

Advertisement

NEWS | OPINIONS | SPORTS | ARTS & LIVING | DISCUSSIONS | PHOTOS & VIDEO | CITY GUIDE | CLASSIFIEDS | JOBS | CARS | REAL ESTATE

SEARCH:

go News Web results by Google | Search Archives

washingtonpost.com > Nation > Science

Print This Article E-Mail This Article

# One Woman's Story of Hurt and Help

By Shankar Vedantam Washington Post Staff Writer Friday, June 16, 2006; Page A03

### MOST VIEWED ARTICLES

Nation On the Site

Updated 12:00 p.m. ET

- [Court Eases 'No Knock' Search Ban](#)
- [Birds' Oldest Ancestor Found in China](#)
- [House Passes?Iraq Resolution](#)
- [DHS Stands By Anti-Terror Cuts](#)
- [Long Operation In L.A. Separates Conjoined Twins](#)

### RSS NEWS FEEDS

Top News Nation

What is RSS? | All RSS Feeds

### E-MAIL NEWSLETTERS

View a Sample and Sign Up Today's Headlines & Columnists Daily Politics News & Analysis Federal Insider Breaking News Alerts Manage Your Newsletters

### TODAY IN SLATE

Travel & Food Cooking With Fire Dear Chris and Steven: It is such a pleasure to be discussing grilling and barbecuing with both of you. More

Hilda Anyanwu was 16 when her high school in the Bronx organized a screening for suicidal behavior in 1999. It was the start of a journey that would lead her to confront the traumatic sexual abuse in her past and, she said, help her change from a loner to a gregarious young woman.

Anyanwu's story illustrates many of the reasons proponents say screening of teenagers is valuable -- but also why it draws questions from critics. TeenScreen, a program developed by Columbia University researchers, placed Anyanwu in contact with The Washington Post.

At the time she took the survey, parents were not required to sign a consent form, something that TeenScreen says it now requires all schools using the program to mandate. As Anyanwu's case shows, however, asking parental consent can produce complications.

The survey Anyanwu filled out asked whether she was suicidal, was depressed or had experienced traumatic events. On the basis of her answers, she was selected to take a more in-depth questionnaire. At one point, she recalled, she became upset and wanted to stop, but she stayed because she had been taught to obey her elders.

She was then referred to a counselor, who sent her to a psychologist in Manhattan. For this, she did need her parents to sign a consent form -- and Anyanwu had not told them about the abuse because she had feared they would not believe her. In an interview, she said an older cousin in Nigeria had abused her from the time she was 8 until her family moved to New York when she was 13.

Anyanwu said she rushed her father to sign the consent sheet without

### Suicide-Risk Tests for Teens Debated

A growing number of U.S. schools are screening teenagers for suicidal tendencies or signs of mental illness, triggering a debate between those who seek to reduce the toll of youthful suicides and others who say the tests are unreliable and intrude on family privacy.

### SAVE & SHARE

Tag This Article

Saving options

Powered by Del.icio.us

### FEATURED ADVERTISE

- Refinance Rates As Low
- \$200,000 loan for \$917/m
- For College Graduates, I
- Barbra Streisand Ticket: NASCAR Tickets, Eric C
- ReNu, Celexa, Car Accid
- \$145,000 Mortgage for U
- Promotional Pens, T-shi
- Cool Gadgets, Great De:
- Get Free Checking with

looking at it and began therapy. At times, she was prescribed the antipsychotic drug Risperdal, the antidepressants Zoloft and Paxil, and lithium, which is often given for bipolar disorder. She was even hospitalized a few times, she said, once for cutting her wrists and attempting suicide as she wrestled with painful memories.

When her therapist eventually pressured her to tell her parents what had happened, her mother took her side but her father refused to believe her, Anyanwu said.

But the screening and the treatment changed her life for the better, she said, adding that she is glad TeenScreen and her therapists persuaded her to participate.

"I wanted to be in denial," she said. "Without the people to dig in, I would never have been able to verbalize my isolation and tell my story. My getting angry was part of the healing process."

[Print This Article](#)[E-Mail This Article](#)[Permission to Republish](#)

© 2006 The Washington Post Company

#### Ads by Google

##### [Titan® Car Seats](#)

Make Traveling With Babies Easy w/ the New Titan® Car Seat - Get Info!  
[www.Evenflo.com](http://www.Evenflo.com)

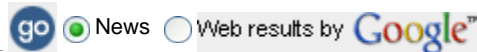
##### [iBoss Internet Filtering](#)

The affordable hardware solution. Easy to use. No software.  
[www.ipantom.com](http://www.ipantom.com)

##### [Self-Charging Smoke Alarm](#)

Protect high-risk areas. Easy installation. Buy online now!  
[www.DuPont.com](http://www.DuPont.com)

SEARCH:



[NEWS](#) | [OPINIONS](#) | [SPORTS](#) | [ARTS & LIVING](#) | [Discussions](#) | [Photos & Video](#) | [City Guide](#) | [CLASSIFIEDS](#) | [JOBS](#) | [CARS](#) | [REAL ES](#)

[washingtonpost.com: Help](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [About Us](#) | [Advertise With Us](#) | [Site Index](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Make Us Your Homepage](#) | [mywashingtonpost.cc](#)  
[The Washington Post: Subscribe](#) | [Subscriber Services](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Electronic Edition](#) | [Online Photo Store](#) | [The Washington Post Store](#) | [About The Washington Post Company: Information and Other Post Co. Websites](#)

© Copyright 1996- 2006 The Washington Post Company | [User Agreement and Privacy Policy](#) | [Rights and Permissions](#)