Your teen is participating in Too Good for Violence - Social Perspectives, a comprehensive character building violence prevention program. Teenagers who know their parents support them, communicate effectively with their parents, and live by clear non-violence standards are significantly less likely to be involved in violence. Use this newsletter as a resource to talk with your teen about living a safe and violence-free life.

**Setting Reachable Goals**

Teens who set reachable goals for themselves make an investment in their future. Six key steps can help students set and achieve their goals.

1. **Name it.** When teens name their goal and write it down, they are more likely to reach it.
2. **Picture yourself reaching your goal.** Picturing yourself reaching a goal will help students define what they are aiming for.
3. **Say, “I Can.”** A positive attitude goes a long way toward helping teens reach their goals.
4. **Think how to do it.** Making a checklist can help teens keep track of their action steps.
5. **Go for it!** Well planned goals are ready to be reached.
6. **Celebrate your success.** Once the goal is achieved, it is time for teens to celebrate their success.

---

**Finding Purpose**

Work with your teenager to set a reachable family or community involvement goal. Encourage your teen to be creative and develop unconventional and new ideas for family or community involvement goals.

Name the goal and write it down. Make sure the goal meets the four criteria for a reachable goal.

- **The goal must be personal.** You will work harder to reach goals that matter to you.
- **The goal must be possible.** Do you have the time, ability, and resources to reach the goal?
- **The goal must be positive.** State the goal as a positive action by saying what you will do rather than what you won’t do.
- **The goal must be specific.** The goal needs to be measurable so you will know when it is successfully completed.

**Be a Goal Model**

What is the last goal your teenager saw you achieve? Humans learn through modeling others, and our behaviors are influenced by the examples people set for us. When your teenagers see you work to achieve a goal, it will have a positive impact on them.

When you are a goal model, you teach your teenagers:

- to put forth the effort.
- to appreciate failure as a learning opportunity and to keep working toward success.
- self-control and determination.
- how to overcome obstacles.

The ability to set and reach goals is a valuable skill you can teach your teenager.

---

“If you want your children to improve, let them overhear the nice things you say about them to others.”

- Haim Ginott

© Mendez Foundation
toogoodprograms.org
High Expectations

Families can help their children resist negative influences and bounce back from tough times in life by expressing high expectations in their home.

Some suggestions include:

- Expect success at school. Teens do best when they know what you expect of them.
- Discuss expectations in your family.
- Encourage your children to be challenged but not overwhelmed.
- Look for opportunities to bring out the best in your teenagers.
- Communicate the value of education.
- Encourage your teenagers to stand up for what they believe.
- Ask what your teens think about and listen to what your teens believe.
- Look for the positive in every situation.

When parents are involved, teenagers...

- are more likely to graduate from high school.
- have better academic performance.
- have fewer behavior problems.
- are more likely to go to college.
- exhibit lower levels of aggression and antisocial behavior.
- are less likely to experiment with drugs and alcohol.
- have higher levels of self-esteem and internal self-control.
- are less likely to experience emotional distress.

"You can tell a child is growing up when he stops asking where he came from and starts refusing to tell you where he is going."

- Author Unknown

Resources

National PTA
Resources for parents on everything from health and wellness to media and technology.
pta.org

National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement (NAFSCE)
Their mission is advancing high impact policies and practices for family, school, and community engagement to promote child development and improve student achievement.
nafsce.org

TeenLife
TeenLife is the leading resource for opportunities that inspire passion in teens. They connect students, parents and educators with community service organizations, summer and gap programs, schools, colleges and services that help teens find their purpose.
teenlife.com

Mendez Foundation
For more than thirty-five years, the Mendez Foundation has been developing and implementing unparalleled evidence-based, skill-building programs that equip students with the tools they need to live safe, healthy, and drug-fee lives.
Help Your Teen Make Responsible Decisions

The road to healthy living begins with setting reachable goals, but to stay on track to reaching their goals, teenagers must learn to make responsible decisions. Four steps can help teenagers make responsible decisions.

Stop
Before making a decision, encourage your teenager to stop and take a moment to process the choices at hand.

