



Whose Kids?...Our Kids!

Newfound Area School District

Teen Use of Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs

Recently, the Newfound Area School District, UNH Cooperative Extension and community members joined together to learn more about the youth in our community by conducting the Teen Assessment Project (TAP).

Approximately 83% of Newfound students were surveyed from the Middle School and High School. In all, information from 579 surveys was used for this newsletter.

		Male	Female
108	7th graders	60	48
95	8th graders	49	46
108	9th graders	56	52
100	10th graders	46	54
80	11th graders	43	37
88	12th graders	39	49

"Whose Kids?...Our Kids!" is a parent newsletter series of the Teen Assessment Project (TAP), a program of the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension. This project was funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), through the Division for Children, Youth and Families, NH Department of Health and Human Services. The Teen Assessment Project (TAP) originated at the University of Wisconsin at Madison under the direction of Stephen A. Small, Ph.D. TAP in Grafton County is under the direction of Deborah Maes, UNH Cooperative Extension Family Development Educator in cooperation with Charlotte W. Cross, UNH Cooperative Extension, Youth Development Specialist. For more information about TAP call Charlotte W. Cross at (603) 862-2495 or e-mail at charlotte.cross@unh.edu.

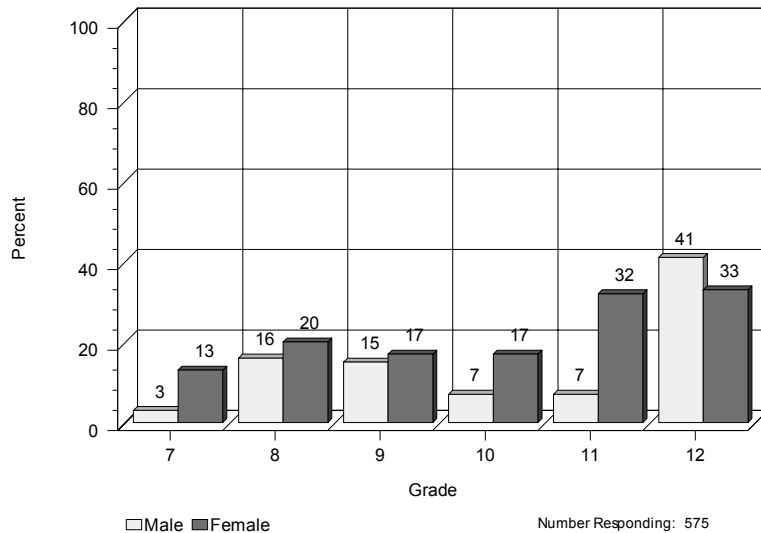
This issue of WHOSE KIDS?...OUR KIDS! looks at the topic of alcohol and other drugs. How often do teens drink and use drugs? Is this part of growing up? Should we be concerned?

Today's teenagers hear mixed messages about drinking alcohol and using other drugs. One minute they hear the simple message, "Just say NO!" or they hear "Don't Drink and Drive." Television commercials, magazine ads, and billboards have a different message. These state that drinking is "fun," "sexy," "romantic," "adult," or "macho." On top of this, teens know adults who use alcohol or pills to relax, to get rid of stress, or to socialize.

Alcohol and Drug Use Among Local Teens

About 1 in 7 males (14%) and 1 in 5 females (21%) smoke cigarettes monthly in grades 7-12. Smoking increases from the middle school years to the high school years. Far more high school boys smoke monthly as compared to middle school boys (middle school, 9%; high school, 17%). The same is true for girls. In middle school, only 1 in 6 girls (16%) smokes, but in high school, about 1 out of 4 girls (24%) smokes.

Teens Who Smoke Tobacco
(Monthly or More Often, by Grade and Gender)



