

Empowering
Youth &
Families

PARENT MANUAL

University of Minnesota and Kaiser Permanente - 2015



MPower Program

MPOWER PROGRAM

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MPOWER PROGRAM

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It's not only children who grow. Parents do too. As much as we watch to see what our children do with their lives, they are watching us to see what we do with ours. I can't tell my children to reach for the sun. All I can do is reach for it myself.

~Joyce Maynard

MPOWER PROGRAM

HOW TO USE THE PARENT MANUAL

This manual is designed to provide parents/guardians with additional information and resources to extend the use of the MPower Program at home with their teen.

- **The MPower program is intended to:**
 - Increase family communication, bonding, and understanding around sensitive topics; especially alcohol and other drug use.
 - Reduce adolescent risk factors for drug use.

- **Included in this manual are the following:**
 - Information about parenting a teen
 - Drug education
 - Online Resources
 - Additional Reading Resources



Artwork from: <http://tohnijean.com/2014/07/19/parenting-a-comparison-between-your-mom-and-you/>

MPOWER PROGRAM

PARENTING TEENS



*photo from <http://tentotwenty.com/parenting-teens-needs/>

**"Nothing you do for a child is ever wasted.
They seem not to notice us,
hovering, averting their eyes, and they
seldom offer thanks,
but what we do for them is never wasted."**

—Garrison Keillor

Introduction

Though the goal of this program is to empower teens by providing tools for them to make educated and healthy choices, it is also critical to empower you, the parents/guardians, to support your teen through effective communication, enhanced parenting practices, knowledge of adolescent brain development, and increased family bonding.

Adolescent Brain Development & Cognitive Emotional Regulation

Knowledge of adolescent brain development can give you an understanding of why teens act the way they do, provide realistic expectations for behavior, and provide guidance for promoting independence and cognitive/emotional regulation.

Adolescent brain development:

1. Adolescence is a period of profound brain maturation.
2. Development is finalized from the back of the brain to the front of the brain.
3. Maturation is not considered complete until around age 25.



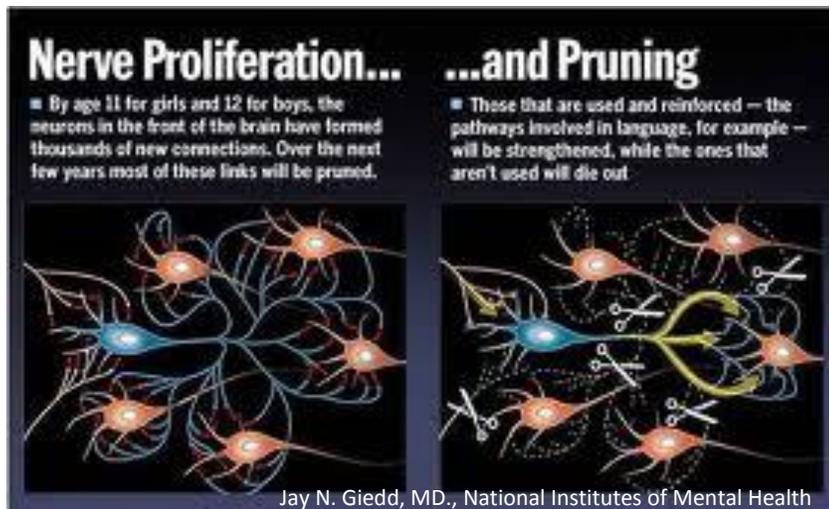
CAUTION: TEEN BRAIN UNDER CONSTRUCTION!

Three important changes are occurring in the brain during adolescence:

1. Pruning
2. White matter maturation
3. Gray matter maturation

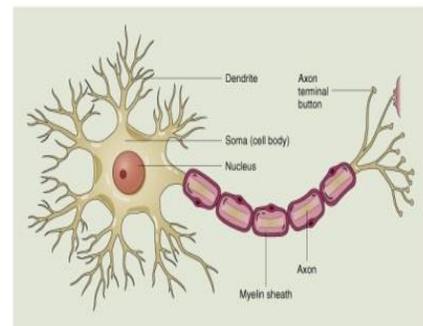
Pruning

- Throughout childhood your brain undergoes significant cell growth!
- Then, starting at age 11 for girls & 12 for boys, connections in the brain are starting to be *pruned* (cut).
- You can think of it like the pruning of a tree or shrub. You need to prune off the “straggly or sucker branches” that take up energy and interfere with full growth potential.
- The connections YOU USE get bigger, stronger, and faster – Use it or lose it!
- The connections you DON’T USE get cut - 20% get pruned off.
- This pruning process allows for personalized growth, which will make the brain faster and more efficient as it matures. It’s important to empower your teen to make healthy choices for stress management, pleasurable activities, interests, communication, etc. that strengthen the desired neural connections. By strengthening these healthy neural connections, teens will gain skills that result in successful and productive adult behaviors and help the teens avoid unhealthy neural connections that can result from alcohol & drug use and other unhealthy behaviors.



White Matter Maturation

- Brain cells (also called neurons; shown in the picture at right) consist of a cell body, dendrites, and axon. The axon is the long part of the cell that stretches out from the body of the cell; signals travel down this axon. The job of the axon is to send information to other neurons.
- The axon has a white protective coating call the myelin sheath. This myelin sheath acts as an insulator and helps the signal get stronger and move faster; helping the brain act quicker and more efficiently. **This insulator (the white matter of the brain)** gets thicker during adolescence. Think of it as a coating over an electrical wire outside. It helps the messages travel more quickly and smoothly throughout the brain. Thus, as the brain matures, if the healthy or desirable connections have a thicker myelin sheath, those desirable thoughts or behaviors will grow stronger and occur more quickly.
- Encourage healthy behaviors like effective communication, stress management, and positive decision making so those connections become stronger, rather than the less healthy connections for activities like fighting, drug and alcohol use, and explosive behavior. Tips for encouraging these healthy behaviors are provided on the following pages!



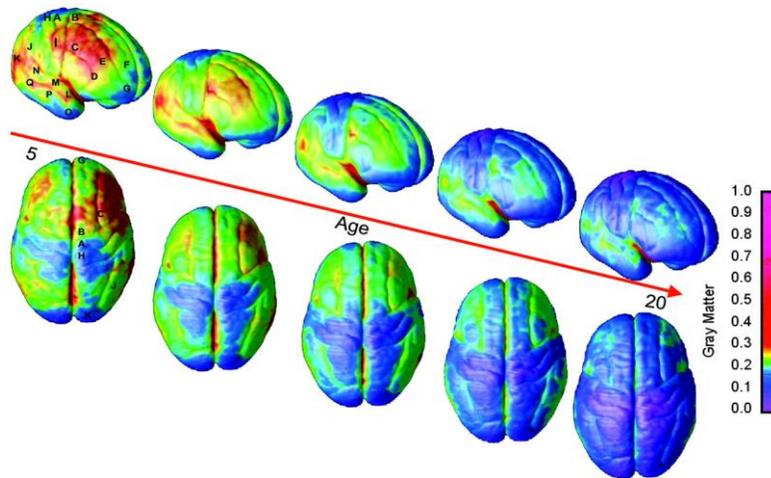
© 2000 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Gray Matter Maturation

- Gray matter is the un-myelinated cell bodies within the brain. They process the signals that are sent from the white matter. This too is under construction during adolescence. Thus, even though teens may receive a message, they can't always process how to effectively act on that message.

- The picture below shows the maturation of the brain through young adulthood when it finally finishes its development – usually around age 25, but can be later (age 29), especially for boys or individuals with mental health concerns. The blue color represents gray matter maturation.

Gray Matter Maturation
(Gogtay et al., 2004)



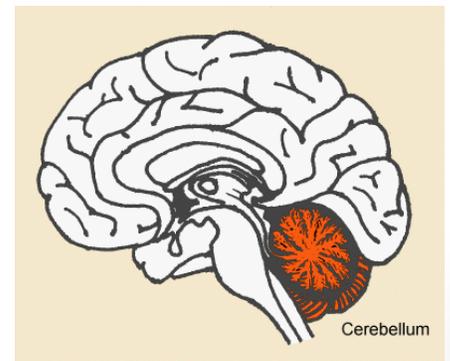
- There are a few industries that have developed policies congruent with adolescent brain maturation (likely based on insurance statistics!). Any ideas of what type of company or organization makes decisions based in part on adolescent brain development data?

RENTAL CAR COMPANIES and HOTELS.

Typically individuals can't rent a room until age 21 or a car until age 25.