Think
Think about the choices and the consequences of each choice. Your teen should also consider what is best for him or her now and in the future. Teens should also consider what might be influencing their decision making and how their decision might affect others.

Act
Act out the best plan.

Reflect
Consider if the decision was the best one and if the outcome matched what was expected. This is also the time to discuss with your teens if they would do anything differently if a similar decision arises.

Learning these skills requires time and practice to incorporate them into everyday life. When your teens are facing a decision, walk through these steps with them to help them become responsible decision makers.

Room for Error

Watching your teenagers make the wrong decision may be one of the most difficult things you do as a parent. However, when you allow teenagers room to make some mistakes you equip them with essential life skills.

When teenagers experience failure, they learn...

responsibility. If you don’t allow teenagers to experience some failure, they miss out on the opportunity to accept full responsibility for the outcome of their decisions.

how to problem solve. When teens experience failure, it can encourage them to consider other ways to accomplish the task. It empowers them to be creative and innovative.

coping skills. Experiencing failure and the feelings that accompany it provides teens the opportunity to develop coping skills that build self-efficacy.

to adapt. If you step in and prevent your teen from failure, you hinder their ability to learn to change and adapt when circumstances change or don’t go as they planned.

to handle disappointment. Allowing teens to feel disappointment equips them with the ability to bounce back so they can cope better with future mistakes.

they are not entitled. When you protect teens from feeling anything unpleasant in their lives, they begin to feel entitled to success. Allowing teens to fail teaches them they must work to achieve success and healthy relationships.

There may be times when you feel it is necessary to step in. For example, if your teen is at risk of physically hurting themselves or others, it will be necessary for you to intervene. You will need to decide when to step in and when to allow events to occur that may provide opportunities for healthy growth for your teen. Teaching teens to learn from their mistakes and to bounce back when they fail is a valuable life lesson.
Parent Involvement is a GOOD THING

Parents make a crucial difference in teenagers’ alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use. They also model and train their children for non-violent living. Teenagers who feel their parents’ support, communicate effectively with their parents, and live with clear no-use standards are much less likely to become involved with drugs or violence.

Parents can help students by:

• Asking what happened at school
• Setting aside a space and time for homework to be done at home
• Helping with homework when appropriate
• Following through at home with the concepts taught in the drug prevention programs at school
• Knowing the school’s policies regarding alcohol and other drug use
• Getting to know the parents of your teen’s friends
• Resolving conflicts at home in healthy ways
• Setting curfews and enforcing them
• Setting up a system with your children that makes it convenient for your teenagers to leave a party if they feel uncomfortable
• Keeping the lines of communication open with your teens so they feel free to discuss everything
• Attending your teenager’s activities like band, sporting events, contests, etc.
• Responding to problems as they occur. Don’t wait until discipline problems or academic difficulties become emergencies.

Hold Your Teenagers Accountable

Teenagers are often excited about making their own decisions and being responsible for themselves. Discuss with your teenager the relationship between age or maturity and the degree to which one should be held accountable for their decisions. How do decisions and accountability differ for children, teenagers, and adults? At what age should a person be held accountable for the decisions they make? Discuss with your teenager the kinds of decisions they should be held accountable for (schoolwork, time management, extracurricular activities, finances, etc.)

Resources

Family Education
Provides current information, including message boards, newsletters, and resources for parents.
familyeductation.com

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens by Sean Covey
Provides information and practical examples with warmth and humor that benefit both parents and teens.
seancovey.com

By Parents For Parents
A useful resource for anyone trying to raise a teenager.
byparents-forparents.com

More4Kids
Their mission is to foster and encourage children’s intellectual and emotional growth by providing parents with current and relevant information and resources.
more4kids.info

Mendez Foundation
For more than thirty-five years, the Mendez Foundation has been developing and implementing unparalleled evidence-based, skill-building programs that equip students with the tools they need to live safe, healthy, and drug-free lives.
Your teen is participating in Too Good for Violence - Social Perspectives, a comprehensive character building violence prevention program. Teenagers who know their parents support them, communicate effectively with their parents, and live by clear non-violence standards are significantly less likely to be involved in violence. Use this newsletter as a resource to talk with your teen about living a safe and violence-free life.