Warning Signs of Teenage Alcohol or Drug Abuse

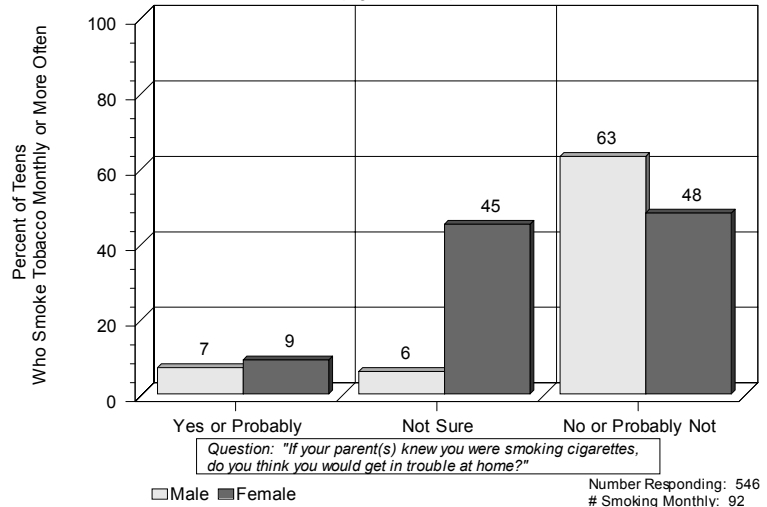
When can you tell a teen has gone beyond trying out drinking or drugs? There are signs that show a teenager may be abusing, or often using, alcohol or other drugs. The following warning signs show a teen may frequently be drinking or using a drug:

- missing work
- not saying where he or she is going
- lying about where he or she has been
- stopping activities the teen used to enjoy and not filling the time with other fun activities
- getting angry easily and often
- borrowing money from parents or friends
- inability to explain loss of money or valuables
- sniffing, running nose; losing appetite; dilated or red eyes
- associating with a new group of friends, often with those who use drugs
- hiding things that would show alcohol or drug use.

Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse

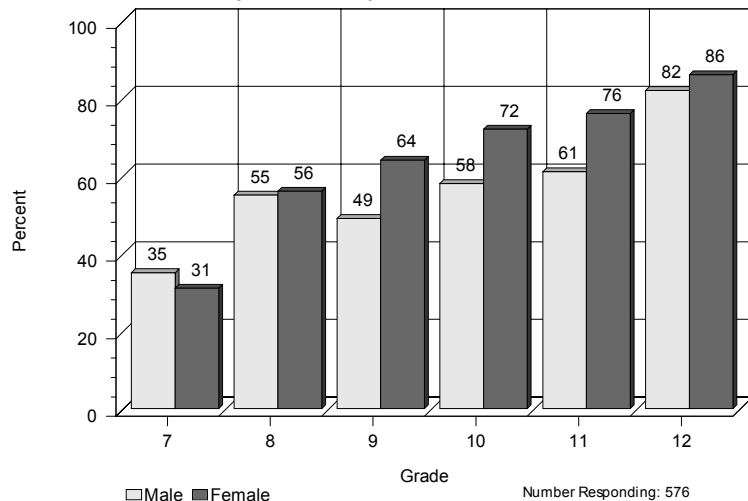
Clearly, teens who think they will get in trouble at home are much less likely to smoke on a monthly basis.

Relationship Between Teens' Perceptions of Parental Consequences and Monthly Teen Smoking (By Gender)



Our survey shows more local teens are using alcohol than their parents may expect. The following chart shows many youth have tried alcohol (beer, wine, or hard liquor) even in middle school. The number of youth who have tried alcohol generally increases with age.

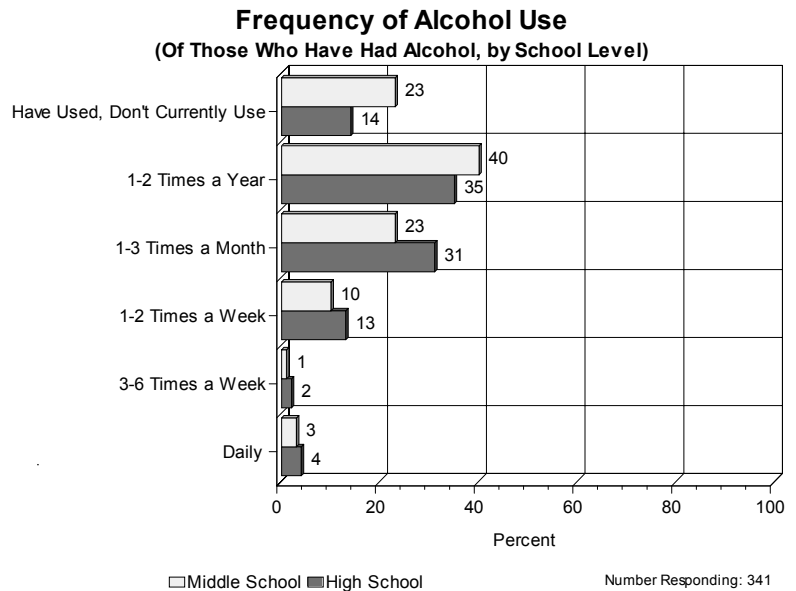
Teens Who Drink Alcohol (Any Use At All, by Grade and Gender)



