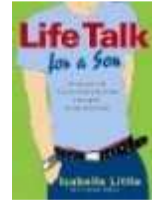


# Life Talk™ Forum News 10



(Suggestion: print for a complete record) ©Izabella Little

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-Life Talk for Parents: the book

- Previous issues covered

-Forum: can you get involved?

-Hubbly-Bubbly: important !

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-Fake ID: a teen's story

-Head injuries

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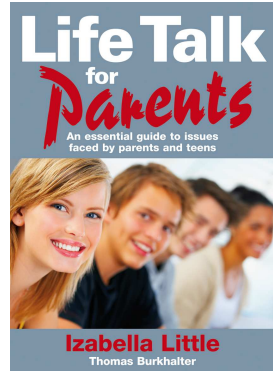
Panel members

Life Talk website

Contents of Life Talk for Parents

## FORUM BACKGROUND

The **LIFE TALK PARENTS' FORUM** provides parents with information and the opportunity to discuss issues and challenges that affect teenagers' lives. Author of the *Life Talk* books, Izabella Little, co-ordinates the Forum, the format is primarily electronic and input comes from parents, teens, and a panel of experts.



Our aim is to: create awareness, stimulate discussion, and highlight areas that can make a positive difference to the lives of adolescents and parents, helping to facilitate communication and to create happy, successful and fulfilled youth guided by sound values.

## BOOK NOW AVAILABLE

*Life Talk for Parents – an essential guide to issues faced by parents and teens* is now available and covers all the issues that have been tackled by the Forum to-date, and many more. Highly recommended by a number of schools, the books are available at most bookstores. For details see last page and [www.lifetalk.co.za](http://www.lifetalk.co.za)

## PREVIOUS ISSUES:

**Newsletters 1 – 9 covered:** clubs; drugs; cell phones; teenage drinking; pocket money; hubbly bubbly; porn; communication; discipline & boundaries; depression; Grade 8 hiccups; sexual activity; self-mutilation; eating disorders; self-esteem; bullying; sexual abuse; ADHD; EMO; subject choices; teen values; MXit; divorce; ice-spiking with 'eye drops', counsellors, 'rape me' games and helpful reading. (If you didn't get the newsletter/s, [email forum@lifetalk.co.za](mailto:forum@lifetalk.co.za) or download from [www.lifetalk.co.za](http://www.lifetalk.co.za) )

## THE FORUM: HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The Forum is overwhelmed with emails that describe so much heartache which, when explored, is so unnecessary and should never have happened.

We are highlighting the issues and aspects that contribute to this heartache, but we need to speed up the awareness building to enable some of the key issues to be tackled urgently, effectively and on as wide a scale as possible.

A number of people have asked us how they can help, and here are some suggestions that have come up:

### Individual parents:

- Select issues that are close to your heart, or those that you feel are of concern, and seek opportunities to discuss them and explore helpful areas and solutions with fellow parents, friends and relevant people in the community.
- Host get-togethers (like a book-club or Tupperware-party concept) for parents to discuss specific issues, concluding with a plan of positive actions and areas to focus on, implement or promote. Eg: agreeing on approaches to teen drinking, bullying, pocket money, curfews, clubs, values, boundaries etc

### Schools:

- Promote awareness of the important issues. and encourage ongoing

discussions and an active focus on all important and helpful areas.

- Encourage parents' get-togethers and discussion groups. One school's parents have formed "PUPS" (Parents Under Pressure), others have "chat-togethers".

**Business people and organisations:**

- Address parental challenges, and host talks to staff about parenting issues. (Productivity suffers when parents stress about their children, and companies are finding that investing some effort in helping parents can pay dividends.)
- Sponsor awareness building initiatives as a social responsibility drive.

**ALL SUGGESTIONS ARE WELCOME!**

If we all get involved, at all levels of society, we can make a powerful difference to the outcome of many lives. The Forum team is available to facilitate initiatives, provide information, give talks, and help where possible.