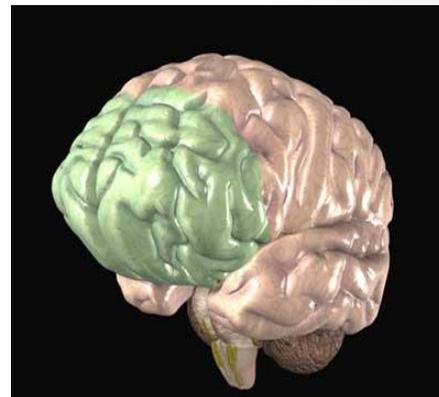
Now keeping these important brain changes in mind (**pruning and white and gray matter maturation**), let's consider the parts of the brain that are being most impacted during adolescence to help explain: **WHY TEENS ACT THE WAY DO & WHY THE TEEN BRAIN IS SO VULNERABLE TO RISKY BEHAVIORS, ESPECIALLY THE EFFECTS OF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL!**

- **Cerebellum** (Shaded in the picture to the right): It is responsible for physical activity, coordination, balance, learning and remembering physical skills. *This is one of the first sections of the brain to finalize its development.* That is why it is important to keep teens physically active. Their brains are primed and ready to go physically!



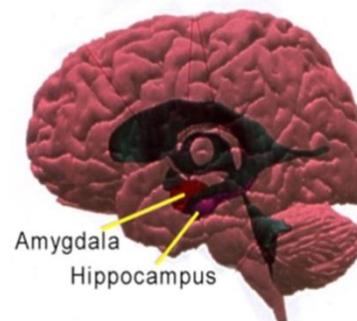
The front part of the brain, called the prefrontal cortex, is also greatly affected during the life stage of adolescence. This area is sometimes called the “new brain”; it distinguishes humans from other animals.

- **Prefrontal Cortex** – responsible for planning, putting on the BRAKES, making choices between right & wrong, good & bad, understanding consequences, & organization
- **This is the last part of the brain to finalize its development!** Brain maturation isn’t considered fully complete until most people reach their mid-20s (though maturation can vary among individuals, usually ranging from age 22 to age 30!).



Lastly, the center of the brain holds 3 parts of the brain largely affected by adolescence:

1. **Hippocampus** – responsible for learning, memory & spatial navigation
2. **Amygdala** – responsible for emotions: fear, anger & happiness
3. **Nucleus Accumbens** – responsible for pleasure seeking & motivation



These three sections of the mid brain are not only being finalized in their development, but are also being influenced by high levels of testosterone (boys naturally produce this during puberty and girls turn estrogen to testosterone). The testosterone during adolescence often works to intensify the functions of the amygdala and nucleus accumbens, creating intensified emotions, pleasure seeking behaviors, and peer-motivation. This intensified risk-taking and emotional experience, combined with the immature reasoning and judgment by the prefrontal cortex, creates the life phase called ADOLESCENCE, which is experienced by everyone who reaches adulthood (though the expression of these circumstances can vary by individual and culture). Remember when you went through this stage?



Photo from www.montway.com

AN ADOLESCENT BRAIN IN DEVELOPMENT HAS A “FULLY FUNCTIONAL CAR ACCELERATOR BUT THE BRAKES HAVE NOT BEEN INSTALLED YET.”

(DAVID WALSH, 2004, P. 72)

To summarize, in the teen brain...

- the cerebellum is **physically** “ready to go!”
- the **emotional, pleasure seeking, motivational, and memory parts** of the brain are highly stimulated and getting stronger & faster (helps to explain why we see so much “drama” during adolescence!)
- the “weighing consequences, knowing right from wrong, and brakes” part of the brain (prefrontal cortex) is **not fully functioning... until about age 25.**

This brain maturation process is what makes the teen brain so very **VULNERABLE** to risky behaviors, including drugs & alcohol – if teens are repeatedly engaged in these risky behaviors, the neural connections that are responsible for those behaviors will grow stronger and more efficient. In addition, key brain structures are solidifying and strengthening during this time and the use of drugs and alcohol will disrupt this process.

Knowledge of adolescent brain development can assist you in your understanding of why teens act the way they do and help you adjust your reaction to your teen’s behaviors. They may be under-developed, but *it doesn’t mean that teens are not responsible for their behavior.* Consider the following analogy:

The Infant Analogy

If a baby throws his or her food on the floor when eating in the high chair, the parent probably realizes that this behavior is developmentally appropriate and – though it may be annoying to the parent –he or she doesn’t make a big deal about it. If the baby keeps playing the “dropsy game” the parent changes their behavior (i.e., puts the food out of reach, takes the infant out of the high chair, etc.) because they understand this behavior is typical of a child at this stage in development.

Parents of teens need to keep in mind the developmental aspects of the teen brain as well. The teen brain is “under construction” which gives explanation for many of the decisions and behaviors teens can display. When parents interact with a teen or reflect on their behavior, parents need to be aware of developmentally appropriate teen behavior and adjust their responses and thoughts accordingly. Teens still need to learn to not “throw their food on the floor”, as suggested by the analogy, but parents can adjust their reaction to the behavior to assist in that learning process.

Cognitive Emotional Regulation

Cognitive emotional regulation has to do with understanding the role our emotions play in our thoughts and behaviors. Emotions profoundly influence how we process a situation and our reaction to it. In this section, we integrate what we learned about adolescent brain development with how we can assist teens in regulating their emotions. Helping teens understand how to **regulate their emotions and cognitions** (thoughts) can be used to reduce stress, such as in the Tea Kettle Analogy (page 25), and is an important part of a parenting.

What is Emotion Regulation?

(adapted from EROS Research Group, The Institute of Work Psychology:
http://www.erosresearch.org/index.php/emotion_regulation/an%20easy%20guide/)

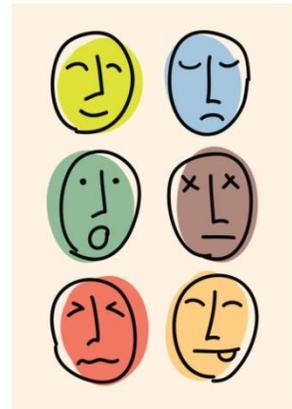
Emotion regulation describes the mental and behavioral processes by which people influence their own feelings and the feelings of other people.

Everyday examples of regulating your own emotions:

- Cheering yourself up by doing something enjoyable;
- Making yourself anxious by worrying.

Everyday examples of regulating someone else’s emotions:

- Making a colleague angry by criticizing him or her;
- Calming down an over-excited child.



Emotions and Mood Are Not The Same!

Emotions are usually more short-lived than moods and are directed at something specific.

For example, emotions include feelings like anger, disgust, or fear, whereas moods include more generalized feelings of being calm or gloomy. Consider a time when you’ve been in a gloomy mood and how you experienced the emotion of anger – was this different than the feeling of anger when you’re in a calm mood?

How do people regulate emotions?

People have hundreds of different strategies for influencing how they feel and how others feel. These strategies can be aimed at making themselves or others feel better or worse than they currently feel. Emotional regulation strategies can involve *thoughts*, such as thinking about a situation differently, or *behaviors*, such as doing something different to serve as a distraction. Sometimes people regulate their emotional *expressions* (face, tone and posture), rather than their feelings. For example, they may fake a smile, or suppress their anger.

Cognitive distortions are common ways of regulating emotions that can be counter-productive. These cognitive distortions are simply ways that our mind convinces us of something that isn't really true. These inaccurate thoughts are usually used to reinforce negative thinking or emotions — telling ourselves things that sound rational and accurate, but really only serve to keep us feeling bad about ourselves.

Consider the list of cognitive distortions on the next page. Then think about ways and times when you or your teen uses these distortions. What might be affecting that way of thinking? Sometimes, these distortions are a learned behavior - we've seen or heard others use this method of dealing with situations, or we've tried it and gotten a desirable response, so we learned to continue using this method of addressing situations. Sometimes they can arise out of self-esteem problems or mental health issues. Despite the origin of the cognitive distortion, how can you help your teen challenge these thoughts to allow for more productive, positive thoughts?

- Embrace the positives and appreciate the accomplishments, no matter how small! Write them down so you don't forget!
- Remember that a single negative experience doesn't last forever. Negative experiences often promote change and growth quickly.
- Think of baby steps – a situation may appear to be insurmountable, but by breaking it down into smaller steps, it may become much more attainable.
- Take a step back before you jump to conclusions. Before you say it out loud, think clearly about the situation and look at all the possibilities, especially the positive ones.
- Avoid the words “never”, “always” and “ever”. Think about times when these words were not true. Instead of saying, “I always screw things up”, consider times when things worked out well.

Discuss this cognitive distortion chart with your teen.

