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## The Marshmallow Test: How we can learn better self-control

by Barbara J. Green, Ph.D.; YHC Medical Director

The holidays are past us and the airwaves are bursting forth with ads promising winning strategies for New Year's resolutions, including weight loss and financial planning. I find it absolutely fascinating to follow the timely sequence of holiday overeating and overspending to being cajoled into instant self-restraint. If only we could change our human behaviors so quickly and easily. For years I have been studying the challenge of developing self-control and how to assist those who come to me for help with managing eating, drinking, spending and other behaviors.

Over 40 years ago Dr. Walter Mischel started researching self-control skills demonstrated by a series of experiments involving young

children and marshmallows. He found that those children who could resist the marshmallow placed in front of them and hold out for a larger reward in the future became adults who were more likely to complete college, earn higher incomes and less likely to become overweight.

The good news is that Dr. Mischel powerfully presents documentation and research that shows that self-control skills including cognitive and emotional, can be learned, enhanced and harnessed. It is possible to develop tools to create positive change. In other words, it is the combination of environment, DNA and our active selves that make it possible to be "active agents" in our own lives. We can

use strategies to resist temptation and delay gratification. By developing the skills, nurturing it and practicing it we can empower our executive function and self-control strategies which then allow us to improve our ability to achieve our goals.

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### Youth Health Connection Upcoming Meetings & Events:

#### **South Shore FACTS**

**Meeting:** January 20, 2015 from 2:30-4 PM. Anyone interested in substance abuse prevention are welcome! Please RSVP to: [karin\\_farrell@sshosp.org](mailto:karin_farrell@sshosp.org)

#### **Parent Partner Meeting:**

January 21, 2015 from 8:30-10:30 AM. Guest Speaker: Bob Anthony-Adolescent Wellness.

#### **All Advisory Meeting**

February 3, 2015 from 9-11 AM. Guest Speaker: Jim McCauley, Riverside Trauma Center, School Crisis Planning. Please RSVP to: [karin\\_farrell@sshosp.org](mailto:karin_farrell@sshosp.org)

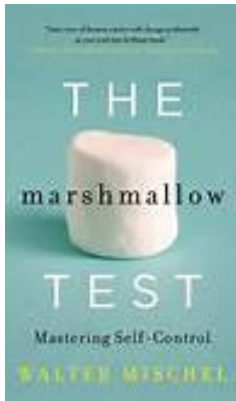
All meetings are held at Home Care Division of South Shore Hospital, 30 Reservoir Park Dr. Rockland, MA

### Tip for Better Living:

"The best way to predict the future is to invent it."

**Alan Kay**  
Computer scientist  
b. 1940

## The Marshmallow Test: How we can learn better self-control by Barbara J. Green, Ph.D.; YHC Medical Director



By learning to use positive thinking, mindfulness/meditation/breathing, thinking through to actions and results, distracting ourselves with something fun, imagining how someone else would behave, monitoring progress, visualizing your future self, creating consequences for succumbing to craving, paying attention to motivations, and role

modeling for children we can build an approach for building a life lived with self-control as a value. His tools are being applied to educational curriculums, financial planning and other aspects of life that require self-control.

Dr. Mischel's book, "*The Marshmallow Test: Mastering Self Control*" is a great read.

I encourage you to consider how you might want to enhance your own self-control as you begin the new year with a new set of resolutions. There are great rewards ahead for all of us who resist the "Marshmallow" and let our motivations lead us to something better in the future.

### Teen-Safe Website Updated!

Teen-Safe is an on-line resource for parents and guardians to gain a better understanding of underage drinking and substance use. The content was created by John Knight, M.D., founder and director of the Center for Adolescent Substance Abuse Research at Children's Hospital Boston.

The website includes a brief video history on why Dr. Knight has devoted his

career to the topic of Adolescent Substance Use Research.

On his website there are **recently updated** series of 8 short video clips (a total of 15 minutes of content) and then a quiz to help you gauge your knowledge.

The website also includes a FAQ section in which there are short videos of parent questions and answers by Dr. Knight.

This website includes an extensive list of resources.

**To learn more**, view the short videos, take the quiz and more visit: <http://bit.ly/teen-safe>



### The Anonymous People

Free Film Screening  
Jan. 14, 2015  
8 PM

Mill Wharf Cinema  
Scituate, MA

Sponsored by:  
South Shore Peer Recovery  
Initiative

### Cancer Resources and Information for Women

The winter 2014 edition of *Cure™ Magazine* includes two articles that might be of interest to many of you.

The first article in the Integrative Medicine section is entitled "Yoga's Benefits Explored," and provides overviews of a recent research study on the positive impacts of yoga for women with breast cancer receiving

radiation treatment.

The second article, under the Bookshelf recommendation is "*A Breast Cancer Alphabet*" by Madhulika Sikka, NPR Producer. This book is a memoir of her experience from diagnosis with breast cancer through treatment, with chapters arranged in alphabetical order with titles

such as "E is for Epiphany," "N is for Notebook" and "V is for Vacation," Ms. Sikka relates her experience with humor while sharing knowledge learned along the way.

