

MEMBER CENTER: Create Account | Log In

SITE SEARCH

WEB SEARCH BY Google

Search



Central Coast Deals | Contests | Get Coupons | Law Line | Perfect Health | Perfect Home | Preferred Merchants |

Home | News | Video | Weather | Story Links | Sports | Community | MarketPlace | Programming | Lifestyle | Contact Us

Email | Share | Print | Text Size

### Professor Explains Deadly 'Choking Game' Logic

[Recommend](#) Be the first of your friends to

Posted: Apr 18, 2012 7:56 PM EDT  
Updated: Apr 18, 2012 7:56 PM EDT

UC SANTA BARBARA – A visiting professor from Cornell University is discussing her research about what goes through the minds of young people when they take risks that can sometimes end in death.

In the past month, five deaths have been attributed to the choking game in five states.

It's an activity that has been around for decades that cuts off blood and oxygen to the brain and simulates a high. Sometimes a rope, belt or hands are used.

"I witnessed it," said a Stamford, CT student. "She basically just bent over and started breathing really heavy and then she would come up and shove her thumbs into her throat."

"It almost seems like a crazy thing to call it a game," said Professor Valerie Reyna.

Professor Reyna of Cornell University is visiting UC Santa Barbara for a month to learn more on the Sage Institute for the Study of the Mind. She has done extensive research on risk-taking behavior.

She said the thought used to be that young people did dangerous things because they didn't understand there was a risk and didn't think anything bad could happen.

"And it turns out that multiple studies have shown that young people don't think they're immortal, in fact more often they think they will die before their time," explained Professor Reyna.

Because of that, to them it justifies taking a chance.

Professor Reyna's research doesn't focus on the actual event of risky behavior like the choking game, but on how teens and college age students think when it comes to taking risks.

"The young person thinks of it as more of a mathematical puzzle. What are the pros and what are the cons? They get out a sort of mental calculator and they add up the pros and the cons. And they say there are benefits involved, there's a high involved. And one of the pros, in the mind of the teenager, is that this activity is not illegal where other activities that they would have as an option like drinking, are illegal."

Reyna said understanding the thought process of why young people do something like the choking game will help parents prevent a possible deadly accident.

If you would like to hear Professor Valerie Reyna speak about risk taking behavior, she will be at the University Club in Santa Barbara on April 26 at 6:30 p.m. The event is open to the public.

University Club of Santa Barbara  
1332 Santa Barbara St  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101-2017

#### Video Gallery



Explaining The Choking Game  
1:54



#### News

[More>>](#)

- [Baby Girl Dies at Hospital After Car Crash](#)
- [Holocaust Survivors Speak At Beth David Congregation](#)
- [Professor Explains Deadly 'Choking Game' Logic](#)
- [Alcohol Related Crash Kills Man On Hwy 154](#)
- [Crews Locate Missing Man in San Luis Obispo](#)
- [A Bear-y Good Recycling Idea!](#)
- [Deputy Suing San Luis Obispo Sheriff's Department No Stranger to the Court](#)
- [Highway 154 Closed For Several Hours After Fatal Accident](#)
- [Goleta Library Receives Grant for Family Place](#)
- [CHP Investigating Fatal Rollover in Morro Bay](#)



All content © Copyright 2000 - 2012 WorldNow and KCOY. All Rights Reserved.  
For more information on this site, please read our [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Service](#).