**Seeing Emotions**

Sometimes teens talk about what they are feeling, and at other times they keep their feelings to themselves. Regardless of how much they share, you can identify what your teen might be feeling by observing their facial expressions.

When you can interpret your teen’s emotions by reading their facial expressions, you can be ready to respond appropriately. Sometimes, your teen may not even recognize the emotion in themselves. Checking in with your teen about how they feel can build trust and understanding. Recognizing your teen’s emotions provides you the opportunity to help them manage their emotions.

**Attributes of Empathy**

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. Developing empathy with your teen is rewarding.

**Empathy requires self-awareness.** To understand another person’s feelings, we need to be in touch with our personal feelings. Emotional self-awareness means being able to recognize emotions you experience, understand the feelings associated with the emotion, and understand what you think and do as a result.

**Empathy promotes nonjudgmental perspective taking.** To be able to see a situation as another person sees it, we must find value and credit in the experience of the other.

**Empathy fuels connection with others.** When we feel heard, cared for, and understood, we also feel loved, accepted, and like we belong.

**Building Empathy with Your Teen**

- Discuss current or historical events with your teen and ask them how they think the people in the story might be feeling.
- Share stories about times when you recognized a friend or family member was in need, what you were thinking about it at the time, and what you did to help.
- Help your teen problem-solve different situations. For example, “How would you like to be treated if you were the new person at school?” or “If you were being teased, what would you want your friends to do to help?”
- As pets are treated with love, dignity, and respect in your family, your teen and other young children learn to treat other living beings the same. Teens learn to consider the needs of others, rather than disregard them. When young people understand that pets are creatures with their own wants and needs, and not toys or objects for us to use, this perspective carries over into their interactions with others.

“I think we all have empathy. We may not have enough courage to display it.”

- Maya Angelou
Putting it to Practice

Here are some tips to help you improve identifying your teen’s emotions…

• **Stay connected with your teen.** Engage frequently with your teen making the effort to be face to face so you can actively listen to your teen and observe their facial expressions.

• **Don’t project your own emotions.** You and your teen may be experiencing the same circumstance, but you each may feel differently about it. Practice filtering out how you feel about a situation so you can be open to interpret and understand how your teen feels.

• **Respond promptly and appropriately.** When you notice your teen’s facial expressions change, try to name it. For example, say, “You seem sad” or “You seem frustrated.” Don’t assume you know by saying “You are frustrated.” Responding promptly and appropriately demonstrates to your teen you care about their unspoken emotions and you are open to listening to how they feel.

Hang in There

*It is common for parents to believe they need to be “hands on” with their children in elementary school; however, many believe parent involvement is not as critical when children get to middle school and high school. The research shows that the opposite is true. The more involved parents are through their teenagers’ high school years, the better off their students are. It is critical to have shared experiences with your teenagers throughout high school years. Hang in there! Your children need you no matter their age.*

资源

**Family and Youth Services Bureau**
Provides current information, including message boards, newsletters, and resources for parents.
familyeducation.com

**KidsHealth**
Offers knowledge, advice, and comfort for parents.
As well as answers, advice, and straight talk for teenagers.
kidshealth.org

**TeenLife**
TeenLife is the leading resource for opportunities that inspire passion in teens.
They connect students, parents and educators with community service organizations, summer and gap programs, schools, colleges and services that help teens find their purpose.
teenlife.com

“**When you show deep empathy toward others, their defensive energy goes down, and positive energy replaces it. That’s when you can get more creative in solving problems.”**

- Stephen Covey
Screen Addiction

Is your teenager dependent on technology? Even though internet addiction is not yet an actual clinical diagnosis, there is no doubt teens are plugged in more than experts consider healthy for normal development. This type of distraction from real life has ramifications.

This type of reliance on technology not only interferes with times when youth could otherwise be studying, but late night texting and other screen time may lead to sleep deprivation.

Teenagers need a healthy balance between their relationship with technology and their human interactions. Such a balance is essential to the development of school and career readiness, because nothing can replace the skills teens learn through relating to others in person.

The first step in addressing teens’ overdependence on technology is simply to become aware of it. Encourage your teens to engage in face to face interaction, rather than rely so heavily on technology. Model for your teens how to connect face to face with others by unplugging the technology yourself and talking with people in person.