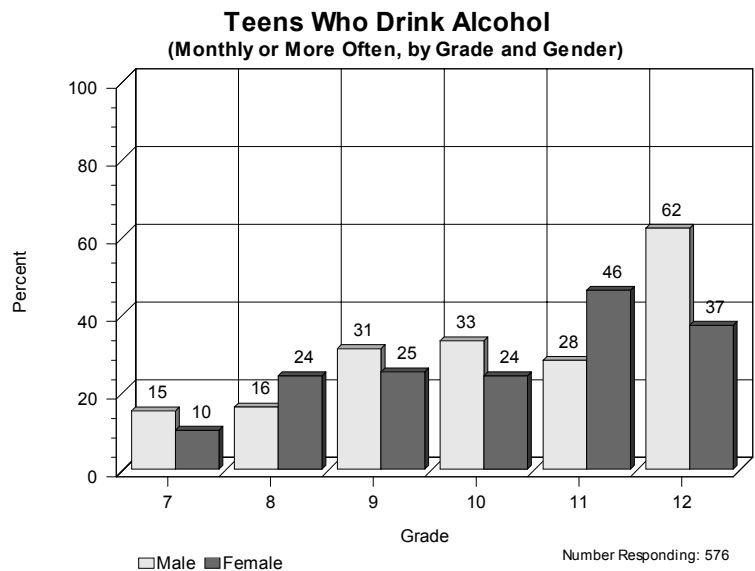
Ways Parents Can Help

- Encourage teenager’s abilities and interests.**
 Parents need to encourage their teens in activities that develop interests and skills. These activities should help teens feel good about themselves without the use of alcohol or drugs. Hobbies, school events, sports, and volunteer work may keep youth from using alcohol and drugs out of boredom.
- Help your teen or preteen deal with peer pressure.**
 Parents can help their teens say no to alcohol/drugs without “losing face.” Here are some things teens can say: “I don’t like the way it (beer, cigarettes) tastes,” or, “I’d rather sit here and watch you guys get stupid.”
- Tell your teen to involve you when needed.**
 Let your teen know it is okay to bring you into the conversation if they need to. For example, “My mom is going to give me a driving lesson this afternoon.” “If my dad finds out I’ve been drinking, he’ll never let me use the car again.”
- Know the facts about alcohol and other drugs.**
 Parents should know the risks of alcohol and drug abuse. This includes the effects of alcohol/drugs on the body and on driving ability.
- Create strong family ties.**
 Strong family ties can help protect against alcohol/drug problems in young people. Family activities (for example, sports, movies, or family meetings) along with open discussions and flexible rules can be particularly helpful. Really listening to your teen, even when you don’t agree, will strengthen the ties between you.

About 1 in 4 students (21%) only drink a couple of times a year. More than 2 out of 3 of the students (66%) in middle school have either never tried alcohol or are not currently drinking. The same holds true for 2 in 5 (42%) high school youth.



How many teens drink every day? Drinking every day is serious and will hurt a teen's school work, personal relationships, emotional development and health. Of all teens surveyed, 2% drink every day. Overall, 6% of middle school and 13% of high school students reported drinking alcohol once or more per week. Sixteen percent (16%) of middle school youth and 35% of high school youth reported drinking once or more per month. During the past year, 44% of middle school students and 68% of high school students reported drinking at least once.



More than 1 in 4 (29%) middle school students and more than 1 in 3 (34%) high school teens reported binge drinking (having 5 or more drinks in a row) in the past month.

Ways Parents Can Help

- **Keep Calm**

Many teens will experiment with alcohol and some other drugs. Try not to overreact. However, take the situation seriously and talk to your child. With your child's input, decide on consequences if he or she drinks again. If consequences have already been set, firmly enforce them. If you learn your teen is involved in frequent, heavy or very early use of alcohol or other drugs, seek help.

