



MONTHLY MENTAL HEALTH MOMENT

THE CHOKING GAME

“The Choking Game” is just one name for a potentially dangerous practice where children and adolescents engage in self-strangulation in order to produce a dizzy feeling, or a feeling of being high. This practice is done both in groups or alone (much more dangerous). This high or dizzy feeling is the effect of a lack of oxygen to the brain, which is actually the feeling associated with brain cells dying.

Who is playing?

Information from the Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey from CAMH indicates that about five percent of children and adolescents ages 9-16 have played this game at least once to get high. Typically, these are well adjusted, high achieving kids, who are seeking a high without the use of drugs or alcohol. They tend to think that the game is harmless and safe. IT IS NEVER SAFE.

More Information

Games Adolescents Shouldn't Play

www.gaspinfo.com

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)

www.camh.ca

Sick Kids Toronto

<http://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/En/News/NewsAndFeatures/Pages/The-choking-game.aspx>

Local Mental Health Supports

Windsor Regional Children's Centre 519-257-5215

Maryvale 519-259-0484

Family Services Windsor/Essex 519-966-5010

Community Crisis Centre Distress Line 519-973-4435
(24 hours)

What can I do?

Talk to your kids openly about risky behaviours, including the choking game. Listen to them, and encourage open, two-way communication on a daily basis. Be involved in their lives. Ensure that they know the risks of engaging in such behaviours. Address the role the peer pressure could play in any type of risky activities. Help them develop a plan to stay safe.

If you have concerns about your child, or about children and adolescents in your life, please reach out for help. Contact your child's teacher or principal if you need more information.

WARNING SIGNS

- Marks on the neck, which may be hidden by choice of clothing (scarves, turned up collars, etc.)
- Changes in personality, possibly increased agitation or aggressiveness
- Any kind of choking implement (strap, belt, scarf) seen in an unusual place (tied to the bed, doorknob) as well as an elusiveness on the part of your child if asked about it
- Increased headaches, loss of concentration, flushed face
- Bloodshot eyes
- Loud noises (like a thud) coming from their room when they are alone
- If your child asks about or talks about the effects, sensations, or dangers of strangulation

Information adapted from www.gaspinfo.com