Stay Connected

Staying connected with your teenager may seem like a daunting task, but here are some tips to help make communicating with your teenager easier.

• Listen to your teenagers with an open mind.
• Ask open-ended questions to give your teen the opportunity to talk and share more information with you.
• Make eye contact with your teenagers. This means turn off the TV, put down the cell phone, and focus on what your teen is saying.
• Create times to talk. Find time to talk with your teen about everyday events. Talk in the car, over a meal, while shopping, or while playing sports.
• Keep the conversations positive. Ask about their successes, interests, friends, and activities.
• Remember, you can agree to disagree. It is okay if you don’t agree, but strive to understand.
• Send your teenagers text messages as a follow-up to your conversations, not instead of talking.
• Spend time together. Teenagers want to know you are available when they need you. You don’t always need a reason to be with your teens.
• Keep trying. Communicating with your teens is important, so don’t ever give up.

Genuine Listening

Listen with your eyes, heart, and ears.
7% of communication is contained in the words we use.
55% is contained in body language.
38% is in how we say the words—the tone or feeling reflected in our voices.
Topics of Conversation

Often the most difficult part of talking to your teenager is finding something to talk about. The following is a list of questions that can start a conversation with your teen.

- What did you think of the last movie you saw?
- What do you wish you had more time to do in your life?
- Name one thing that has made you laugh this week.
- What is most challenging about the video game you are playing?
- What is one thing you would like to do that you have never done?
- What are you looking forward to this week?
- What are you dreading the most in school this week?
- If you could change one thing about your school day, what would it be?
- How is (sport your teen plays) going? What does the coach say about the team this season?
- If we could do one thing as a family before you graduate from high school, what would you like to do?

Social Skills for the Workplace

Employers seek professionals with finely tuned social skills. Effective communication is a social skill essential to workplace success. Practice communicating effectively with your teenager to help develop effective speaking and active listening skills.

Qualities of an effective speaker:

- **Be assertive.** Use a confident tone of voice.
- **Be aware of body posture.** Stand up tall and sit up straight.
- **Make eye contact.** Speakers who make good eye contact show they are serious about delivering their message.

Qualities of an active listener:

- **Pay attention to body language.** Good listeners can read a speaker’s body language to notice any unspoken cues.
- **Lean in.** Pay careful attention to what the speaker is saying.
- **Ask clarifying questions.** Don’t be afraid to ask questions to clarify what the speaker is saying.

“Don’t worry that children never listen to you; worry that they are always watching you.”

- Robert Fulghum

Resources

**HealthyChildren.org**
Sponsored by the American Academy of Pediatrics, HealthyChildren.org is committed to the attainment of optimal physical, mental, and social health and well-being for all infants, children, adolescents, and young adults.

HealthyChildren.org

**National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement (NAFSCE)**
Their mission is advancing high impact policies and practices for family, school, and community engagement to promote child development and improve student achievement.

NAFSCE.org

**Family Education**
Provides current information, including message boards, newsletters, and resources for parents.

FamilyEducation.com

**Mendez Foundation**
For more than thirty-five years, the Mendez Foundation has been developing and implementing unparalleled evidence-based, skill-building programs that equip students with the tools they need to live safe, healthy, and drug-fee lives.
FOR PARENTS AND FAMILIES

Your teen is participating in Too Good for Violence - Social Perspectives, a comprehensive character building violence prevention program. Teenagers who know their parents support them, communicate effectively with their parents, and live by clear non-violence standards are significantly less likely to be involved in violence. Use this newsletter as a resource to talk with your teen about living a safe and violence-free life.