Cognitive Distortions

Cognitive Distortion		Explanation
1	Catastrophize or Minimize	Exaggerate the importance of your mistakes or imperfections, do this to others, or minimize your academic achievements, good qualities, and those of others.
2	Jump To Conclusions	Interpret events negatively even if there's no support for your conclusion.
3	All-Or-Nothing Thinking	See things in absolute categories. For example, if your grades aren't perfect, you believe you are a total failure.
4	Mental Filter	Select a single negative detail and dwell on it so exclusively that it colors reality like one drop of ink colors a whole glass of water.
5	Mind Reading	Assume you know what others are thinking and that people are reacting negatively to you.
6	Emotional Reasoning	Assume that your emotions necessarily reflect reality. An example is, "I feel like an idiot therefore I must be one."
7	Disqualify The Positive	Ignore positive accomplishments and focus on negatives that prevent seeing or enjoying your successes.
8	Fortune Telling	Anticipate that things will turn out badly and convince yourself that your prediction will become fact, and then act accordingly.
9	Labeling	Involves emotionally loaded language. Instead of trying to fix an error or situation, you attach a negative label to yourself such as, "I am a terrible learner." When other people annoy you, you attach a negative label such as, "What a total @#%\$%^!"
10	Overgeneralization	View a single negative event as a predictable pattern for a future of never-ending negative events.
11	Personalization	See yourself as causing a negative outcome even if in reality you are not responsible.
12	"Should" Statements	Try to motivate yourself with "shoulds", "ought to's", and "need to" statements. The emotional consequence is ineffectiveness, guilt, and depression. You apply your "shoulds" to other students and when unmet, you feel resentment or disappointment.

Reproduced with permission from Dennis Congos, University of Central Florida;
<http://www.learningassistance.com/2006/june/cognitivedistortions.html>

What are the best ways of regulating feelings?

This often depends on the context. However, reappraisal (i.e. thinking about things from a different perspective) and distraction (i.e. thinking about or doing something different) have been found to be generally most effective in producing a desired change in feeling. Venting feelings (e.g., shouting) and avoiding thinking about things are often ineffective and can be counterproductive. Likewise, regulating one's expressions (also known as surface acting) can be less effective than regulating one's feelings (also known as deep acting) because it can come across as inauthentic to others.

Like other behaviors, regulating feelings can take time and practice! Be patient.

Effective Communication

For many families, this topic is a very difficult one. For example, on the issue of drug use, some parents choose to not address it; others become upset by accidentally discovering some drug paraphernalia and then end up lecturing or berating their child about the dangers of drugs. Research has shown that one of most powerful influences that can be exerted by parents in an effort to reduce the likelihood that their child will use drugs is to communicate to him or her *early and often* that you disapprove of drug use and would be very upset if use occurred. Likewise, effective communication skills in all areas of life can greatly improve the relationship, increase trust and respect, reduce defensiveness, and reduce anxiety.

“Then you should say what you mean,” the March Hare went on.

“I do,” Alice hastily replied; “at least—at least I mean what I say—that's the same thing, you know.”

“Not the same thing a bit!” said the Hatter. “You might just as well say that ‘I see what I eat’ is the same thing as ‘I eat what I see!’”

-Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

What is Effective Communication?

Communication is a transaction between two or more people, with all participants having an active role in the process. A speaker transmits a message and must ensure that the message is delivered clearly. A listener takes delivery of the message and must be an active listener. It can occur verbally (through speech, using words and tones) or non-verbally (through body language, such as attentiveness, eye contact, eye rolling, standing vs. sitting, and arm/hand placement). Effective communication takes place only when the listener clearly understands the message that the speaker intended to send.

6 Steps to Effective Communication

Step 1 – “I care”

Tell the other person that you care about him or her. Attempt to build upon your relationship to help to reduce the potential defensiveness in the other person. An example of this approach is, “I care about you and I don’t want you to get hurt”.

Step 2 – “I see”

In this step, you need to tell the person what they have done that has caused you concern. *Just give the facts*, not your opinion, based upon what you have seen or found. An example of this is, “when you came in last night you were three hours late and you didn’t answer my calls”.

Step 3 – “I feel”

This is where you tell person about how this behavior or discovery has made you feel. Be sure to take away any blame from this step. For example, “When you yelled at me in front of all my friends, I felt really embarrassed”.

Step 4 – Listen

This is one of the most important steps. Listen to what the other person has to say about the situation. Some may not say anything at all at this point but it is useful to allow this opportunity for the other person to tell their side. It is possible that they are not ready to talk. You can tell them that you are available to listen to what they have to say at another time.

Step 5 – “I want”

After hearing the other person’s side, tell them what you want to happen next and what you want them to do. For example, “I want to know that you’re safe, and to do that I want you to call me and let me know where you are going”.

Step 6 – “I will”

This final step is where you tell the person **what you will and will not do in order to help** with this problem. Some may choose to be available to just listen when the person chooses to discuss the issue. Others may choose to make an appointment with a mental health or chemical health counselor.



Remember:

The best time to talk is when you have calmed down from the initial shock of the situation. You will need to find a place to talk where you will not be interrupted. The time to talk is not while anyone involved in the conversation is under the influence of drinking or using other drugs.

(Adapted from Walking the Talk: A Program for Parents about Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Use and Nonuse - A Participant Workbook. Developed by The Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, Rockville, MD, 2001).

Respectful Arguing

This topic, a form of effective communication, can be very difficult for families to incorporate into their daily life because the techniques used in communication and arguments are often a deeply ingrained habit that may have been used for generations. Off-spring commonly use the same communication and argumentative techniques as their parents/role models. As a parent, you are modeling problem-solving skills and the ability to deal with disagreement/confrontation. Please remember to be patient with your teen *and yourself*; it takes persistence and patience in developing these new habits.

Review the Tips for Respectful Arguing on the next page, and consider which tips your family already uses, and which ones your family might want to start using! What are ways to start incorporating those changes?



Respectful Arguing

Stay on the topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No “kitchen sinking.” Stay on topic - do not bring “everything but the kitchen sink” into the argument. • If another topic comes up, save it and state that you can discuss it at another time. • Put boundaries around the subject matter so the argument doesn’t become a free-for-all.
Avoid character assassination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No put downs/name calling/use of “shut up”. • Use “I feel” statements. (“When this happens, I feel _____”).
Allow for retreat or space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State that you need a break/space if you need to calm down or rethink the situation. • Agree to come back to discussion if needed at a later point. • Retreat may not be used to “run away” from the conversation; agree on a reasonable time to return to the conversation.
Use good listening skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen intently and repeat what you understand the other person has said. • Verify correctness of interpretation of what was said. • Take turns – <i>really</i>. • Don’t interrupt.
Keep your body in check	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of your body (how loud are you talking, what is your body posture). • Take a few deep breaths. Count to ten to prevent an explosion. • Respect physical boundaries/proximities. Sit at equal level so neither person is in a higher position.
Choose your battles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You don’t need to have an argument over every little thing you don’t agree with. • Remember to look for the positive things too. • Watch for clues of an escalating situation, such as rising voices, aggressive body postures, etc. • Recognize if you’re “pushing buttons” and avoid it. • Try to deescalate the situation by talking slowly, quietly, and calmly. • Agree to disagree. • Don’t concentrate on who is right.
Have a release when discussion is complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in a <i>healthy</i> activity to help your body release the stress: Take a walk, play a video game, take a bath, listen to music, play with a pet, do something physical.

House Rules

As a parent, you know, it is a parent’s responsibility to ensure your child is safe, and to encourage good decision making. Establishing house rules can help to communicate family expectations. Located below is a worksheet to consider current house rules (both spoken and unspoken rules!) and to make changes or additions that would be good for your family currently.

Current House Rules	Changes to House Rules <i>(if applicable)</i>
1. Ways of getting along with other family members (e.g. respect others’ privacy, speak politely to siblings): <hr/> <hr/>	1. <hr/> <hr/>
2. Household responsibilities (e.g. take out trash daily, feed pets twice daily): <hr/> <hr/>	2. <hr/> <hr/>
3. Spending time with friends (e.g. friend’s parents must be home when visiting, need to text/call if going somewhere): <hr/> <hr/>	3. <hr/> <hr/>
4. Drinking alcohol, using tobacco, using drugs, or possessing paraphernalia (e.g. no use of any substance in or outside our home): <hr/> <hr/>	4. <hr/> <hr/>
5. Curfew (e.g. come home at the time decided upon before you leave): <hr/> <hr/>	5. <hr/> <hr/>
6. Parent monitoring of room, phone, computer, etc. (e.g. if I’m concerned, I can search any of your property): <hr/> <hr/>	6. <hr/> <hr/>
7. Schoolwork (e.g. All homework will be completed before playing video games): <hr/> <hr/>	7. <hr/> <hr/>
8. Other: <hr/> <hr/>	8. <hr/> <hr/>

Consequences and Rewards

After establishing family rules, it is important to discuss what happens when rules are not followed. Think to yourself about the following: When your teen breaks a household rule, what generally happens? Do you think you're fair with the consequences? Does the punishment fit the crime? Although it can be helpful to openly discuss consequences with your teen, it is important to remember that ultimately, YOU are responsible for deciding and *following through* on the appropriate consequence.

