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Teen Angst

# Yes! Program Reduces Teens' Impulsive Behavior

Teaching teens techniques to promote a healthy body, mind, and lifestyle.



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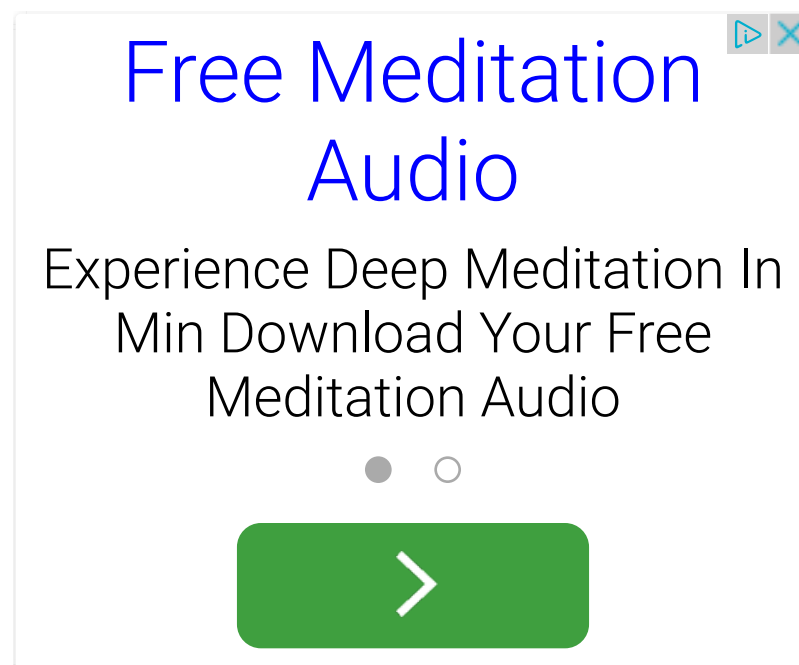
Any parent (/basics/parenting) of a teen knows that the adolescent years can be turbulent to say the least. They are filled with mood swings, hormonal changes and oftentimes a lot of risk-taking (/basics/sensation-seeking) behavior... especially for an impulsive (/basics/self-control) teen. But don't get discouraged; teens can learn skills to reduce impulsive and potentially life endangering behavior through learning techniques that promote a healthy body, mind and lifestyle. A little bit of yoga, healthy eating, deep breathing and decision making

(/basics/decision-making) skills provide help for teens who engage in risky behaviors.

According to a study from the University of California, Los Angeles

(<http://newsroom.ucla.edu/portal/ucla/note-to-teens-just-breathe-246556.aspx>), teens who went

through a four-week [stress \(/basics/stress\)](http://www.youthempowermentseminar.org/) reducing program called, “[YES! For Schools](http://www.youthempowermentseminar.org/)” showed a significant decrease in impulsive behaviors. “YES” stands for Youth Empowerment Seminar. The power of the “YES” program lies in teaching teens how to be healthy, make good decisions, and relieve stress through the use of yoga and deep breathing techniques. According to this research the program can help impulsive teens, who are more prone to engaging in risky activities control their behavior.



The study was made up of students from three high schools in the Los Angeles area. Seven hundred and eighty-eight students participated in the study who were between the ages of 14 and 18. Five hundred and twenty four took part in the YES! For Schools program and 264 made up the control group. The program was implemented during the students' physical [education \(/basics/education\)](http://www.jahonline.org/inPress) class over a period of four weeks. Researchers had students in the program and control group complete pre-post questionnaires to assess their impulsive behavior. The findings were conclusive; the YES! program showed that it can significantly reduce impulsive behavior in teens! No change in behavior was noted with the control group. The study appears in the [Journal of Adolescent Health](http://www.jahonline.org/inPress) (<http://www.jahonline.org/inPress>).

So, just what is the "YES!" program? The YES! program is operated through the nonprofit International Association for Human Values. The program is centered on three modules promoting a healthy body, a healthy mind and a healthy lifestyle. YES! provides practical tools for stress reduction, handling emotions, and boosting self-awareness. Here are a few components of the program:



- Positive physical, mental, social, and emotional development
- Stress reduction techniques
- Mindfulness (/basics/mindfulness) and awareness
- Yoga-based breathing program and stretches
- Problem-solving strategies
- Leadership (/basics/leadership) skills
- Interactive discussions to help teens deal with challenging situations, increase confidence (/basics/confidence), and cope with peer pressure

To learn more about YES! (<http://www.youthempowermentseminar.org/>) visit their website at:

<http://www.youthempowermentseminar.org/> (<http://www.youthempowermentseminar.org/>)

This study comes on the heels of another study out of the University of Liverpool (<http://www.liv.ac.uk/research/news/articles/impulsive-adolescents-more-likely-to-drink-heavily/>) that was published in the journal Addiction (<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/add.12283/abstract>) which demonstrates how teens who show impulsive tendencies are more likely to drinking heavily at an early age. If programs such as YES! can make a positive impact on a teen's life, then I say "YES!" we need to explore placing the curriculum in more schools across the US. Any program that can help teens say "NO" to risky behaviors is worth exploring.



On a positive note, due to the positive results of this study, the National Institute on Drug Abuse ([www.drugabuse.gov/](http://www.drugabuse.gov/)) has awarded the researchers a grant to continue their study into the effects of the YES! Program. So hopefully more positive results are to come!