

Parenting Teens – Strategies for Success

Psychological research and practice show us that parents play the most important role in children's development. Just as our children grow and learn, so must our parenting.

The formula for parenting includes both LOVE and STRUCTURE

What does LOVE look like?

Love expressions vary according to culture and personal style

Most teens respond to smiles, hugs, compliments, and showing an interest in them

Devoting regular time to your teen without distraction from phones, computers, or the TV

Being available teaches children they can turn to you when they are troubled

Being a good listener – for example, practice active listening while driving your teen somewhere

Modelling healthy expression of feelings (both positive and negative), patience and tolerance

*Love develops self-esteem and confidence,
and buffers the need to get attention by engaging in risky behaviours*

What does STRUCTURE look like?

Routine, consistency, and an appropriate level of monitoring

Setting rules and expectations

Noticing and commenting on appropriate behaviour to strengthen habits

Using mild logical consequences (such as temporary loss of privileges) to correct misbehaviours

Modeling setting personal limits, exercising self-control, and making good choices

Negotiating topics such as curfew and appropriate dress

Learning when to step back – for example, giving choice to a teenager over hairstyle, which is a temporary outcome, but being firm with tattoos, which have a more long term outcome

Allowing teens to grow from their mistakes fosters resiliency to future challenges

Parents need support too!

Different teenagers present different challenges

Parenting can be tough, especially during financial or work stress, while dealing with separation or divorce, or when you, or a family member, suffers from an illness or other stressor

Get support for parenting as well as for your own psychological health and wellness

There's value in Psychology for Parenting

- They teach parenting strategies for children with normal and abnormal behaviours
- Effective in promoting positive relationships and in reducing misbehaviour
- Psychologists offer support for individuals, groups and families
- Cognitive-behavioural therapy helps with improved communication, anger management, family problem solving, and emotional issues such as depression, anxiety, or chronic pain

Address problems early on to get the best results

Resources

To find mental health resources visit: <http://www.ementalhealth.ca/>

Local organizations: http://www.psychologistsassociation.ab.ca/site/other_psychology_web_links

Right by You Campaign – tools for parents: <http://rightbyyou.ca/en/resources>

Fact Sheets

http://www.cpa.ca/docs/File/Publications/FactSheets/PsychologyWorksFactSheet_ParentingChallenges.pdf