



# The School Solution Newsletter

Where families find support and solutions



**Karen Mabie**  
**Ed.S., NCSP, CEP**

Karen has been in practice as a Therapeutic Educational Consultant for over 10 years. She has been involved in the leadership

of the Independent Educational Consultants Association, involved in maintaining the highest ethical and professional standards in the profession. She is the instructor for new Therapeutic Consultants at the Summer Training Institute of the IECA.



**ad-dic-tion** /ə dɪkSH(ə)n/

Addiction is defined as a chronic, relapsing brain disease that is characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use, despite harmful consequences. It is considered a brain disease because drugs change the brain; they change its structure and how it works. These brain changes can be long lasting and can lead to many harmful, often self-destructive, behaviors.

**Testimonials from students in different Wilderness Programs:**

*"I know my mom believes in me, she sent me here as an act of faith in me, this is hard and she knew I could do it!"* 15 year old girl

*"Wilderness works! You cannot get away with anything here, I could lie to my therapist at home, here, you have to deal with the truth."* 18 year old young man

*"I thought I was here for one reason, but after time, my therapist helped me 'peel the onion' now I know WHY I have been struggling for so long."* 14 year old boy

## Addiction?

So many families are concerned: Is my child (or young adult) an addict? Do they really need treatment? Is it "bad" enough?

My answer is, almost always, I don't know, and we do not have to wait until we know. Instead, I want to know; what are the harmful consequences? Has your child missed school or isolated themselves? Has he/she flunked or lost friendships? Has he or she quit teams, or other interests? Then it is time. The risk of drug misuse on an adolescent brain is much more impactful than that for an adult. It is time to find a safe, sober, healthy place to take the time to assess what is really going on and to begin anew. There is no better place than wilderness for that intervention and assessment. Although a young person may look very healthy and resilient, their growing brain is extraordinarily vulnerable during adolescence, and it is up to the people that care for them to keep them safe if they cannot. Wilderness is a gift of quiet and caring where they can rediscover their strength, there is no need to wait for it to be "bad" enough.

### Good News:

Drug use is down in all categories, including Marijuana and binge drinking

### Bad News:

- General decline in perceived risk, especially with Ecstasy (MDMA), inhalants and Marijuana
- 6% of adolescents report daily use of Marijuana
- 4.8% of 12th graders report misuse of opioids

*Statistics from National Institute on Drug Abuse- Monitoring the Future Survey December 2016 Statistics of Drug use in 8th, 10th and 12th Graders*

## Meet our team

### Carly Scheinbaum, Office Manager



Carly Scheinbaum is an Associate with The School Solution and has been a part of The School Solution team since early 2015. Carly previously served as a Child Care Worker at the Forest Heights Lodge in Colorado, a premier residential treatment center for adolescent boys. With more than 10 years of experience working with children of all ages in a variety of settings, Carly has a strong passion for helping children in need. Carly holds a bachelor's degree in psychology with a minor in gender studies from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) and a Certificate in Mind-Body Medicine from Saybrook University. She is also certified in Nonviolent Crisis Prevention (CPI) and Medication Administration (QMAP). Carly is thrilled to be a part of The School Solution team, assisting families across the country identifying the best professional resources available.

### Caretia Fernandez, Parent Coach, LCSW



Caretia Fernandez has a Master's in Social Work from Smith College. Caretia has a varied and extensive background working with different populations and using varied approaches including working with adolescents in residential treatment.

In 2008 she began a long career as the Director of the Parent Program at a respected Wilderness Program. From 2008-2015 Caretia developed, implemented and ran their Parent Program. She has spoken at national conferences regarding the work she has done with families and has helped other programs develop and expand their family work. She is committed to helping families identify their patterns, explore generational burdens and heal collaboratively. She was psychodynamically trained, a trained interventionist, Internal Family Systems therapist, and a trained narrative therapist. Growing up in Amherst allowed for her to find a life rich with culture and arts. She has a deeply rooted yoga and meditation practice, is an experienced runner, world traveler, food and wine enthusiast, gardener, and artist. She now lives in Portland, Oregon. Caretia is a licensed clinical social worker in the state of Oregon.

# Breaking News

## A new study has been released that found children of privilege are at much higher risk for addiction:

"We found alarmingly high rates of substance abuse among young adults who we initially studied as teenagers," said Suniya Luthar, a Foundation professor of psychology at Arizona State University and a professor emerita at Columbia University's Teachers College, who led the research. "Results showed that among both men and women and across annual assessments, these young adults had substantial elevations, relative to national norms, in frequency of several indicators - drinking to intoxication and of using marijuana, stimulants such as Adderall, cocaine, and club drugs such as ecstasy."

The paper, "Adolescents from upper middle class communities: Substance misuse and addiction across early adulthood," appears in the current issue of *Development and Psychopathology*. It is co-authored by Phillip Small, an ASU graduate student in clinical psychology, and Lucia Ciciolla an assistant professor at Oklahoma State University.

"We found rates of addiction to drugs or alcohol among 19 to 24 percent of women in the older cohort by the age of 26, and 23 to 40 percent among men. These rates were 3 and 2 times as high respectively, as compared to national norms," Luthar said. "Among the younger cohort by the age of 22 years, rates of addiction were between 11 and 16 percent among women (close to national norms) but 19 to 27 percent among men, or about twice as high as national norms."

**"We found alarmingly high rates of substance abuse among young adults who we initially studied as teenagers"**

Luthar said a look into the lives of these adolescents provide some clues to the cause of these high rates of addictions.

When the NESSY groups were first assessed, they all attended the best schools in the region - suburban schools with very high-standardized test scores, rich extra curricular offerings and high proportions of their graduates heading off to very selective universities. In general, kids at such schools experience enormous pressures to achieve, and many come to live by the dual credos of "I can, therefore I must" and "we work hard and we play hard" with the playing involving parties with drugs and alcohol.

## Also implicated is affluence in the school community.

"Not all of these students were from wealthy families but most were; as parents typically had advanced educational degrees and median incomes much higher than national norms," Luthar said. "And without question, most of the parents wanted their kids to head off to the best universities, as did the kids themselves."

With affluence comes ease in acquiring drugs, she added. "Many kids in these communities have plenty of disposable income with which they can get high-quality fake ID's, as well as alcohol and both prescription and recreational drugs."

Other factors that exacerbate the risks, Luthar said, include widespread peer approval for substance use, and the fact that parents can be lulled into a false sense of security, believing that as their kids continue to perform well in school there could not be any serious underlying issues. As a result, they can become somewhat laissez-faire about detected alcohol or marijuana use.

## It is time we take our children's struggles seriously.