Consider ways that your teen learns best – does he or she change their behavior when he/she is praised more (i.e., when you say he did a great job, is he the type of person to repeat the behavior to seek positive attention?) or does he or she learn more effectively by his/her mistakes (i.e., if you take away her cell phone because of her behavior, is she more likely to avoid that behavior so she doesn't get it taken away again?). Most people respond to a mix of both methods, so it may be useful to think of several types of rewards and consequences to keep in your "parenting toolbox".

REWARDS

Give verbal praise, extra time on the computer, opportunity for staying out later, a special meal, or tangible rewards for good behavior/making good choices.

Establish and verbalize specific rewards for good behavior and good decision making so your teen has something to work toward.

Giving your teen external reasons for good behavior/good choices will help encourage positive behavior that help promote internal reasons for good behaviors.

CONSEQUENCES

Following through on the consequence is the key to successful discipline; Don't threaten a consequence for which you cannot follow through.

Be clear about disciplinary timeline.

Vagueness (i.e. you're grounded until I can trust you again) causes powerlessness in the teen and isn't likely to change the behavior.

- Pick your battles
- Don't put the discipline off onto the other parent
- Assign consequences once you've had a chance to calm down

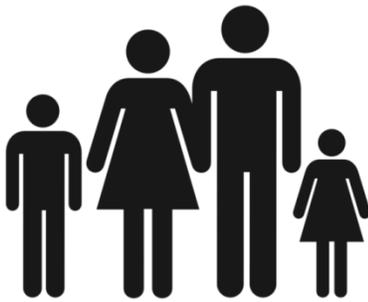
Depending on the severity of the situation, you may use the following consequences if you are at a loss for ideas:

- **Lose privilege** (e.g. take away phone, ipad/computer, TV, video games, etc.)
- **Extra chores**
- **Lose time with friends**
- **Lose out on attending an activity**

Decide and discuss with your teen how/when s/he may **earn back privileges** if the behavior changes. REMEMBER, clear communication will empower you to follow-through because the teen will clearly know what to expect.

Integrating Positive Family Time

Something that is important to having a happy family is spending time together that is enjoyable to all of you. It is understandable that days can become very busy with varying schedules and family time gets pushed to the back burner.



Sit down with your teen and try to come up with some ideas of activities that you both would like to do together (or as a family). Think about things that you all can do together or as a family just for fun. You can try to brainstorm ideas that can be done weekly, or twice a month, as well as ideas for things on an occasional basis. During this time, please remember that part of the purpose of doing this is to help empower your teen so s/he feels like they have a say in what your family does.

Choosing a Family Activity

- *Together*, choose a few activities you and your teen can do together next week, and throughout the next couple of months.
- Be careful not to burden the activity by trying to encourage your teen to talk about “issues” or to only do activities you want to do.
- Be open-minded and willing to take the lead. Especially for the first few times together, discuss non-confrontational, generic, or positive topics. The purpose of time together is to have fun and build trust.
- You want to convey to your teen that they are special, and that you want to spend quality time with them.

Activity Suggestions

- Go to a coffee shop and get a beverage
- Go for a walk
- Go the mall to window shop for something you want
- Rent a movie
- Choose and plan a family dinner at home
- Choose and plan a family dinner at a restaurant
- Hold a game night
- Go to a sporting event
- Start a tradition, like “Donut Tuesday”
- Work on projects initiated by the teen (e.g. repaint their bedroom)

MPOWER PROGRAM

COPING WITH LIFE STRESSORS



**Found on: www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-race-good-health/201501/teens-and-stress-practical-coping-skills*

Life Stressors

Stress & Stress Management

Stress is a natural response to a variety of demanding circumstances and can cause both positive and negative effects. Stress is experienced by children, teenagers, and adults alike; most people can benefit from learning and practicing stress management skills.

What is stress?

When we view a situation as difficult or painful, our bodies release certain hormones and create changes in our brains and bodies to prepare us to respond to danger. This "fight, flight, or freeze" response includes faster heart and breathing rate, increased blood to muscles in arms and legs, cold or clammy hands and feet, upset stomach and/or a sense of dread.



Where does stress come from?

- Sources of stress vary, but some stress for teens might come from the following:
- Problems with a teacher or class at school
 - Negative thoughts and feelings about yourself
 - Problems with friends or family
 - Problems with students at school
 - Problems at home
 - Death of a loved one (including pets)
 - Moving or changing schools
 - Family financial problems

How is stress managed?

As soon as our mind and body decide that a situation is no longer dangerous, hormones are released again to help us relax and calm down, including slowing down our heart rate and breathing.

An effective method of dealing with stress is to learn healthy ways that will relax and calm your body and mind. Learning to manage stress helps us feel more confident and improves our ability to concentrate.

One way to handle stress is to be aware of what triggers stress and how our body responds to those triggers. Consider the following tea kettle analogy (adapted from Shelley Row, www.shelleyrow.com: © Shelley Row, 2015) and discuss with your teen what his or her triggers, sensations, and responses might be. Similarly, talk about the stress and stress management worksheet, located on page 27 to learn more about the stress in your adolescent's life and how to help him or her regulate that stress.

Tea Kettle Analogy

There it is – a tea kettle. Shiny and copper. It sits quietly until the heat is on. Suddenly, unexpectedly, it erupts, “Eeeeeeeeee!”

There you are, sitting quietly at home or at work doing what you’re doing. Something happens – a cross word, a sideways glance, an awkward situation – and you erupt. It may not be a loud “Eeeeeee” (Or maybe it is. I won’t judge.), but you over-react and your reaction doesn’t serve you or the situation. What can you learn from the tea kettle that will reframe an over-reaction to a considered response? Three things:

The Fire – Your Triggers

The tea kettle is quiet and calm until an external event –in this case, a fire – adds energy to its system. That energy ignites changes inside the tea kettle. Similarly, you exist calmly in your world as a parent, employee, student, son or daughter, until an external event trips your trigger, or punches your hot buttons. Like the tea kettle, that event adds energy to your system and starts reactions inside your nervous system. To prevent an over-reaction you must know what lights your fire and trips your triggers. To identify triggers, start with identifying situations where you over-react. For most people, an over-reaction causes a fight, flight, freeze or appease response. A fight reaction incites you to confront; flight draws you inside and away; freeze stops you in your tracks; and appease, well, don’t we all just want to get along? Whatever your reaction, it is out of scale for the situation. Someone makes a glancing comment; you hear it as a jab; triggering you to withdraw from the discussion. Someone explains the rationale behind a decision; you hear a threat to your values, and you verbally lash out. Whatever it is – a situation, a comment, or a person – it pays to recognize your triggers. Think back to times when you over-reacted. What happened? What started the fire under your tea kettle?

The Water – Your Sensations

As the fire adds energy to the tea kettle, changes begin to happen. The tea kettle grows warm, the water inside agitates and rumbles. Both are indicators that something is happening inside that precedes the eruption. You, too, have indicators - sensations in your body - that are early warning signs that a triggered reaction is on its way. The trigger ignites your sympathetic nervous system (fight or flight) sending alarms through your body. Your body reacts first; your brain, well, it’s the last to know. With attentive awareness, you can learn to recognize the signs that your nervous system, like the water in the tea kettle, is registering an upset. Perhaps you get a knot in your stomach, or your breathing becomes shallow, or your jaw clenches, or palms sweat. We have this language: Hot under the collar, steam coming out the ears, chills running up your spine, blood boiling. The skill is to recognize these initial bodily sensations. When you consider your over-reactions, see if you can recall your feelings in that moment. What sensations occurred first and where did they surface – gut, hands, chest? The next time you are hit with a triggering event, notice the sensation. If you can, you have a chance to intercept the over-reaction before it happens.

The Whistle – Your Response

Left on the heat, the tea kettle sends out its piercing “eeeeee”. Without intervention, you erupt with an over-reaction that doesn’t help you or anyone else. How do you give yourself other options that are more considered?

To stop the tea kettle’s whistle, remove it from the heat or turn the heat down. You have the same two options in your environment. In some cases, you may be able to remove yourself from the situation. Can you stop the discussion and reconvene later? Or take a break for a few minutes? Any type of complete break will take you off the heat while your nervous system calms and your brain catches up to the action. If the situation doesn’t allow you to stop, there are techniques that turn down the heat and activate the parasympathetic nervous system (rest and repose).

- Relax your jaw and the area around your eyes;
- Deeply and slowly exhale;
- Breathe consciously from your belly;
- Count to ten...slowly;
- Scan your body and consciously relax tense areas;
- Ground yourself to the floor, sit up straight and imagine tension draining away.