- **Provide Guidance**

Prevention of alcohol and drug abuse can begin at home. Parents need to guide their adolescents by setting clear and reasonable rules. Parents should:

- clearly state the rules about alcohol and drug use (for example, tell teens that drinking before the age of 21 is illegal and the use of illicit drugs is illegal for everyone)
- talk about the risks of alcohol and drug use (for example, use news reports of alcohol related accidents to discuss the harmful outcomes of drinking)
- make sure teens are in places where alcohol is not being served (for example, call the parents of a teen giving a party to make sure alcohol will not be allowed).

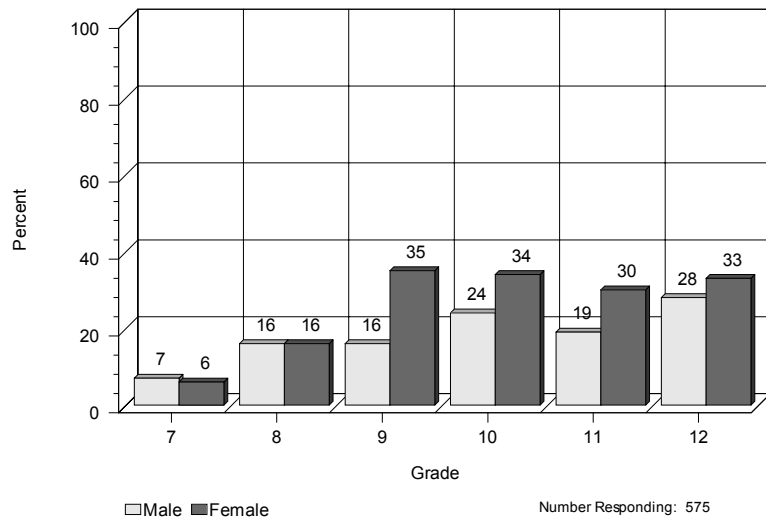
- **Make a Contract**

Many teens and parents make a "contract" about alcohol and drugs. Agreements could include:

- teens will not drink and drive or ride in a car with a driver who has been drinking
- teens will call parents for a safe ride home if they or the driver of the car has been drinking
- parents will pick up their teen and not discuss things until the next day
- teens will not go to parties where alcohol or drugs are provided

Use of marijuana is lower than alcohol use for both middle school and high school youth. Overall, 1 in 9 (11%) middle school youth and about 1 in 4 (27%) high school youth use marijuana monthly or more often.

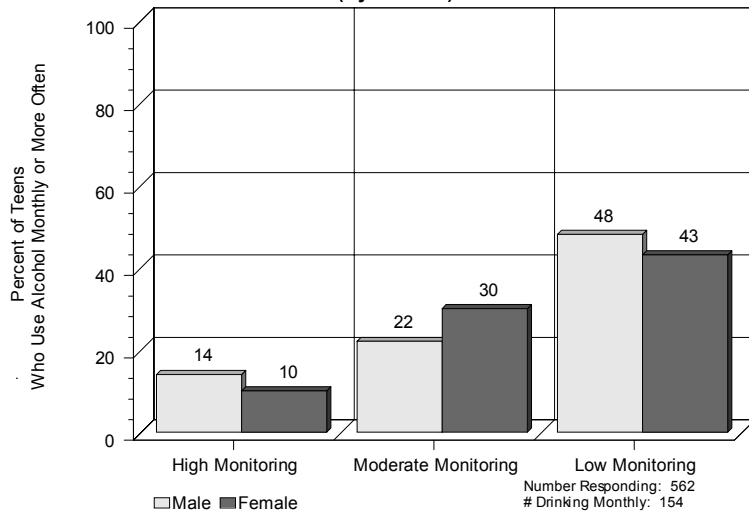
Teens Who Use Marijuana
(Monthly or More Often, by Grade and Gender)



Alcohol and marijuana are used by local teens more than any other drugs. Most people believe alcohol is not as harmful as other drugs. Still, more Americans die each year from alcohol-related illnesses and accidents than from the use of all illegal drugs combined. Motor vehicle accidents involving alcohol are the leading cause of death for 15- to 19-year-olds.

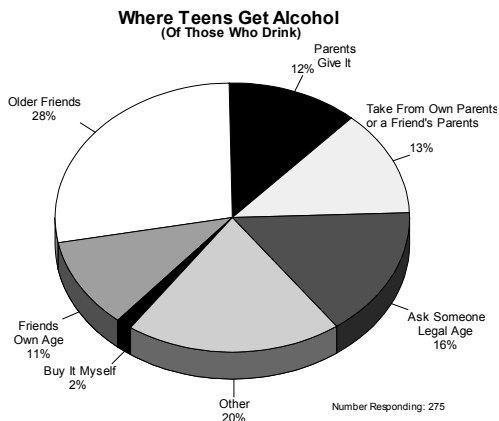
What role does parental monitoring play in lowering the levels of teen drinking? Parental monitoring means parents supervise their children or know where they are and what they're doing. Higher levels of parental monitoring are related to lower levels of alcohol drinking in youth.