**To access** the winter 2014 edition of *Cure Magazine* visit: <http://bit.ly/curewinter2014>

## Will You Be Joining Us?

On Monday, February 9, 2015 from 3:30-5:30 PM Youth Health Connection will host a Train the Trainer event for Hidden in Plain Sight at Home Care Division of South Shore Hospital, 30 Reservoir Park Dr., Rockland, MA.

Hidden in Plain Sight is a mixed-modality community substance abuse education program for parents. This educational offering includes a staged "mock teen

bedroom" with 50 items of concern related to substance abuse; in addition there is an accompanying PowerPoint presentation to help strengthen family communication and resiliency.

If you are interested in being able to host a Hidden In Plain Sight event in your community, please join us to learn how to host the event, reserve and set up the

display and how to present the community education component. Seating is limited at this training!

**Please RSVP to:**  
[karin\\_farrell@sshosp.org](mailto:karin_farrell@sshosp.org)

We are grateful to the generous funding from BlumShapiro that supports Hidden In Plain Sight.



## Community Education Series: Dialogues with the Doctor

The Hingham Public Library presents "Dialogues with the Doctor," featuring Katie McBrine, M.D. on January 15, 2015; the presentation will start at 7:30 PM and will be held at the Hingham Public Library-Children's Department, 66 Leavitt St., Hingham, MA.

The topic for this session is "Acne-When Washing Isn't Enough." The discussion will include: Teenage years are tough; getting a dermatology

appointment may be tougher. Attend and learn how to try and manage acne with your pediatrician's help.

On February 19, 2015 (same time and location) the content covered will be "The Talk" *Sexual Development in Children*. At this presentation Dr. McBrine will discuss what normal pubertal development is and when it is going too fast or too slow.

Dr. McBrine is a general pediatrician working at Scituate Pediatrics.

**Questions about these presentations?** Call the Children's Department at 781-741-1405 X1403.

*Dialogues with the Doctor*

## Resource for Educators and Families

To help busy educators quickly access highlights of innovative programs the Harvard Graduate School of Education's *Harvard Family Research Project* has created a section on their website called "Snapshots in Anywhere, Anytime Learning."

This new section will highlight innovative programs and practices, creative partnerships and inventive tools that promote anywhere, anytime opportunities for children and youth to learn.

(from [www.hfrp.org](http://www.hfrp.org))

Current resources relate to easing transition to Kindergarten and recommended apps to share with the children in your life.

**To learn more** about Snapshots visit:  
<http://bit.ly/HFRPsnapshots>



## Youth Health Connection

### Medical Director:

Barbara Green, Ph.D.

781-749-9227 x3

[Barbara@bjgreenphd.com](mailto:Barbara@bjgreenphd.com)

### Program Coordinator:

Kim Noble, RN, MBA

781-624-7415

[kimberly\\_noble@sshosp.org](mailto:kimberly_noble@sshosp.org)

### Administrative Secretary:

Karin Farrell, B.S.

781-624-7849

[karin\\_farrell@sshosp.org](mailto:karin_farrell@sshosp.org)

Youth Health Connection is a community benefits program of South Shore Hospital dedicated to the positive mental health and physical well-being of youth. Our programs collaborate with schools, community health providers, law enforcement officers, state agencies, religious leaders, parents and peer leaders to help young people deal with the various challenges they face and the decisions they must make as they grow and mature. By combining efforts, we can ensure that local youth have access to the health-related knowledge, skills and resources they need to make healthy decisions throughout their lifetime.

Youth Health Connection is a community benefits program of South Shore

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**Health Knowledge  
and Risk Prevention  
through Collaboration,  
Respect, Connectedness  
and Coalition Building**

## Safe Sledding By Andrea Moschella R.N., Curry College Nursing Student



There is nothing more exciting than the first snowfall of the season, looking forward to a day off from school, spending the day with friends, hot cocoa, and of course sledding! Unfortunately every year we hear news about many people who get hurt, from bumps and bruises to serious head injuries.

There are a few ways to be sure that your day is filled with fun and excitement and not an afternoon in the emergency room:

Select a hill that is not too steep and has a long flat area at the bottom in order to glide to a stop.

Avoid hills that end near a street or parking lot, ponds, trees or fences.

Make sure the hill is free of obstacles such as rocks, poles, or trees before you begin sledding.

Choose hills that are snowy rather than icy. Icy slopes make for hard landings if you fall off a sled.

Always sled during the daytime, when you can see better.

Always wear protective gear. Not only wear warm clothes like snow pants, hat, gloves and a warm winter jacket, but also wear a

helmet. Even though you may see others not wearing a helmet, it is the safest way to prevent a head injury.

Lastly always be aware of your surroundings. Be sure to allow others the space that they need to sled safely, and be sure that you have enough space as well.

Follow these few instructions and have a safe, fun afternoon followed by being curled up on the couch with your favorite movie and some hot chocolate to keep you warm.



For more safe sledding information visit Nationwide Children's Hospital at:

<http://bit.ly/1HEH1kd>