Each of these techniques can be used without calling attention to yourself. They help to calm the disruption in your body and gives you a gap in which to bring your awareness to the situation. In that slight gap, you recognize the trigger, notice the over-reaction building, and realize that you have the opportunity to choose a different response. Now, reframe the over-reaction into a considered response.

It takes practice, but don’t worry, there are plenty of opportunities for practice! Learn the three tips from a tea kettle: know your triggers, watch for body sensations and manage your responses. It’s your choice.

Helping Teenagers Deal with Stress

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Teenagers, like adults, may experience stress every day and can benefit from learning stress management skills. Most teens experience more stress when they perceive a situation as dangerous, difficult, or painful and they do not have the resources to cope. Some sources of stress for teens might include:

- School demands and frustrations
- Negative thoughts and feelings about themselves
- Changes in their bodies
- Problems with friends and/or peers at school
- Unsafe living environment/neighborhood
- Separation or divorce of parents
- Chronic illness or severe health problems in the family
- Death of a loved one
- Moving or changing schools
- Taking on too many activities or having too high expectations
- Family financial problems

Some teens become overloaded with stress. When it happens, inadequately managed stress can lead to anxiety, withdrawal, aggression, physical illness, or poor coping skills such as drug and/or alcohol use.

The same mechanism that turns on the stress response can turn it off. As soon as we decide that a situation is no longer dangerous, changes can occur in our minds and bodies to help us relax and calm down. This "relaxation response" includes decreased heart and breathing rate and a sense of well-being. When teens develop a "relaxation response", and other stress management skills, teens may feel less helpless and have more choices when responding to stress.

Parents can help their teen in these ways:

- Monitor if stress is affecting their teen's health, behavior, thoughts, or feelings
- Listen carefully to teens and watch for overloading
- Learn and model stress management skills
- Support involvement in sports and other pro-social activities

Teens can decrease stress with the following behaviors and techniques:

- Exercise and eat regularly
- Avoid excess caffeine intake which can increase feelings of anxiety and agitation
- Avoid drugs, alcohol, and tobacco
- Learn relaxation exercises (abdominal breathing and muscle relaxation techniques)
- Develop assertiveness training skills. For example, state feelings in polite, firm and not overly aggressive or passive ways: ("I feel angry when you yell at me", "Please stop yelling")
- Rehearse and practice situations which cause stress. One example is taking a speech class if talking in front of a class makes you anxious
- Learn practical coping skills. For example, break a large task into smaller, more attainable tasks

- Decrease negative self-talk: challenge negative thoughts about yourself with alternative neutral or positive thoughts. "My life will never get better" can be transformed into "I may feel hopeless now, but my life will probably get better if I work at it and get some help"
- Learn to feel good about doing a competent or "good enough" job rather than demanding perfection from yourself and others
- Take a break from stressful situations. Activities like listening to music, talking to a friend, drawing, writing, or spending time with a pet can reduce stress
- Build a network of friends who help you cope in a positive way

Relaxation Technique

Relax with a "2 Minute Vacation"

- Close your eyes
- Take a deep breath
- Think of a relaxing place
- Ask yourself to imagine...
 - What do you see?
 - What do you smell?
 - What do you hear?
 - What do your hands and feet touch?



Consider doing healthy things that may make you happy

1. Taking a long hot bath
2. Thinking about your future and what you want to do
3. Going out with a boyfriend/girlfriend
4. Going to a movie
5. Jogging
6. Going for a walk
7. Listening to music
8. Sitting in the sun and relaxing
9. Reading a magazine or book
10. Hanging out with friends
11. Painting your nails
12. Dancing
13. Rearranging your room
14. Cooking
15. Taking your dog for a walk
16. Going swimming
17. Drawing or doodling
18. Exercising
19. Playing sports
20. Talking with a friend or relative
21. Singing
22. Going rollerblading or roller skating
23. Playing with a pet
24. Painting
25. Going on a bike ride
26. Doing a puzzle
27. Going shopping
28. Going to hear live music
29. Going for a drive
30. Watching a favorite TV show
31. Going to a park
32. Completing a task
33. Writing in a diary or writing letters
34. Spending time with a child
35. Going on a picnic
36. Meditating
37. Playing cards
38. Seeing or showing photos
39. Doing word puzzles
40. Playing pool
41. Playing video games
42. Talking on the phone
43. Getting a massage
44. Going to the mall
45. Thinking about your good qualities
46. Going bowling
47. Playing a musical instrument
48. Making a gift for someone
49. Buying CDs
50. Watching sports on TV
51. Buying clothes
52. Going out to dinner
53. Going for coffee or tea

By using these and other techniques, teenagers can begin to manage stress. If a teen talks about or shows signs of being overly stressed, a consultation with a child and adolescent psychiatrist or qualified mental health professional may be helpful.

Personal Strengths

We all have things that we are good at and things that we are not so good at. We may be good at things we haven't even really thought about. Below is a worksheet entitled, "Exploring My Strengths". The goal of this activity is to help your teen explore his/her strengths and to contemplate positive attributes about themselves that they may not have considered. Teens may be quick to identify more obvious skills that they possess such as athleticism, a subject in school, computers, etc., but helping them recognize other important strengths may encourage greater insight into their skill set or talents. Take some time to discuss these topics with your teen. You might be surprised!

Exploring My Strengths

What are some things you are good at or that you like to do?

What do others (such as friends, family, teachers) say are some of your strengths, things you are good at, what people like about you?

Other things you may be good at but you may not have thought about (circle all that apply).

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. Staying calm in a difficult situation | 10. Being musical |
| 2. Being good with children | 11. Being a good friend |
| 3. Being flexible | 12. Being a good listener |
| 4. Relating to animals | 13. Being creative |
| 5. Being a hard worker | 14. Being spiritual |
| 6. Being organized | 15. Being a good role model |
| 7. Being compassionate | 16. Being pretty self-aware |
| 8. Being optimistic | 17. Having a good sense of humor |
| 9. Being able to read people well | 18. _____(Other) |

How do your strengths help you in everyday situations?

How could your strengths help you in the future (with friends, family, school, work, etc.)?

What area/aspect do you want to enhance in your life, say become more of a strength for you?

Decision Making

To facilitate progress towards goals, your adolescent may need help and support with their decision-making skills. One of the ways to facilitate these goals is to help him or her explore their own methods of decision-making and the efficacy of those methods.

Some people think through a situation before they make a decision regarding their next step, while others just do what comes first or is easiest, regardless of the consequences (i.e. act first, think later). Others may have different decision-making styles. Still others prefer to avoid making decisions, and let others decide for them. Other people may have a combination of these styles or a different decision-making style altogether.

There are important factors that can influence the way people make decisions, especially adolescents. Friends, parents, mood, what you eat and drink, even drug and alcohol use can make a big difference in the ways people make decisions. Interestingly, the adolescent brain is undergoing a lot of physical changes (i.e. big increase in hormones, cell connections get stronger, and certain parts of teen brains are more active than others) and this can strongly impact how adolescents make decisions.

Certain decision-making styles are better able to help a person to think before acting. **By teaching your teen to stop and think before acting, it helps reinforce that they may wish to choose a healthier behavior**, rather than acting impulsively or engaging in risky behaviors, such as using drugs or alcohol.

With your teen, discuss the following **Decision-Making Styles** summary on the next page (from Shelley Row, P.E., © Shelley Row, www.shelleyrow.com); think of examples when the different styles may work best. Becoming aware of the various styles - and appropriate times to use them - can be an essential first step in making a change to the decision-making process.

In addition, it may be beneficial to review **Four Areas of Development That Affect Teen Decision-Making** handout (S. Zeldin, PhD, C. Mook, S. Mahon, & C. O'Connor; School of Ecology, U of WI Madison, 2004) that is presented after the decision-making styles summary.