How to Be a Friend

Adolescence can be a challenging time for teenagers and their friends. Some helpful reminders and positive qualities for teenagers to use to create and cultivate lasting friendships include:

✓ Be yourself
✓ Be honest
✓ Appreciate others
✓ Have fun
✓ Be accepting
✓ Be respectful
✓ Be adventurous
✓ Cooperate
✓ Be dependable
✓ Be patient
✓ Offer forgiveness
✓ Be helpful
✓ Be compassionate

Build a Stronger Relationship with Your Teenager

Parents can help teenagers resist negative influences and bounce back from difficult times by creating strong bonds within your family. Some suggestions:

• Do things with your teens – chores around the house, playing video games, watching a movie, whatever life has in store – spend time together.
• Ask about school, friends, and activities.
• Be willing to listen to and learn from your teen.
• Know your teen’s friends.
• Welcome teenagers into your home.
• Eat meals together whenever possible – without TV or technology interfering.
• Model mutual respect.
• Avoid negative labels.
• Show your sense of humor. Conversations don’t always have to be serious. Lighten up and have fun with your teenager.
• Remember to set clear and consistent boundaries. Teens appreciate rules and knowing the consequences if they break the rules.

“I cannot even imagine where I would be today were it not for that handful of friends who have given me a heart full of joy. Let’s face it, friends make life a lot more fun.”

- Charles R. Swindoll

© Mendez Foundation
toogoodprograms.org
Build Your Teen’s Teamwork Skills

No matter what kind of career your teenager wants to pursue, employers are interested in employees who work well with others. There are many ways you can help your teenager build these skills in high school.

- Point out examples of teamwork in sports, school projects, or in your home. Ask your teen to explain how people’s strengths and weaknesses work together for success.

- When you accomplish a project as a family, ask your teen which skills each member of the family brought to the project.

- Encourage your teen to join a club. Many clubs provide opportunities to work as part of a team.

- Help your teen organize a community service project. This will help your teen practice leadership.

Help!! I Don’t like My Teenager’s Friend

There may be times when you don’t like your teenager’s choice of friends. The following are some helpful tips to help you in these challenging times.

- Don’t overreact. Take time to figure out why you don’t like them. If it is just conflicting personalities and your teen continues to act and behave responsibly, you may just need to ignore it.

- Reinforce positive and acceptable behavior in your teen without criticizing the negative behavior in your teen’s friends.

- If the friend is a troublemaker, explain to your teen that you disapprove of their friend’s behavior. Then, clearly state the consequences if your teen decides to follow in the friend’s footsteps.

- If necessary, use your authority as a parent to explain why you would prefer for your teen to end the friendship. Have a conversation with your teen about the qualities of a good friendship and help them realize this person isn’t really a good friend. Your teen may be grateful for your help to get out of the friendship.

Resources

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Adolescent Health
Provides resources for parents and teenagers on a variety of health topics.
  hhs.gov

Family and Youth Services Bureau
Provides current information, including message boards, newsletters, and resources for parents.
  familyeducation.com

KidsHealth
Offers knowledge, advice, and comfort for parents. As well as answers, advice, and straight talk for teenagers.
  kidshealth.org

Mendez Foundation

For more than thirty-five years, the Mendez Foundation has been developing and implementing unparalleled evidence-based, skill-building programs that equip students with the tools they need to live safe, healthy, and drug-fee lives.
Your teen is participating in Too Good for Violence - Social Perspectives, a comprehensive character building violence prevention program. Teenagers who know their parents support them, communicate effectively with their parents, and live by clear non-violence standards are significantly less likely to be involved in violence. Use this newsletter as a resource to talk with your teen about living a safe and violence-free life.

RESPECT

When teens have a sense of worth or value for themselves and others, they have greater empathy, can diffuse conflict, and develop stronger relationships. Respect is an overall evaluation we give ourselves and others based on factors that relate to how we live our lives.

7 + 2 = 9
(But so does 6 + 3)

“The way you do things is not always the only way to do them. Respect other people’s way of thinking and opinion.”

- facebook/the idealist

Being a Positive Role Model

Children and teens learn behavior through observation. Everything you do, right or wrong, is modeled by your teens. One way to show your teen how to respect others is to model respectful behavior when you interact with your teen and with others in front of your teen. For example, say “please” and “thank you” to express courtesy and appreciation to others.

When your teen communicates with teachers in school or interviews for a first job, using these positive social skills will show that your teen is kind, caring, and respectful. Explain that using manners, like saying “excuse me,” demonstrates empathy. By observing your actions and the reactions of others, your teen will understand how what you say and do can positively or negatively impact someone else’s day.