Relationship Between Levels of Parental Monitoring and Monthly Teen Drinking
(By Gender)



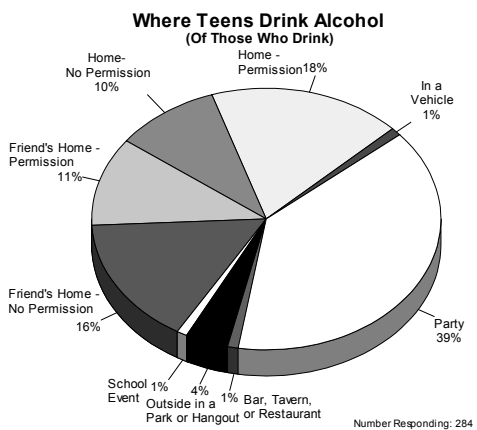
Where do teenagers get their alcohol?

More than one quarter (28%) of local youth get alcohol from older friends.



Where do teenagers drink alcohol?

When asked where they drank alcohol, more kids said they drank at parties than any other place. Others said they drank at their homes or their friends' homes with or without permission.



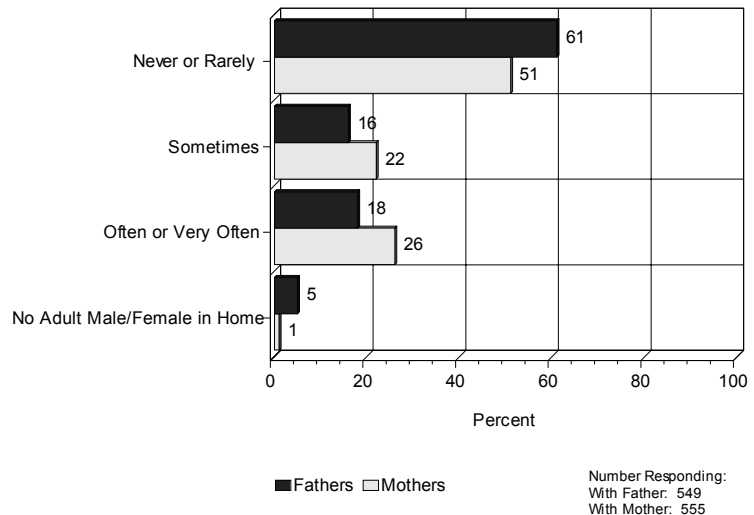
Providing Alcohol to Anyone Under the Age of 21 is Against the Law.

- Parents are breaking the law if they provide alcohol to teens.
- Older friends are breaking the law if they purchase alcohol for younger friends.

Parent-Teen Communication

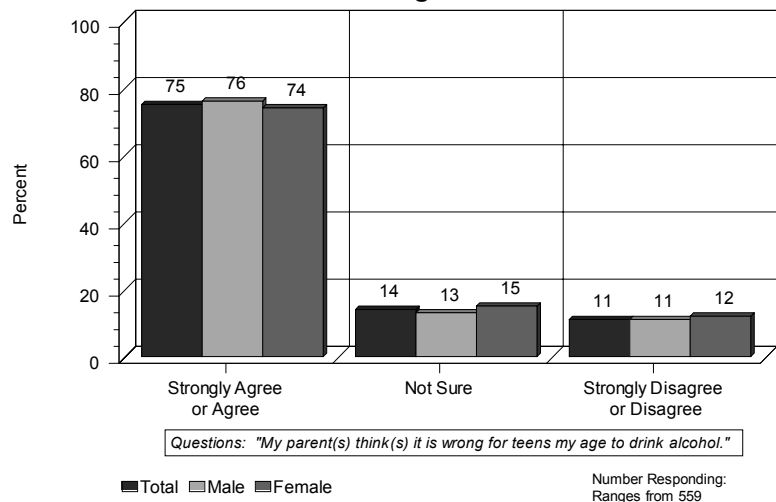
Many parents express concern over possible problem drinking and drug abuse among teens. But, they don't always discuss their views and concerns with their children. Or, parents may wait until a problem actually arises before bringing up the topic at all. Our survey of local youth shows many have rarely or never talked with their mothers or fathers about the risks of drinking or taking drugs.