Decision Making Styles

Style	Description	Examples
No-Brainer decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facts are the main ingredient • Are low in emotion (no drama) or controversy • Have clear rules that are well-known • Are low risk • Are ones that you can very easily tell if it was a good decision • Factors such as safety are involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Making sure the door is locked before I leave the house/apartment</i> ➤ <i>Stopping to look both ways before I cross the street</i> ➤ <i>Putting on my coat when I leave the house in the winter</i>
Over-thinking decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision is set aside while you get more information • All the time spent “thinking” exceeds the value of the decision • The need to collect more information and “think about it” shuts out other important factors involved (e.g., People want my decision by Friday.) • You may feel stuck as you “chew” on a decision longer than necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Trying on 12 different outfits before deciding what to wear on the first day of school</i> ➤ <i>Changing the caption on my photo six times before posting it</i> ➤ <i>Taking an hour to figure out what to eat for dinner</i>
Knee-jerk decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick reaction without hearing available information • You over-react to a situation • Your reaction causes later regret about how the decision was handled • There is strong emotion behind the decision • Available information and others’ input are downplayed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Hearing that a friend was spreading rumors about me, so I yelled at her (him) during lunch in front of our friends.</i> ➤ <i>Getting grounded by mom, and telling her I hate her and never want to speak to her again.</i> ➤ <i>Breaking-up with my girlfriend (boyfriend) because I thought she (he) was going to break-up with me.</i>
Complex decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thoughts from impacted people are considered • You understand what feelings are involved (i.e., anger, sadness) • The main purpose of the decision is kept separate from trivial information • Your final decision is based on being informed and having knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>After taking 4 different tours, & discussing with my parents, I have decided where I am going to college</i> ➤ <i>Needing money after my parents cut my allowance, I got a part-time job</i> ➤ <i>My siblings’ regular babysitter cancelled so I said I would babysit Friday night so my parents could go out, even though I really want to be with my friends</i>

No-Brainer decisions are highly quantitative, fact-based, have well-defined boundaries, low risk and emotion, or a clear definition of success. This type of decision may be defined and delegated. Simple decisions are comfortably made using predominantly cognitive processing.

Over-thinking is common because we learned to value logical thought to the exclusion of everything else. You may find yourself force-fitting every decision into a logical mold by rationalizing decisions or creating pro/con lists. Over-thinking is repetitive cognitive processing in search of a logical resolution. You may feel stuck as you chew on a decision longer than warranted.

Knee-jerk decision-makers make decisions without considering all available information. They “shoot from the hip.” Everyone makes knee-jerk decisions occasionally. The challenge is to understand the motivation. Knee-jerk decisions come from deeply ingrained habits stemming from life experience. They can also be reactions triggered at an emotional level. You need to know the difference.

Complex decisions involve high degrees of uncertainty and ambiguity. Decisions involving many people with high emotion are complex. These are decisions with no clear definition of success or where conflicting principles are at play. Periods of rapid change or crisis also breed complexity. The more complexity, the less likely cognition alone will provide a sound resolution. Intuitive processing is more effective at combining many variables into an insightful decision that may seem at odds with logic. Perceptions from impacted people are considered.

FOUR AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT THAT AFFECT DECISION MAKING

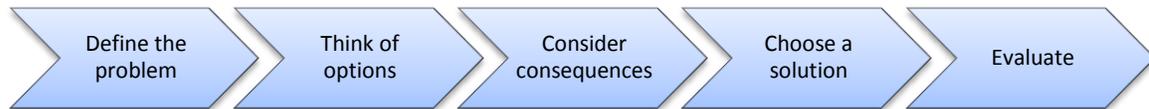
Development in each particular area occurs differently for each adolescent. These domains do not all have the same amount of influence on decision-making.

Physical development

Hormonal changes are occurring throughout the body, which begins the process of puberty to sexual maturity. This change can begin at different ages for all adolescents. Because of the different time of onset, it's important to recognize that it may cause self-consciousness for those that begin early or late. During this time, you may also become more attracted to others and become concerned about your appearance. But how does this affect your decision-making? You may tend to make decisions to appear attractive, look good, or prevent yourself from looking ugly or undesirable in front of your peers. It can also be hard to make choices when you're trying to impress someone, and not always thinking rationally.

Cognitive Development

During this stage of development, your thinking skills improve! You're beginning to be able to think about several things at once, think abstractly (outside of the box), and about the future. You gain the ability to think rationally about emotions, which will help you make more logical choices. But how does this affect your decision-making? Cognitive development provides you the ability to think through decisions, and not rely solely on emotions. It also helps you brainstorm and compare different solutions to a problem before making a final decision. Below illustrates how cognition plays a role.



Socio-emotional Development

During this stage of development, peer relationships become more important, and you want to spend more time with friends. You may try on different identities to see which fits best, by exploring different interests or friend groups. But how does this influence decision-making? Maintaining your social connections may become your primary motivation for decision-making. Remember: exploration of your identity during this time is an important, health step in the development of your adolescence.

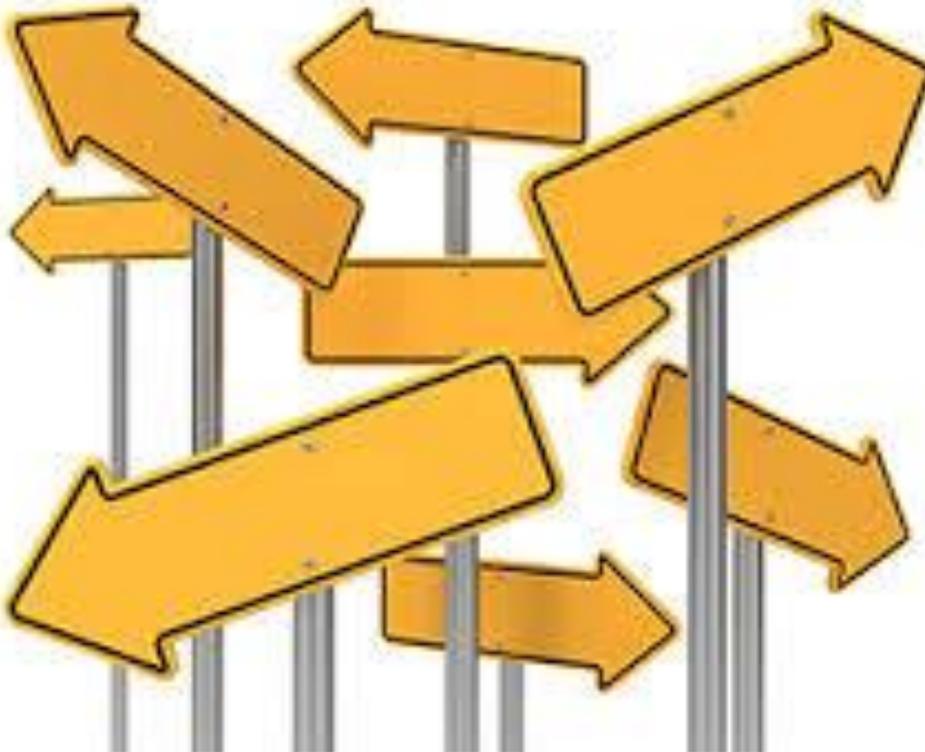
Moral Development

During this stage of development, you start to internalize and take ownership of values and/or religious beliefs. You may move beyond your parents' beliefs, and begin to define what is important to your own life and identity. It becomes easier to understand that things are not always "black and white", which in result, helps you comprehend others' perspectives and empathize more. But how does this affect decision making? During this time, your choices are no longer based on "following the rules". You may begin to consider why rules exist, and whether or not they are worth following. You may also worry about how your decisions may affect current relationships, and you take other's feelings into consideration before making a choice.

Adapted from Zeldin, S., Mook, C., Mahon, S., & O'Connor, C. (2004).

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EXPLORING CHOICES



DRUG EDUCATION

Drug education can be very important and potentially difficult to discuss. It is always important to be sensitive when discussing this topic with your teen.

There is a plethora of information available on many of the common drugs. A possible place to begin discussing drug information, so everyone can get on the same page, is with the various myths and facts about alcohol and other common drugs.

Starting with alcohol, what are some things you know about alcohol? Be prepared to talk factually about substances with your teen, including, but not limited to:

Alcohol is categorized as a “depressant”.

A “depressant” de-presses, or squashes the central nervous system – including the neurons in the brain – so this is why we slur our words or can’t walk a straight line when intoxicated.

Alcohol has different effects on teenagers than it does on adults.

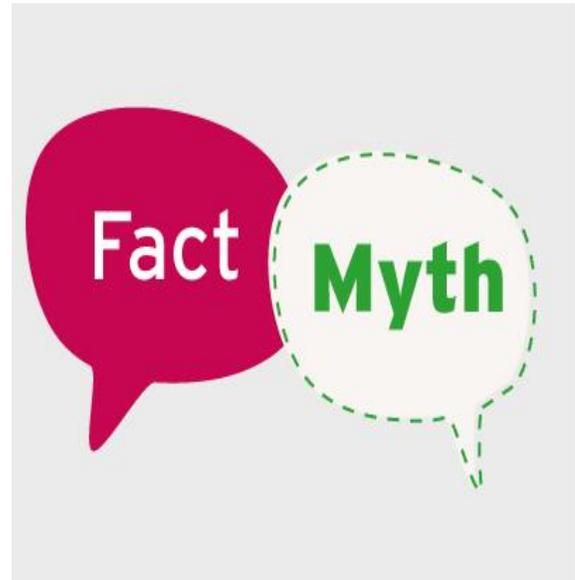
Teens don’t feel the effects of alcohol the same way adults do because of their under-developed brain (see pages 6-10!). For example, the adolescent GABA receptors – the “stop signs” of our brain – are not fully developed. This is why teens & young adults more often drink until they are highly intoxicated, vomiting, or passed out. Also, due to the developing neural connection, alcohol can cause more lasting damage to the adolescent brain than to the adult brain.

