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Parents need to check out this TeenScreen program

To the parents of students at Ft. Madison & Central Lee Schools:

I discovered recently that both of these schools participate in the Teen Screen program. It's a psychological evaluation given to middle school and high school students. Central Lee sends home a permission slip, but the permission slip gives the parent no idea of the content of the test or the repercussions. Below is an idea of some of the questions on the test.

Has there been a time when nothing was fun for you and you just weren't interested in anything?

Has there been a time when you felt you couldn't do anything well or that you weren't as good-looking or as smart as other people?

How often did your parents get annoyed or upset with you because of the way you were feeling or acting?

Have you often felt very nervous when you've had to do things in front of people?

Have you often worried a lot before you were going to play a sport or game or do some other activity?

Have you tried to kill yourself in the last year?

Are you still thinking of killing yourself?

Have you thought seriously about killing yourself?

I can't imagine any normal teenager that hasn't experienced the first five of these questions. This test is billed as a suicide prevention test. However, it goes much further than that. From the results of this test students are labeled with:

Social Phobia

Panic Disorder

Anxiety

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

Active Suicide Ideation

Passive Suicide Ideation

Along with these so-called disorders goes the desire to put the teen on psychotropic drugs. According to the web sites I checked there is a 84-94% misdiagnosis rate with this test. I suggest all parents go to Google and type in 'Teen Screen' and read through the various web sites. By typing in this web site, you can read the test in its entirety:

http://www.psychsearch.net/teenscreen_lawsuit/31_4.pdf As you can see, you have to have Adobe Acrobat Reader to view this site. If I had known what was in these tests I would never have allowed my children to take them.

I am blessed with children who have a lot of common sense and a healthy sense of self-esteem. My daughter said a teacher stopped her in the hall and wanted to discuss the results of her test. My daughter told her the test was stupid and she wasn't interested in discussing it: end of discussion. Her comment to me was that "the guy who designed this test must have been high." My son said the test was ridiculously long and he didn't read it, just randomly answered the questions. His was kicked out by the computer as unreliable. He was quite pleased with himself.

In the interests of your children, please check it out.

Jeannie Hetzer

Ft. Madison