

Whose Kids? ... Our Kids!



Volume 4 Issue 1

Knox Teen Assessment Project (KTAP) 2002
Knox Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Initiative (K.A.P.P.I.)

September 2003

Knox County middle and high schools joined forces with the Knox Adolescent Pregnancy Preventiniative to learn more about the experience of teens in our county. Teens in grades 7, 9 and 11 (8,360 students) were surveyed in 2002 about what they were thinking and doing. The survey covered many areas of concern to adolescents and their parents. A series of newsletters focusing on topics such as teen sexuality, alcohol and other drugs, personal issues, opinions about school, and parent communication will be available this next year. This issue of *Whose Kids? ... Our Kids!* focuses on the topic of teen depression and suicide.

The results of this survey allow us to confidently state:

- Certain student attitudes and behaviors greatly hinder the job the school system can do
- These attitudes and behaviors are terribly disturbing and present difficult challenges to our community
- For many of these issues, school is not the cause, but educational efforts are hindered and everyone must be aware of and deal with these issues.

For Parent and Teen Help Cards, contact:

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KTAP 2002 TEEN DEPRESSION & SUICIDE

“During the past 30 days, have you felt depressed or very sad?”

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Students reporting depression rarely or some of the time | 3,811 48% |
| Most or all of the time | 1,043 13% |

N=8,055

The following teens answered “yes” to the question, “During the past 30 days, have you thought about committing suicide?”

| Grade Level | | |
|-------------|------------|------------|
| 7th | 9th | 11th |
| 498 15% | 494 20% | 390 18% |

N=8,023

Knox County Mobile Crisis Unit

Children/Teens (866) 791-9224
Adults (865) 539-2407

KTAP 2002

(Knox Teen Assessment Project)

A Collaborative Effort of: K.A.P.P.I.

(Knox Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Initiative)

Knox County
Health Department

Knox County Schools

Knox County agencies that
comprise K.A.P.P.I.

(Knox Adolescent
Pregnancy Prevention
Initiative)

are as follows:

Baptist Health System

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Knoxville

Child & Family Tennessee

Children's Hospital of E. TN.

City of Knoxville

Community Coalition on Family Violence

Community Prevention Initiative

District Attorney General's Office

East Side YMCA

East Tennessee Council on
Children & Youth

Florence Crittenton Agency

Helen Ross McNabb Center

Hope Resource Center

John Tarleton Home

KAMA Health Discovery Center

Knox County Development Corporation

Knox County Health Department

Knox County

Parent - Teacher Association

Knox County Schools

Knoxville Police Department

Lisa Ross Birth & Women's Center

March of Dimes of East Tennessee

Mental Health Association
of Greater Knoxville

Metropolitan Drug Commission

Parish Nurse Program

PARTNERS – Teen Pregnancy Program

Planned Parenthood of East Tennessee

Project Grad

St. Mary's Health System

Sexual Assault Crisis Center

S.T.A.R.S.®

(Students Teaching And Respecting Sexuality)

The University of Tennessee

The University of Tennessee

Medical Center

YMCA of Metro Knoxville

Facts for Families ~ Teen Suicide

National statistics from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention state that suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people ages 15 to 24 years.

- Every day, fourteen young people commit suicide or approximately one every one hundred minutes.
- Fifty-three percent of young people who commit suicide abuse substances.

Suicide is a serious problem among young people. Between 1980-1997, the rate of suicide increased 109% for 10-14 year olds. Suicide was the third leading cause of death for 15-24 year olds in 1997. That same year, a nationwide survey for high school students found that in the previous year, one-fifth had seriously considered suicide and one in thirteen had attempted it.

Parents should be aware of the signs in adolescents who may try to kill themselves

Teenagers experience strong feelings of stress, confusion, self-doubt, pressure to succeed, financial uncertainty and other fears while growing up.

For some teenagers, divorce, the formation of a new family with step-parents and step-siblings or moving to a new community can be very unsettling and can intensify self-doubts. In some cases, suicide appears to be a "solution."

Many of the symptoms of suicidal feelings are similar to those of depression. Four out of five teens who attempt suicide have given clear warnings, such as:

- Suicide threatens, obsession with death
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits
- Withdrawal from friends, family and regular activities
- Violent actions, rebellious behavior or running away
- Alcohol and drug use
- Unusual neglect of appearance
- Marked personality change
- Persistent boredom, difficulty concentrating
- Decline in the quality of school work
- Frequent complaints about physical symptoms, often related to emotions, such as stomach aches, headaches, fatigue, etc.
- Loss of interest in pleasurable activities
- Not tolerating praise or rewards
- Complains of being a bad person or feeling rotten inside
- Gives verbal hints with statement such as, "I won't be a problem for you much longer," "Nothing matters," and "I won't see you again."
- Puts his or her affairs in order; for example, gives away favorite possessions, or throws away important belongings.
- Overwhelming sense of guilt, shame or rejection
- Suddenly becomes cheerful after a period of depression
- Irrational, bizarre thoughts, hallucinations, behavior