Alcohol affects girls differently than boys.

Females don’t have the same amount of dehydrogenase – the enzyme that metabolizes alcohol – as males do, so girl’s & women’s bodies don’t break down alcohol as quickly. Also, the female body, on average, has more body fat than the male body; thus, girls & women have less body water to dilute alcohol causing a higher blood alcohol concentration.

Is marijuana addictive?

Due to the developing brain, teens are more at risk of becoming addicted to marijuana than adults. 1 in 6 teens who use marijuana will become addicted, compared to 1 in 10 adults who use marijuana.



Is marijuana harmful?

Yes, especially when used more frequently, but new research shows that it changes brain functioning even with occasional use. Evidence shows support for increased risk of lung cancer, and decreased memory and learning capabilities. In addition, it causes increased social harm as evidenced by increased traffic accidents by those under the influence of marijuana, as well as higher rates of unemployment and lower school functioning.

For more information, please see the Reading List and Resource Guide portion of this manual

Pros & Cons of Drug Use

Discussing the pros and cons of drug use is very important and a critical parenting discussion. It is important to remember that this topic is difficult to address and discuss with your teen. To increase honesty and openness, a non-judgmental approach is helpful.

The following information may help to provide a glimpse into your teen's perceptions of and beliefs about alcohol or drug use. This may allow you to understand your teen's thought processes and provide a partial explanation for your teen's actions or behaviors. Keep in mind that your teen may not recognize the reasons for his/her actions and behaviors.

What people may find appealing about drug use

- It helps people fit in socially.
- It can reduce anxiety.
- It can provide relaxation.
- It alters perceptions.

What people may find unappealing about drug use

- It can give people a bad reputation.
- It is illegal.
- It gets you in trouble (at home, school).

So, now that you and your teen have an idea of possible pros & cons of alcohol or other drug use, begin thinking about how certain situations or feelings might trigger an urge to use alcohol or other drugs. A trigger is generally a feeling or situation that may make the urge to use alcohol or drugs much stronger, such as being at a party with certain people, having an argument with a friend or that sort of thing. Triggers are times when it's hard to resist using alcohol or drugs.

Whenever we have a habit that is triggered by or associated with something (like watching TV before bed or having a cup of coffee each morning), it can be very difficult to make changes to that habit. If we take that habit away, it can create a void or hole in our life and our day just isn't normal or comfortable without it. The routine gets disrupted. However, if we find something healthy to fill that hole, we can more easily manage to live without that action or habit. Making changes in alcohol or drug use patterns can be difficult for the same reason, even if you're not

using regularly. If it served a purpose, such as reducing anxiety, or providing relaxation, something else needs to take its place that can fill the same purpose.

Personal Risk and Protective Factors

An important goal of drug use prevention is to change the balance between risk and protective factors so that protective factors outweigh risk factors.

Factors that may increase PROTECTION	Factors that may increase RISK
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling connected with and valued by family and other significant adults • High educational goals and expectations • Strong bonds w/ social organizations (school, community, extra-curricular activities, church) • Parent involved with child’s activities • Parents who discuss expectations/consequences of using alcohol or other drugs • Personal disapproval of alcohol or other drug use • Parental supervision • Involvement in activities that provide joy, self-esteem, prevent idle time • Parental follow-through on consequences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early age of first alcohol or other drug use (age 13 or younger) • Difficulty coping with problems • Experiences depression, anxiety, aggression, or impulsivity (to a greater degree than others) • Thoughts or feelings of being unloved • Low levels of parental supervision, monitoring, & follow-through with consequences • Perception that others (peers, family, community) approve of drug use or find it amusing • Associating with friends/peers who are getting in trouble • Chaotic home environment • Past or current drug or alcohol problems within the family • Past or current abuse or neglect

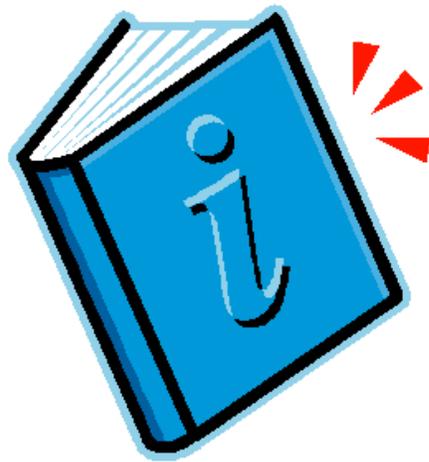
Keep in mind that if an individual endorses many risk factors, he or she is not destined for a life of drug abuse; rather this list aims to make you aware of the risks, and empower you to reduce those risks and gain more assets.

MPOWER PROGRAM

READING LIST AND RESOURCE GUIDE

Pertaining to Adolescents, Drug Use & Mental Health, and Parenting Practices

(please note that this list is not exhaustive; its purpose is to provide a starting point for gaining additional information and resources to assist in the process of parenting teens)



Books

Adolescent Depression: A Guide for Parents (A Johns Hopkins Press Health Book)

by Francis Mark Mondimore, MD

In *Adolescent Depression: A Guide for Parents*, Johns Hopkins psychiatrist Francis Mondimore helps parents understand that serious depression in adolescents is an illness—an illness that can be effectively treated. He describes the many forms of depression and the many ways it can appear in young people—from intensely sad feelings to irritability, anger, and destructive rages. And he answers parents' questions, including: What are the danger signals of serious depression in teenagers? How are mood disorders diagnosed? How do medications work? What about talking therapies? How does depression relate to other problems, such as drug abuse, ADHD, and eating disorders and other self-injurious behaviors.

Age of Opportunity: Lessons from the New Science of Adolescence

by Laurence Steinberg, PhD

In *Age of Opportunity*, Steinberg leads readers through a host of new findings — including groundbreaking original research — that reveal what the new timetable of adolescence means for parenting 13-year-olds (who may look more mature than they really are) versus 20-somethings (who may not be floundering even when it looks like they are). He also explains how the plasticity of the adolescent brain, rivaling that of years 0 through 3, suggests new strategies for instilling self-control during the teenage years.

Choices and Consequences: What to Do When a Teenager Uses Alcohol/Drugs

by Dick Schaefer

Choices & Consequences tells you precisely how you can help. Written for parents, teachers, family doctors, mental health professionals, school guidance counselors, social workers, juvenile justice workers, clergy, and anyone else who cares about teenagers, it describes a step-by-step process called “intervention” that you can use to stop a teenager's harmful involvement with chemicals.

How to Talk so Teens Will Listen and Listen so Teens Will Talk

by Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish

Internationally acclaimed experts on communication between parents and children, Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish “are doing for parenting today what Dr. Spock did for our generation” (*Parent Magazine*). Now, this bestselling classic includes fresh insights and suggestions as well as the author’s time-tested methods to solve common problems and build foundations for lasting relationships, including innovative ways to:

- *Cope with your child's negative feelings, such as frustration, anger, and disappointment
- *Express your strong feelings without being hurtful
- *Engage your child's willing cooperation
- *Set firm limits and maintain goodwill
- *Use alternatives to punishment that promote self-discipline
- *Understand the difference between helpful and unhelpful praise
- *Resolve family conflicts peacefully

How to Talk With Teens about Love, Relationships, and Sex: A Guide for Parents

by Charles Miron, PhD & Amy Miron

The Miron, a husband and wife team of sex educators and certified sex therapists, have co-written a thoughtful, well-organized volume that covers most of the common topics for discussion and several you might not have thought of on your own. It also contains eye-opening facts from a teen sexuality survey and “Try This” assignments for parents and teens.

No: Why Kids--of All Ages--Need to Hear It and Ways Parents Can Say It

by David Walsh, PhD

Successful psychologist, bestselling author, and nationally known parenting expert Dr. David Walsh provides you with an arsenal of tactics, explanations, and examples for using “No” the right way with your kids. His memorable, affecting, and sometimes humorous anecdotes help you regain confidence in your own judgment and ability to say “No” as they remind you that you're not alone in your parenting struggles. With Dr. Walsh's down-to-earth advice, you can immediately assess and improve your relationship with your kids, set and enforce limits that make sense for different ages (from toddlers to teens), and otherwise make “No” a positive influence on kids' behavior and in your overall family life.

Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls

by Mary Pipher, PhD

Crashing and burning in a “developmental Bermuda Triangle,” adolescent girls are coming of age in a media-saturated culture preoccupied with unrealistic ideals of beauty and images of dehumanized sex, a culture rife with addictions and sexually transmitted diseases. They are losing their resiliency and optimism in a “girl-poisoning” culture that propagates values at odds with those necessary to survive.

