

Perspectives Counseling Centers

Please join us for our
Professional Fall Open House

THE YOLO GENERATION

"You Only Live Once"

Extreme Risk Taking Among Children & Adolescents

Presented by:

Leslie Johnsen, MA, LLP
Clinical Director & Director of Adolescent Services

Douglas Carpenter, Psy.D., L.P.
Director of Addictions Services

Diana Jennings, MS, LLP
Director of Children's Services

Friday, October 19, 2012

9 am - 12 pm

Perspectives Counseling Centers

888 W. Big Beaver Rd, Suite 1450, Troy, MI 48084

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**This seminar will focus on:**

- The alarming face of risk-taking behavior with this generation
- Extraordinary risk taking behaviors in the area of drug use
- Techniques to turn negative risk taking into positive behavior & outcomes

**This event is complimentary! Seats will fill up fast!  
Please call (248) 244-8644 to make your reservation!**

# From the Therapist Corner

**Positive Risk Taking** by Maria Elena Dionisio, LMSW

At the time of this writing the Detroit Tigers third baseman Miguel Cabrera's batting average is .330. It could mean that 67% of the time, not much memorable happens. Or, it means that he continues with his persistence and determination. He continues to hit the ball — to risk failing, regardless of the outcome. It is what makes him the Detroit Tiger with the best batting average.

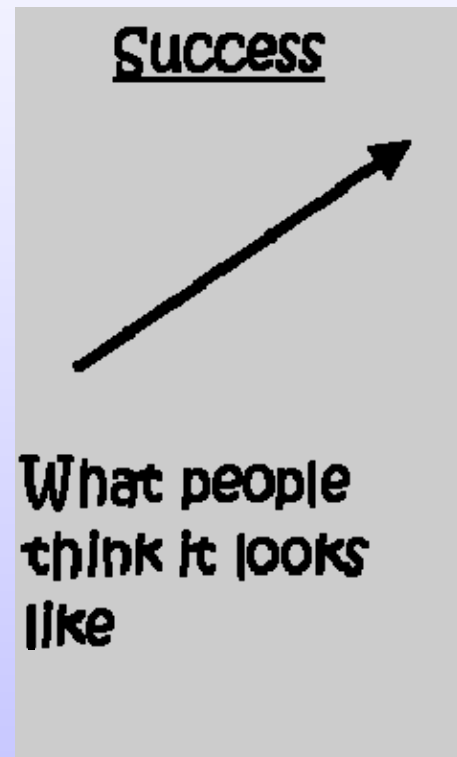
As parents, teachers, mentors, and leaders, what are we demonstrating to our youth during that 67% of the time? Is it a sense of adventure? Is it persistence and determination? Do we take reasonable risks? Or do we just stop trying for fear of failure?

Positive risk taking involves attempting something new while not knowing what the outcome will be. It entails stepping out of our comfort zones, fostering courage and resilience. These traits are imperative for our future leaders. Positive risk taking helps build self-confidence and self-competence. One learns to manage his or her fears and gains practice in decision-making.

There are various types of risk. Children may choose to take an emotional risk by telling someone how they really feel or a mental one such as skipping a grade due to their intellectual prowess. A possible physical risk could be trying out for the school swim team. Accompanying a friend to a new church is yet another form of risk—a spiritual one. All of these possibilities allow children the opportunity to risk being themselves and develop life skills.

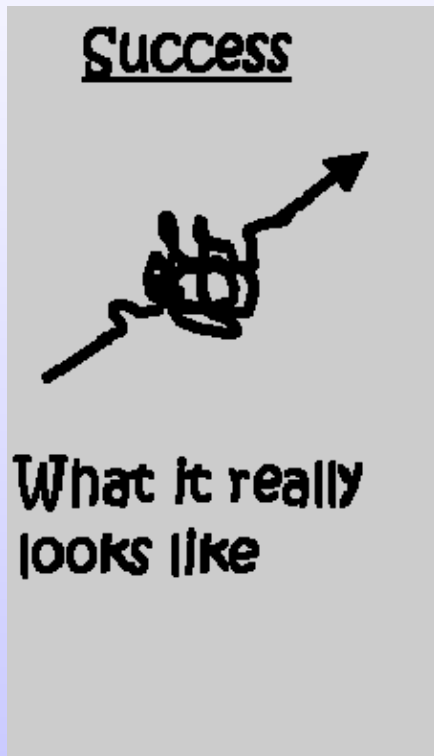
Positive risk taking is not to be confused with mere thrill-seeking. Positive risk taking provides an individual with ways to learn, love, change and grow.

Children have so many decisions made for them regarding their safety, their education, their appearance. Well-meaning intentions can lead to interference that thwarts their learning process. At times, youth find themselves ill-equipped to handle challenges on their own. How can we support their growth and development?



Here are a few suggestions to incorporate positive risk taking in everyday life:

- Allow children to make as many choices as possible according to their age. Giving them opportunities to experience independence, relative to their developmental level, instills a sense of accomplishment. For example, selecting between two different outfits for school gives them the chance to express their individuality.
- Give them opportunities to solve their own problems, such as finding someone to play with at recess. Acknowledge and praise their efforts.



- Model positive risk taking behavior. Is there something you've been wanting to try but haven't due to fear? Let your children see you try and fail and try again. Laugh at yourself in the process.

Riding a bike involves risk. Learning how to do it well usually means losing your balance, falling and getting back up again. Risk is involved when you step on stage or on the baseball field, allowing others to see you from all angles. We must learn to let children go and grow into happy, healthy, competent and confident adults, all the while supporting the process.

*Maria Dionisio is a therapist at the Troy location. She sees children as young as 4 years old. Her specialty area includes children, adolescents, adult women, anxiety, depression, grief & loss, infant mental health, social skills and anger issues.*

Here is a tool you can use with your students:

What will be your positive risks this year?

- Sports \_\_\_\_\_
- School \_\_\_\_\_
- Friends \_\_\_\_\_

**Perspectives  
Counseling Centers  
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Services for Adults!!**

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Clinical Director &  
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Diana Jennings, MS, LLP

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*Anger EDGE*  
with  
Chandler Fleming, LMSW

*Young Women's EDGE*  
with  
Leah Ethier, MA, LPC

*Anxiety EDGE*  
with  
Kim Birmingham, LMSW

*Cutting EDGE*  
with  
Leslie Johnsen, MA, LLP

*Self Esteem EDGE*  
with  
Mary Johnson-Palazzolo, LMSW

*Dear Professional,*

*I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. I am the new Director of Children's Services at Perspectives Counseling Centers. I have been a therapist for almost 2 decades and with Perspectives for over 6 years. I previously held the position of Chief Behavior Psychologist (Master's level) at Jackson-Hillsdale Community Mental Health for many years. At Perspectives, I provide services to children, adolescents and adults, with an emphasis on children. I enjoy working with the families of children and adolescents, assisting them in problem-solving and conflict resolution. My specialty areas include Anxiety, Depression, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Autism Spectrum Disorders and Eating Disorders. I am excited to step into this new role and continue the exciting and progressive work that has always been a part of the children's program at Perspectives. I look forward to meeting you at our Fall Open House!*



*Sincerely,  
Diana Jennings, MS, LLP  
Director of Children's Services*

**Perspectives  
Counseling Centers**

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