many opportunities for gambling in New York State. Many of these activities are not recognized as potentially harmful. Some examples are horse racing, playing cards for money, sports betting and charitable fundraisers like a 50/50 raffle.

Raising awareness about the down side of gambling is an important effort so communities can identify resources for help. There are three special populations more vulnerable to problem gambling; adolescents, college students and senior citizens.

Adolescents are 2 to 4 times more likely to develop a problem with gambling than adults. Adolescents are more at risk because of the unique characteristics that are associated with this developmental stage such as increased impulsivity and susceptibility to peer influence.

Problem gambling impacts an individual's quality of life, affects their family and puts a strain on communities. It is helpful to be aware of the warning signs and to challenge misconceptions about gambling.

#### Warning signs include:

- Spending more time on gambling activities
- Continues to gamble despite negative consequences
- Preoccupation with gambling
- Grades drop or poor work performance
- Stealing money to gamble
- Isolating
- Time spent on gambling interrupts previously planned activities

#### • Resources

- New York Council on Problem Gambling
- 518 867 4084
- [www.nyproblemgambling.org](http://www.nyproblemgambling.org)
- New York State Office of alcoholism and Substance Abuse services
- 18778HOPENY
- [www.oasas.ny.gov/gambling](http://www.oasas.ny.gov/gambling)

## Bipolar Disorder in Children and Teens

Previously recognized as manic-depression, bipolar disorder is a mood disorder marked by extreme changes in mood, energy levels, and behavior. Although bipolar symptoms typically emerge in adolescence or adulthood they can be seen in children as young as 7 or 8 years old. Bipolar disorder can be hard to diagnose in children and teens. Because the symptoms can mimic symptoms of other disorders, such as: Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Alcohol and drug abuse problems, and Conduct disorder. Bipolar disorder causes mood swings with extreme ups (also known as mania) and downs (also known as depression). When children or adolescents with this bipolar are up, they have brief, intense outbursts or feel irritable or extremely happy several times almost every day. They have a lot of energy and a high activity level. When they are down, they feel depressed and sad.

In children and teens, moods quickly change from one extreme to another. In children who have a bipolar disorder, these mood changes must be different from the child's usual moods and must happen with other symptoms or changes in behavior. Your Pediatrician or Psychiatrist can diagnose children and teens with bipolar by asking questions about your child's feelings and behavior. Your doctor may also give you and your child written tests to find out how severe the mania or depression is.