Told in the brave, fearless, and honest voices of the girls themselves who are emerging from the chaos of adolescence, *Reviving Ophelia* is a call to arms, offering important tactics, empathy, and strength, and urging a change where young hearts can flourish again, and rediscover and reengage their sense of self.

Taking Charge of ADHD: The Complete, Authoritative Guide for Parents (Revised Edition)

by Russell A. Barkley, PhD

From distinguished researcher/clinician Russell A. Barkley, this treasured parent resource gives you the science-based information you need about attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and its treatment. It also presents a proven eight-step behavior management plan specifically designed for 6- to 18-year-olds with ADHD. Offering encouragement, guidance, and loads of practical tips, Dr. Barkley helps you:

- *Make sense of your child's symptoms
- *Get an accurate diagnosis
- *Work with school and health care professionals to get needed support
- *Learn parenting techniques that promote better behavior
- *Strengthen your child's academic and social skills
- *Use rewards and incentives effectively
- *Restore harmony at home

The Everything Parenting a Teenager Book: A Survival Guide for Parentsby Linda Sonna, PhD

This authoritative book, written by child psychologist Dr. Linda Sonna, helps parents navigate the emotional teen years, when "no" means "yes" and "I'm fine" means "help me." In reader-friendly language, Dr. Sonna offers advice on everything from establishing curfews and handing over the car keys to coping with the more serious issues, such as substance abuse and school violence.

The Wonder of Boys: *What Parents, Mentors, and Educators Can Do to Shape Boys into Exceptional Men*by Michael Gurian

Therapist and educator Michael Gurian takes a close look at modern boyhood. Gurian asserts that the biological and neurological differences between boys and girls need to be accounted for and nourished in order to raise healthy, happy boys. In discussing boy culture--and the roles of competition, aggression, and physical risk taking--the author concludes, "It's not boy culture that's inherently flawed; it's the way we manage it." If the natural, testosterone-based impulses of boys are squelched or ignored, Gurian posits, such biological truths may find their way to the surface in other, more negative behaviors. He suggests that boys do best when they are part of a "tribe," three families that include: a birth or adoptive family; an extended family of friends, teachers, peers, and mentors; and the "family" of outside culture, media, religious institutions, and community figures. *The Wonder of Boys* offers advice on how to understand and build strong father/son and mother/son relationships, stresses the importance of healthy discipline, and suggests methods of teaching boys about sex, relationships, and spirituality. Parents and teachers of boys will find this book to be an insightful read.

Uncommon Sense for Parents with Teenagers, Third Editionby Michael Riera, PhD

Since its initial publication in 1995, *Uncommon Sense for Parents with Teenagers* has ushered countless families through the trying years of adolescence. In this fully revised and updated edition, Riera tackles some of the newest issues facing parents and teens, and gives a second look to the old standbys—alcohol and drugs, academics, sex and dating, sports and extracurriculars, eating disorders, making friends, single parenting, divorce, and more. Riera channels his unpatronizing approach and two decades of experience working with teens into this optimistic and indispensable book.

Why Do They Act That Way?: A Survival Guide to the Adolescent Brain for You and Your Teenby David Walsh, PhD

Why Do They Act That Way? was the first book to explain the scientific, brain-based reasons behind teens' impulsive behavior, lack of focus, self-consciousness, territoriality, fatigue, and their quickness to anger and take risks—to name just a few common teen problems. All these behaviors are linked to physical changes and growth in the adolescent brain. Ten years ago, there was no Facebook, Instagram, or Snapchat. Now every kid has a smartphone and a Twitter account. Award-winning psychologist Dr. David Walsh has now updated his 2004 classic with the most current research into the adolescent brain, and he's also updated his guidance for parents and teens on navigating the new challenges of the 24/7 online world.

With real-life stories and reassuring guidance, Walsh provides realistic solutions for dealing with everyday and major challenges. Sample dialogues help teens and parents talk civilly and constructively with one another; behavioral contracts and Parental Survival Kits provide practical advice for dealing with issues like curfews, disrespectful language and actions, and bullying.

Wonderful Ways to Love a Teen: Even When It Seems Impossible

by Judy Ford

Wonderful Ways to Love a Teen is composed of 60 two-page essays, to help busy parents develop healthy parenting styles. Through practical suggestions and true-life stories, the book teaches readers how to shift the focus from the hardships and the mishaps to the joys and heartfelt moments. With gentle wisdom, honesty, and a healthy dose of good humor, Judy Ford guides parents and teenagers through one of the most difficult times in their relationship.

You and Your Adolescent, New and Revised Edition: The Essential Guide for Ages 10-25

by Laurence Steinberg, PhD

“Relax! The horror stories you have heard about adolescence are false.” This is Dr. Laurence Steinberg’s reassuring message to parents in this newly revised edition of his classic book *You and Your Adolescent*, which *Publishers Weekly* says is “filled with solid advice for the parents of adolescents.” Among the new topics in this updated edition:

- * An expanded definition of adolescence to age 25, recognizing that college graduates often remain dependent on their parents for an extended period, creating a new parent-child dynamic
- * A discussion of social media that addresses whether parents of preteens and young teens should monitor use of these new communication tools
- * What new research into the adolescent brain tells us about teenage behavior

Websites

howtoparentateen.wordpress.com

How To Parent a Teen is a coaching and consulting business, founded by Karen Vincent, CEC, LICSW, that is designed specifically for parents of teenagers. Articles and postings assist parents of teens in resolving the most challenging issues they are experiencing with their teenager. Through individual and group coaching, as well as through the use of many free resources, parents of teenager get the support and guidance they need to improve communication with their teenager, effectively address their teenager’s behavioral issues, gain new ideas and tools for managing situations with their teenager, improve their relationship with their teenager and restore peace of mind during the teenage years.

www.Drugfree.org

A website dedicated to reducing teen substance use while supporting families that are impacted by substance use and addiction. Filled with information, statistics, and how-tos, this website is great for parents who are interested in learning more information about drug and alcohol use and obtaining help and support when they fear their child might be using (or is using).

www.mentorfoundation.org

Mentor International is the center of knowledge and information about effective policy and practice, and the access point and disseminator of this learning. Mentor provides a communication link for others working in prevention policy and practice. For those outside of prevention policy and practice, Mentor International provides a glossary of types of drugs as well as the latest research findings related to substance use and abuse.

www.nida.nih.gov

The National Institute on Drug Abuse website provides the latest science-based information about the health effects and consequences of drug abuse and addiction and resources for talking with kids about the impact of drug abuse on health. Glossaries on drug types and consequences are provided as well as information regarding how to seek help (treatment).

www.learnaboutsam.org

This website, Smart Approaches to Marijuana, is produced by a group of bipartisan professionals (including scientists, law enforcement, teachers, lawmakers, and others who approach marijuana policy from a research-based and public-health perspective).

www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/teenbrain/work/adolescent.html (Article and Video)

It's the mystery of mysteries -- especially to parents -- the unpredictable and sometimes incomprehensible moods and behaviors of the American teenager. Generations of adults have pondered its cause. Hormones? Rock music? Boredom? Drugs? In *Inside the Teenage Brain*, FRONTLINE chronicles how scientists are exploring the recesses of the brain and finding some new explanations for why adolescents behave the way they do. These discoveries could change the way we parent, teach, or perhaps even understand our teenagers.

www.samhsa.gov/about/topics.aspx

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities. The website itself provides information pertaining to substance use and abuse as well as challenging mental health concerns. How to obtain substance use treatment or other mental health services is shared as are the programs/campaigns currently funded by the administration.

www.talklineforparents.org

TALK Line Family Support Center offers a safe, respectful and comfortable place where parents and caregivers are supported. Parents and caregivers residing in San Francisco are welcome to use the services regardless of whether a child is present. The TALK Line operates round-the-clock (24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year) and has provided service virtually uninterrupted for more than 30 years. Enhanced translation capacity allows the TALK Line to handle critical calls in more than 170 languages. The TALK Line is free of charge for all callers. The TALK Line's trained volunteer counselors provide early interventions, referrals and support to every parent and caregiver who calls. TALK Line counselors and professional clinical staff provide counseling and support on any topic of concern for a parent or caregiver.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xelvtx6HHLg (Adolescent Brain Development Video)

For more than twenty years, National Institute of Mental Health neuroscientist Dr. Jay Giedd has studied the development of the adolescent brain. Decades of imaging work have led to remarkable insight and a more than a few surprises. This five minute video presents Dr. Giedd's findings on the adolescent developing brain.

Article

What Makes Teens Tick? Time Magazine (163) pages 57-65, May 10, 2004

by C. Wallis

What Makes Teens Tick? provides some of the scientific details of brain development in humans from conception to the mid-20s. Parents/Guardians who understand the brain's development will be better able to make wise decisions that will help keep their children safe.

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