



# Binge Drinking

## And the Underdeveloped Teenage Brain



*Binge drinking is defined as a female consuming 4 or more drinks on a single occasion. For males, binge drinking is consuming 5 or more drinks in one sitting.*

-Center for Disease Control and Prevention

Dr. Francis Jensen, who is Chair of the Department of Neurology at the University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School of Medicine, has spent years researching the teenage brain. She has recently written a book called "The Teenage Brain: A Neuroscientist's Survival Guide to Raising Adolescents and Young Adults." Her research has found that the teenage brain is only about eighty percent mature. The last part of the brain to develop is the prefrontal cortex, the area of the brain responsible for the executive functions: judgment, insight, self-awareness, impulse control and empathy.

Commenting on the effect of alcohol on the teenage brain, Jensen said it may harm the teenage brain more profoundly than the adult brain since there are likely more open receptors in the brain for alcohol to bind, creating more problems for the developing brain. Researchers led by Toni Pak at Loyola University found that alcohol may also disrupt connections in the brain that relate to the production of the stress hormone, cortisol, throwing off a person's ability to manage stress. And that this disruption may lead to anxiety and depression later in life. More importantly, binge drinking may prevent those connections in the prefrontal cortex from being completed.

By Heather Frenette

#### References

Teen Brain more prone to drug and alcohol damage. <http://thechart.blogs.cnn.com/2010/11/15/teen-brain-more-prone-to-drug-alcohol-damage/>

The Teenage Brain: uniquely powerful, vulnerable, not fully developed.

<http://www.cbc.ca/thecurrent/episode/2015/01/13/the-teenage-brain-unique-powerful-vulnerable-not-fully-developed/>

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1. Binge Drinking and the Underdeveloped Teenage Brain
2. Adolescents Who Self-Harm
3. Why Teens Worry
3. Anxious Times: Teens and Anxiety



## Adolescents Who Self-Harm

“I have 32 scars on my arms and legs. I don’t want to do this anymore, but it takes the pain away. If I didn’t cut myself, I’d cry, and that would be the worst thing. . .” (qu. Suicide.org). In the *Psychiatric Times*, Dr. Greydanus reports 17% of Canadian adolescents and young adults engage in deliberate self-harm.



Self-harm is the act of physically harming oneself without suicidal intent. A few, methods include cutting, poisoning, burning, and jumping from high places. Younger children often will bite and scratch themselves. Trouble with friends, religious pressures, family problems, and difficulty at school can affect adolescents’ proneness to hurting themselves. Other risk factors can involve poverty, abuse, bullying, low self-esteem, impulsive personality, and a dysfunctional home life.

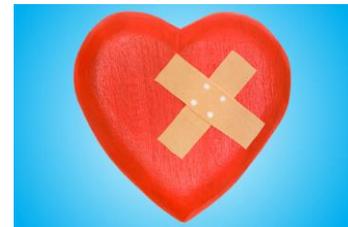
These young people also often have undiagnosed or untreated depression which, if ignored, can lead to suicide. Studies have shown that the ones with the highest risk of suicide are those who go to greater lengths to hide their self-harm, engage in the riskier behaviours, talk often about suicide, and have more than one mental illness. For more information visit <http://www.psychiatrictimes.com/child-adolescent-psychiatry/treating-self-harm-children-and-adolescents#sthash.uXBWrlwf.dpuf>, or if you suspect your child of engaging in self-harm, please see your family doctor as soon as possible.

By Dena Walker

### Sources

Caruso, Kevin. *Suicide Prevention, Awareness, and Support*. “Self-Injury Among Teens on the Rise: A Suicide Risk.” Web. Accessed on January 23, 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.suicide.org/self-injury-among-teens-suicide-risk.html>

Greydanus, Donald E. *Psychiatric Times*. “Treating Self-Harm in Children and Adolescents.” 2011. Web. Retrieved from [www.psychiatrictimes.com](http://www.psychiatrictimes.com)



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### AVD CLUBHOUSE PROJECT – ANNAPOLIS

#### **MUSIC CLUB**

Music Jam: Every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday at 4-6 pm  
*Annapolis Royal Nursing Home*

Ukulele Group: Tuesdays 12:45-1:30 pm *Middleton Baptist Church.*

Sing-a-long Jam: Tuesdays 1:30-3:00 pm *Middleton Baptist Church.*

All abilities welcome.

#### **WALKING AND EXERCISE CLUB**

Fridays 2-3:15pm at The Meadows or the Trojan Center, *Bridgetown*

All of our programs are **free**. Everyone is welcome.

Please contact:

Kate Wasteneys at [kwasteneys@hotmail.com](mailto:kwasteneys@hotmail.com) or by phone at 902-532-0531  
for up to date information on new programs, changes and locations.



## Why Teens Worry

*It is normal for teens to worry. Grades, friends, competitive sports, family conflicts and other situations can be nerve-wracking. But when anxiety is excessive, irrational or stands in the way of the teens achieving their goals and functioning in a healthy way, an anxiety disorder may be the cause.*

-Michael Hurst, *Anxiety In Teens*

An **anxiety problem or anxiety disorder** can be diagnosed when anxious feelings:

- are consistently very intense and severe
- go on for weeks, months or even longer
- are so distressing that they get in the way of a young person's ability to learn, socialise and do everyday things

Anxiety disorders in teenagers are serious mental health problems. An anxiety disorder affects how a young person thinks, feels and behaves. It's important to seek professional help if you see any of the warning signs of anxiety disorders in your child.