## **HUBBLY-BUBBLY: WHY DO PARENTS BUY THEM FOR THEIR CHILDREN?**

We wrote about the Hubbly/Hookah pipe in a previous newsletter, but with the recent burst of Hubbly use, schools have again asked us to highlight the risks.

A large number of parents are buying Hubblies for their children. Some parents haven't yet heard of Hubblies, and many are surprised to find out, after asking their children, that they've either smoked or been to get-togethers where Hubblies are being smoked. And one only has to see how many shops now sell Hubblies to realize how their popularity is growing.

**Experts say that Hubblies carry risks which are as great as, or greater than, smoking cigarettes – so why would anyone buy their child a Hubbly?**

For some reason, there is a perception that Hubblies don't involve smoking or any of the risks associated with smoking. But the facts indicate otherwise:

- Smoking hubbly is still "smoking".
- There are no filters present, so health risks can be as great as, or greater than those linked to cigarettes.
- It can be addictive.
- It is very easy to lace the tobacco with other ingredients, ie drugs. Much of the "fun" of smoking hubbly involves the different flavours that are added in the form of fruit chips and other ingredients. And given the circumstances under which hubblies are smoked (at parties and often raucous gatherings), it is almost impossible to monitor the addition of unwanted substances.
- Smoking Hubblies involves ritual, equipment and group hype – as does drug-taking – and experts warn about the subtle messages about the activity and its related "fun" that are absorbed by children, possibly predisposing them to being more accepting of similar drug-related rituals.

In spite of these risks, we regularly hear of parents who let children as young as 9 or 10 smoke Hubblies, and of others who happily organise "Hubbly parties" as teen entertainment.

More information can be obtained from organisations such as D.A.R.E. on 011-788 0717, and also on the Internet (just avoid sites sponsored by tobacco companies or Hookah manufacturers).

## **CHEWING TOBACCO: ANOTHER 'NEW' CRAZE?**

We have recently received a number of queries about the seemingly growing popularity of "chewing tobacco". It appears that in quite a few schools there's a thriving trade in "smokeless" or "chewing" tobacco. Some parents are becoming very concerned, whilst others are entering the supply chain. (And some teens are managing to fund quite a lavish lifestyle from their creative trading ventures.)

The US National Cancer Institute says:

- "Chewing tobacco and snuff contain 28 cancer-causing agents.
- All tobacco, including smokeless tobacco, contains nicotine, which is addictive. The amount of nicotine absorbed from smokeless tobacco is 3 to 4 times the

amount delivered by a cigarette. Also, the nicotine stays in the bloodstream for a longer time.

- Some of the other effects of smokeless tobacco use include: Oral leukoplakia (white mouth lesions that can become cancerous), gum disease, and gum recession.”

Based on the number of reports the Forum is receiving, use of chewing tobacco by teens definitely seems to be increasing – so it’s important to alert teens and parents about some of the facts and associated risks.

## **FAKE IDs: ARE THE RISKS REALLY WORTH IT?**

From the feedback flooding in, fake IDs are now being made at an even faster rate, and an increasing number of parents seem to be pitching in to help in their production. As some clubs enforce age restrictions in a stricter manner, so are fake IDs seen as more “essential”.

But many such users and makers are unaware of the implications of being caught with such an ID. Low as the risks of being caught may seem, clubs do at times get raided by police, and the implications of being found guilty of being in possession of a fake ID are severe. An email from someone who experienced this first hand reads as follows:

“Please tell everyone (teens and parents too) about the risks of using a fake ID. I was 16 when my mates and I were caught in a popular club. At first we thought it was very funny, an experience to brag about, but the realities hit me after I graduated. I wanted to go overseas to work, and that’s when I found out that the implications of my misdemeanour are:

- Having a criminal record.
- The criminal record states “FRAUD” and gives no explanation that the crime was solely for the purposes of gaining entry into a club.
- When applying for international visas, a criminal record blocks you from entering many of the countries we really want to go to.
- The job I had been promised in Australia fell through when I was refused entry.
- Potential employers, when they find out about the criminal “fraud” record, are not interested in explanations – the doors of opportunity suddenly slam shut.
- Even though I am now a responsible accountant, I have been told that my record prevents me from being a Director, or a Trustee.

