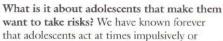
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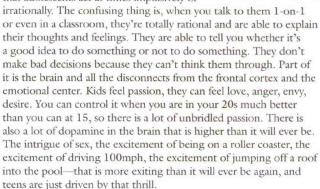


## Adolescent Angst»

## By Bethany Braun-Silva

Jess Shatkin, M.D., M.P.H., leads the educational efforts of the NYU Child Study Center and recently wrote *Born to Be Wild:* Why Teens Take Risks and How We Can Help Keep Them Safe.





How can parents be cognizant of the risks their children take or may want to take? The way we address risk is knowing our kids, knowing their friends, knowing their friends' parents, spending time with our kids. Kids who have parents that spend time with them and who are available to them take fewer risks. They talk to their parents about the risks they are thinking of taking, they talk to their parents about their friends who are taking risks, and they see their parents as a reliable source of information and counsel. Parents who aren't around, who aren't engaged in the process, who don't ask their kids about sex, who don't ask their kids about drugs, who don't just listen and hang out and let their kids chatter about whatever they want to chatter about, those parents don't know what's going on with their kids and their kids don't come to them. By the time you find marijuana in your kid's dresser, it's pretty late, quite honestly.

Are there any trends in this behavior and how has risky behavior evolved over the years? Things are pretty much the same in that the three top killers of young adults ages 13-25 are accidents, suicide, and homicide. Suicide has increased, and that has to do with social networking and with all of the access we have to constantly knowing what everyone else is thinking about us or the message they are trying to send about how great they're doing or how wonderful their life is. You see this very clearly with this FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out) thing kids talk about. It is a very real thing, and new imaging studies of the brain show when a kid is left out, they feel pain in the brain in the same areas as when they experience physical pain. If you are left out of a group, your brain feels like you are being burned or hit hard. Kids will do a lot to avoid that physical pain; they will take a lot of risks to be part of the group.



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