### References:

Anxiety Disorders in Teenagers.  
[http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/anxiety\\_disorders\\_teenagers.html](http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/anxiety_disorders_teenagers.html)

Anxiety in Teens: Symptoms and Treatment.  
<http://www.crchealth.com/troubled-teenagers/teenage-anxiety/>

## Anxious Times: Youth and Anxiety

Adolescence is a difficult time. Some youth experience anxiety more severely than the norm. Many fears they experience are part of growing up and will subside as they mature. Amongst youth with mental health issues, anxiety disorders are the main diagnosis. Some may be diagnosed with multiple anxiety disorders and some may be diagnosed with an anxiety disorder and another type of mental illness.

Anxiety disorders can be serious if they are not treated. There are treatments available. Not all treatments are successful for every youth. What might work for one person might not work for another.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) has been proven to be a successful treatment for anxiety disorders. There are certain skills and techniques that can be applied to reduce symptoms. A person can remove negative thoughts and behaviours and replace them with positive thoughts. They can learn to distinguish between rational and irrational thoughts. Adolescents are given homework to reinforce what is taught during the sessions. CBT takes about 12 weeks but it can be practiced throughout a lifetime.

Another available treatment is medication; the type used depends upon the diagnosis. Social anxiety and generalized anxiety are treated with the same drugs used for depression. Benzodiazepines, such as valium, can be used in conjunction with medication for depression or used on its own. Beta-blockers can be given for anxiety about tests or public speaking one hour before the engagement. Scientists are developing newer drug treatments on an ongoing basis. Mental health professionals will experiment with different medication until the one that will help reduce the symptoms is found.

Once the right treatment is found it is truly possible to get anxiety symptoms under control. Adolescents can function better and have meaning and purpose throughout their lifetime.

By Tony Legere



### References:

"What is Anxiety?" [kelty mental health](http://keltymentalhealth.ca/mental-health/disorders/anxiety-children-and-youth). 17 January 2015.  
< <http://keltymentalhealth.ca/mental-health/disorders/anxiety-children-and-youth>>

"Treatment." [Anxiety And Depression Association Of America](http://www.adaa.org/living-with-anxiety/children/treatment). 17 January 2015.  
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"Anxiety and Teens." [WebMd](http://teens.webmd.com/anxiety-and-teens?page=2). 17 January 2015.  
<http://teens.webmd.com/anxiety-and-teens?page=2>

AVD CLUBHOUSE INVITES YOU!



**ARTS PROGRAM**  
 Thursday 1-4 @ Wolf Baptist Church & Friday 1-4 @ CMHA-Kings  
(pre-registration required for art programs)

**FREE!  
 ALL WELCOME!**

**Indoor floor hockey**  
 Tuesdays 1-2:30 Louis Millett

**MUSIC JAM SESSION**  
 WEDNESDAYS, 10 - 12 | MILLETT COMPLEX, NEW MINAS

FOR PROGRAM INFO:  
 670-4103  
 facebook.com/CMHAKings  
 or email:  
 club@cmhakings.ns.ca





## Mental Health First Aid for Adults Who Interact with Youth

*MHFA for Adults Who Interact with Youth* focuses on mental health problems and first aid for youth ages 12 to 24. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is the help provided to a person developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. Anyone can benefit from this course. Open to members of the general public, MHFA benefits families affected by mental health problems, teachers, health service providers, emergency workers, frontline workers who deal with the public, volunteers, human resources professionals, employers and community groups.

This is a 14 hour course delivered over two days. The cost is \$150.00 (\$120.00 for non-profits or for organizations sending more than 10 people). Please note – you are not considered registered until payment has been received.

Upcoming training date:

**February 26/27 2015**

For a more detailed course description visit <http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.ca/EN/instruct/youth/Pages/default.aspx>

For more information, please email us at [mentalhealthfirstaid@cmhakings.ns.ca](mailto:mentalhealthfirstaid@cmhakings.ns.ca) or call Laurel at 902-690-2422.

Sponsored by the Canadian Mental Health Association Kings County Branch

## PROJECT HOPE

(Formerly “Shelter Me”)



Project H.O.P.E. is designed to assist individuals living with mental illness in Kings County who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to implement long-term solutions to obtain and retain housing. The services include housing placement, eviction prevention, referral to appropriate agencies, skills training, ongoing support, and case management to minimize barriers to finding and retaining housing.

To reach Project H.O.P.E., call 902-679-7573 or email [hope.lead@cmhakings.ns.ca](mailto:hope.lead@cmhakings.ns.ca).

## A Mental Health Perspective Mission Statement:

The purpose of this newsletter is to bring faith, hope and courage to members of the local mental health community of Kings County, Nova Scotia, as well as others who are involved with a mental, emotional or psychological condition.



Donations (cheque or money order) to support this newsletter and other important programs and services can be made to CMHA-Kings, 11 Opportunity Lane Suite 3 Box 10 Coldbrook NS B4R 0A5  
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