“By making that ID I made a very, very stupid mistake. It has ruined so many opportunities for me. Please ask all parents to tell their teens about the risks, and if they don’t believe me, to ask a lawyer or a policeman – the risks are too real.”

## **AVOIDING THE DANGERS OF HEAD INJURIES**

Following a spate of accidents which recently took a number of young lives, and which left an even greater number with head injuries, we received an alert sent in by Alison Gittelson, a personal and business development tutor and volunteer at Headway Gauteng.

“When hearing of a car or bike accident where no one was killed I used to think ‘thank goodness’. Then I started volunteering at Headway-Gauteng, the association that supports survivors of TBI (traumatic brain injury) and their families. Now I know that life after a head injury can sometimes be much worse than death.

“In SA there are about 100 000 new head injuries a year – about 80% of these are caused by vehicle accidents. An unconfirmed statistic says that ‘for every death on our roads four other people will suffer TBI’s’.

“Very few people with severe or moderate TBI ever manage to be employed again. Those who do, rarely work in their original positions.

“In the case of a vehicle accident most of the damage is to the frontal and temporal lobes of the brain. These areas are used for memory, learning, planning, organizing, and problem-solving as well as controlling emotions and behaviour.

“Every injury is different and how each person recovers is unique. But let me paint a picture of some common complaints:

- “My son has a head injury. He used to be such a dynamic, successful person.

He still has a great sense of humour but sometimes the jokes are embarrassing and inappropriate.”

- “He gets angry very easily and flies into a rage.”
- “When he does manage to get a job it doesn’t last long. He’s slow and disorganised and keeps on forgetting what to do. His co workers get irritated with him for repeating the same stories.”
- “Now she is at home I expect her to help out but she just sits and watches TV all day. There is no initiative.”
- “He has all sorts of grand ideas but can’t see they are way beyond his capabilities.”
- “We have to manage his money because he would give it away to anyone who asked.”
- “Where will she stay when I am gone?”

“We, as individuals can do very little about the way other drivers drive. What we **can control** is how we drive and the example we set for our children. We can choose not to drink and drive. We can drive at an appropriate speed for the road conditions. We can wear our seatbelts.

“We can also educate our teenagers. Encourage them to make careful choices and resist peer pressure. Let us each do our part to reduce the risk of being killed, or possibly worse, seriously injured on the roads.”

### **TO SUBSCRIBE ( FREE):**

If you would like to receive your own copy of the Forum News, go to [www.lifetalk.co.za](http://www.lifetalk.co.za) click on the FORUM icon and fill in your name and email. You can also download copies of the newsletter off the website.

### **PANEL MEMBERS & CONTRIBUTORS**

Our panel of contributors includes:

**Thomas Burkhalter.** A leading psychologist, Thomas has two practices, focuses on: children, adolescents, parents, adult psychotherapy and couples therapy, and is case conference consultant at the Parent and Child Counselling Centre(NGO).

**Liz Norman.** Clinical social worker with 22 years experience in the field of child and family welfare, specialising in group dynamics and adolescent mental health.

**Izabella Little Gates.** Internationally published author of the best-selling **Life Talk** books. She runs the Forum, is a regular guest on radio and TV programmes about teens and parenting, gives talks, and continues to write.

**Jenny Shain.** Social worker and Deputy Director of JPCCC (Johannesburg Parent and Child Counselling Centre, 011-484-1734/5/6)

**Liz Dooley.** Director and Counsellor at FAMSA (Family Life Centre) - 28 years experience as a social worker/counsellor specializing in family and marital relationships and parenting skills, youth and individual counselling.

**Sally Thorp.** Works with parents and children in the area of building healthy self-esteem and equipping them with tools to face life with optimism & self-reliance.

