

Glatfelter Public Practice

A Division of Glatfelter Insurance Group
(Formerly Professional Underwriters)

Route to:

___ Superintendent
___ School Business Off.
___ Athletic Director
___ Supt. Bldgs/Grounds
___ Site Administrators
___ Transportation Dir.
___ Lunch Director
___ Classroom Teachers

Safe Schools Agenda

May 2009/Volume 16, Issue 5

A monthly service provided to help you with your efforts to make your school safe for students, staff and the public

Raising Awareness of Suicide Prevention

Suicide is a major public health problem, often affecting our schools. In 2004, it was the third leading cause of death in children ages 10 to 24. In the age subgroup 10 to 14, the rate was 1.3 per 100,000; in the age group 15 to 19, the rate was 8.2 per 100,000, and in the young adult group ages 20-24, the rate was 12.5 per 100,000.

Last month, we wrote about the area school where three teenage girls had committed suicide this year. Since then, a fourth young girl has taken her life, bringing more sorrow to the community and raising questions as to who is to blame for failing to prevent these tragedies, and what can we do about it.

Males and females are at risk. Statistics suggest that white women make more attempts at suicide, but males are more likely to succeed. There are four male suicides for every female suicide.

Be aware of teenage suicide warning signs:

- A previous suicide attempt
- Sudden changes in personality, mood
- Giving away personal possessions
- Cleaning their room, discarding possessions
- Talking about suicide, wanting to die, saying life is not worth living
- Expressing feelings of worthlessness
- Depression, great sadness
- Feelings of hopelessness, guilt
- Feelings of isolation and loneliness
- Changes to sleep patterns
- Changes in eating habits
- Having a friend or family member who has committed suicide
- Using drugs or alcohol
- Changes in academic performance
- Loss of interest in personal appearance
- Marks of self-harming on the body

Be aware of teen suicide risk factors:

- The breakup of a relationship with a girlfriend – one of the most common causes
- Failing or doing badly on a test
- Feeling badly humiliated
- Recent loss of a friend, a family member, a pet from death or suicide
- Loss of a parent due to divorce
- Abuse
- Being a victim of bullying
- Problems with the law
- An unplanned pregnancy
- Causing injury or death to another person
- An anniversary of a tragic event



May Is Mental Health Month

Be Good To Yourself!

Be aware of the role of drugs:

The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) has released a research report that shows some teens are using drugs to alleviate feelings of depression when, in fact, using marijuana can compound the problem. The report shows that two million teens felt depressed at some point during the past year and that they are more than twice as likely to have used illicit drugs as non-depressed teens.

Marijuana use is associated with depression, suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts.

Be aware of the link with poor neighborhoods:


Young people in their late teens who live in poor neighborhoods are four times more likely to attempt suicide than their peers who live in more affluent neighborhoods, according to a new study from the Universite de Montreal and Tufts University.


Be aware of the strong link with bullying and being bullied:


Researchers at Yale School of Medicine have found signs of a connection between bullying, being bullied and suicide in children.


Preventing the Flu: Good Health Habits


The Center for Disease Control advises us to follow these good health habits to help stop the spread of germs and prevent respiratory illnesses like the flu.

 **Avoid close contact.** Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.


 **Stay home when you are sick.** If possible stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.

 **Cover your mouth and nose.** Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick. (Cough or sneeze into your elbow, not hands.)

 **Clean your hands.** Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs.

 **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.** Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.



 **Practice other good health habits.** Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

The New Playground Safety Rules Have Teeth

The NYS Consumer Protection Board has adopted the revised Public Playground Safety Guidelines published by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). **Compliance with the rules is required when constructing a new playground or replacing or modifying a major type of playground equipment, sliding poles, slides and swings. Penalties are provided for noncompliance by General Law 399-dd. See www.nysconsumer.gov.**

JUST A REMINDER

The **Safety Agenda** has gone **Green!**

Please keep us informed if your email address is changing so we can continue to send the Safety Agenda to you. Changes may be sent to Lynn **Green** at 610.458.1050 or email her at lgreen@glatfelters.com.