Talks with Father or Mother About Risks of Drinking or Taking Drugs



Most teens do know what their parents think about drinking alcohol. Three quarters of teens (75%) agree or strongly agree that their parents think it is wrong for teens their age to drink alcohol.

Teens' Perceptions of Parental Values About Drinking Alcohol



Would You Like To Get Involved?

If you are interested in getting involved with others in the community to address teen issues, please call Deborah Maes at 787-6944, Grafton County Cooperative Extension, or Lisa Mure at 536-3720 x108, Lin-Wood/Newfound/Pemi-Baker Community Coalition.

Further Reading

- Pollack, W. (2001). **Real Boy's Voices**. New York: Random House.
- Pruitt, D.B. (2000). **Your Adolescent: Emotional Behavioral Cognitive Development from Early Adolescence Through Teen Years**. American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. New York: Harper Resources.
- Riera, M. & DiPrisco, J. (2000). **Field Guide To The American Teenager**. Cambridge, MA: Perseus.
- Schaeffer, D. (2001). **Choices and Consequences: What To Do When a Teenager Uses Alcohol/ Drugs**. Minneapolis, MN: Johnson Institute Books.
- Steinberg, L. & Levine, A. (1997) **You and Your Adolescent: A Parent's Guide for Ages 10-20**. New York: Harper & Row.
- U.S. Department of Education. (1998). **Growing Up Drug Free: A Parent's Guide to Prevention**. Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

UNH Cooperative Extension

Resources:

- **Publication Series:**
Living with your Teenager
- **Workshop Series:**
Family Focus: Parenting the Young Teen

Helpful Resources

Abuse

- NH Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) 1-800-894-5533
(To report child abuse or neglect)
- Sexual Assault Support Services 1-888-747-7070

Alcohol and Drug Abuse

- Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) 1-800-593-3330
- Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention
and Recovery 1-800-804-0909
- Treatment Hotline of U.S. Dept. Health & Human Services 1-800-662-4357

Counseling Services

- HELPLINE 1-800-852-3388
- Parent to Parent of NH Family Support Network 1-800-698-5465
- NH Legal Assistance 1-800-334-3135

Crisis Hot Lines

- Access Crisis Line 1-800-987-6562
- Boys Town Hotline 1-800-448-3000
- TeenLine (confidential, for any problem) "Head Rest" 1-800-639-6095
- Youth Crisis Hotline 1-800-448-4663

Family Planning/Health Services

- Plymouth Family Planning 536-3584
- Franklin Family Planning 934-4905
- Mt. Mooselauke Health Clinic 764-5704

Information and Referral

- Help Line (also crisis intervention) 1-800-852-3388
- Info Link 1-888-499-2525
- Poison Information Center 1-800-222-1222
- Lin-Wood/Newfound/Pemi-Baker Community Coalition
(youth alcohol, tobacco and other drug prevention) 536-3720 x 108

Runaway

- Child & Family Services of NH Group Home 224-9313
- National Runaway Switchboard 1-800-621-4000

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

- Plymouth Family Planning (testing, info) 536-3584
- Franklin Family Planning (testing, info) 934-4905
- Lakes Regional General Hospital 524-3211
- NH AIDS Hotline 1-800-752-2437

Suicide and Depression

- Speare Memorial Hospital 536-1120
- Franklin Regional Hospital 934-2060
- Lakes Regional General Hospital 524-3211
- TeenLine (confidential, for any problem) "Head Rest" 1-800-639-6095

UNH Cooperative Extension

- Grafton County, Family and 4-H Youth Development 787-6944

Also see the "Self-Help Guide to Human Services in N.H." at the front of your telephone book

This newsletter was based on a publication by Stephen A. Small, University of Wisconsin at Madison. The UNH Cooperative Extension newsletter "Whose Kids?...Our Kids!" was edited by Charlotte W. Cross, Extension Specialist, Youth Development and Mary W. Temke, Ph.D., Extension Specialist, Human Development, with assistance from Fran Chickering, Program Coordinator, UNH Cooperative Extension. Desktop publishing provided by Santhana Souksamrane, UNH Work Study Student.

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