**Melinda Ferguson.** Author of **Smacked** - a harrowing story of addiction and survival. From her own traumatic experience she offers insight & advice on drugs.

**Esha Brijmohan.** A journalist, Esha raises awareness re important issues.

**To utilise any of the panel member’s services, email [forum@lifetalk.co.za](mailto:forum@lifetalk.co.za)**

**PLEASE FORWARD THIS NEWSLETTER TO ANYONE WHO MIGHT BE INTERESTED**

**The FORUM email address is: [forum@lifetalk.co.za](mailto:forum@lifetalk.co.za)**

The Life Talk™ Forum is endorsed by:  
**FAMSA, the CIE , KHULISA (crime prevention initiative)**  
**Johannesburg Parent and Child Counselling Centre**

For more about the *Life Talk™* books or about the Forum visit:

**[www.lifetalk.co.za](http://www.lifetalk.co.za)**

The books make a great gift and are available at most bookstores,  
on [www.kalahari.net](http://www.kalahari.net), and internationally in: UK, Portugal (and soon in Spain & China)

**\*\*Proceeds fund the Forum \*\***

# ***Life Talk for Parents –***

**an essential guide to issues faced by parents and teens**

**(and *Lewenspraatjies met Ouers*)**

**“A must-read for parents and educators” covering key aspects including:**

<b>Teen Issues &amp; Challenges</b>	<b>Parents’ Dilemmas</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Relationships</li> <li>▪ Peer pressure</li> <li>▪ Teen drinking – reasons &amp; solutions</li> <li>▪ Drugs: the spiral down &amp; signs of use</li> <li>▪ Sexual activity – what’s happening?</li> <li>▪ Problems: trivial or serious?</li> <li>▪ Bullying</li> <li>▪ Divorce and its impact on teens</li> <li>▪ Depression: signs, symptoms &amp; causes</li> <li>▪ Eating disorders</li> <li>▪ Sexual abuse; Self-harm; Suicide; Crime</li> <li>▪ Pornography: what’s different nowadays?</li> <li>▪ Steroids: good, bad or ugly?</li> <li>▪ STIs, HIV, condoms &amp; other aspects</li> <li>▪ Learning problems, ADD &amp; ADHD</li> <li>▪ Back-to-school jitters</li> <li>▪ Help – I have nothing to wear!</li> <li>▪ End of school – first-year studies</li> <li>▪ Subjects, careers &amp; aptitude tests</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Ten Points to Ponder</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communication</li> <li>▪ Family</li> <li>▪ Values: powerful &amp; important</li> <li>▪ Self-esteem – important or a buzzword?</li> <li>▪ Boundaries, consequences &amp; discipline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ But Mom, everyone is going!</li> <li>▪ Communication – when the gap widens</li> <li>▪ Parenting styles &amp; dilemmas</li> <li>▪ Sleepovers &amp; related debates</li> <li>▪ Parties: quandaries &amp; tips</li> <li>▪ Clubs, teens &amp; fake IDs</li> <li>▪ Curfew times: to set &amp; how to set?</li> <li>▪ Cell phone, camera &amp; Internet challenges</li> <li>▪ Cell phones &amp; the Internet: tips &amp; solutions</li> <li>▪ Cheeky &amp; rebellious teens</li> <li>▪ Pocket money: could less be more?</li> <li>▪ Guilt: valid or unnecessary?</li> <li>▪ Single-parenting issues &amp; quirks</li> <li>▪ Divorce: to split or to stay?</li> <li>▪ Driving lessons – oh, preserve us!</li> <li>▪ End of school: its impact on parents</li> <li>▪ How teens help us grow</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Faith &amp; spirituality: uncool or important?</li> <li>▪ Parenting responsibility vs. abdication</li> <li>▪ Exercise &amp; healthy diet</li> <li>▪ A positive attitude</li> <li>▪ Love</li> </ul>

**BULK ORDERS (100+ BOOKS) CAN BE EMAILED to: [forum@lifetalk.co.za](mailto:forum@lifetalk.co.za)**