Here are some ways to model respect:

- **Be honest.** If you do something wrong, admit it and apologize. We respect those who own up to their mistakes.

- **Be caring.** Have concern for the wellbeing of people, animals, and the environment.

- **Avoid negative role models.** When you see examples of disrespect, discuss them with your teenager.

- **Obey laws and follow rules.** Even when no one is looking. Having integrity means doing what you know is right because you respect yourself and others.

- **Be polite.** Say “please” and “thank you” when interacting with others. Anticipate how your actions could inconvenience others.

- **Be reliable.** Keep promises. Show your teen that you mean what you say.

- **Be a good listener.** When someone else is speaking, show you’re interested in what they have to say. Ask clarifying questions if you don’t understand something.
Getting to the Root

What does “respect” mean to you? What does it mean to your teenager? Perhaps respect is a sensitive subject in your home. Teenagers are more likely to discuss challenging topics when the focus is not on them.

Find a local or national news story about a celebrity or other famous person who was disrespectful or lost the respect of colleagues, citizens, fans, or themselves. Perhaps a well-known athlete thought he or she could demand people’s respect through rude and aggressive behavior.

Ask your teenager what a Publicity Agent might advise the celebrity do to regain the respect he or she lost. What specific actions should the person take to earn the respect of colleagues, fans, citizens, etc.?

This discussion provides the opportunity to gain some insight into your teenager’s thoughts about respect for self and others.

Self-Respect:
How do I treat myself?

_Sometimes it is easier to have respect for others than it is to respect ourselves. Reflect with your teenager about his or her self-respect by discussing these questions..._

1. **Think about a time when a best friend felt really bad about him or herself.** How would you respond to your friend in this situation? What would you do? What would you say? How would you say it?

2. **Think about a time when you felt bad about yourself.** What did you do to? What did you say to yourself?

3. **Is there a difference between how you treat a friend and how you treat yourself?** Why?

4. **What would you suggest to someone who might not treat themselves as well as they would treat a friend when they are feeling bad?**

Resources

**National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention**

An excellent source for the latest violence prevention information, advice, and news for parents.

[healthysafechildren.org](http://healthysafechildren.org)

**TeenLife**

TeenLife is the leading resource for opportunities that inspire passion in teens. They connect students, parents, and educators with community service organizations, summer and gap programs, schools, colleges, and services that help teens find their purpose.

[teenlife.com](http://teenlife.com)

**By Parents – For Parents**

A useful resource for anyone trying to raise a teenager.

[byparents-forparents.com](http://byparents-forparents.com)

Mendez Foundation

For more than thirty-five years, the Mendez Foundation has been developing and implementing unparalleled evidence-based, skill-building programs that equip students with the tools they need to live safe, healthy, and drug-free lives.
Your teen is participating in Too Good for Violence - Social Perspectives, a comprehensive character building violence prevention program. Teenagers who know their parents support them, communicate effectively with their parents, and live by clear non-violence standards are significantly less likely to be involved in violence. Use this newsletter as a resource to talk with your teen about living a safe and violence-free life.

When Parents and Teens Disagree:
Tips You Can Both Use Now

By Gary Dudell, Ph.D
Author and Parenting Consultant

Many conflicts between parents and teens concern freedom and responsibility. Here are some tips to help both parents and teens survive...

Parents:
Ask how your teen feels. When teens ask for permission to do things they've never done before, ask, “What do you think about this idea? Does it seem safe to you?”

Set clear limits and enforce them. Remember that teenagers need more privileges and more responsibility as they mature. Gradually allow more freedom as your teen shows they can handle it. When you let them make decisions, hold them accountable for the consequences.

Get other opinions. When faced with a tough request, talk it over with a spouse or other parents if you don’t feel comfortable making the decision on your own.

Teens:
Be responsible. When your parents give you more freedom, show that you are mature enough to do new things responsibly.

Own up to your mistakes. When you make a mistake, tell your parents and accept the consequences. When they know you are mature enough to handle mistakes well, they’ll give you more opportunities.

How we can diffuse confrontations with our teens...
- Focus on the behavior, not the person.
- Manage our negative emotions.
- Avoid escalating the situation by saying or doing things that make the situation worse.
- Discuss the misbehavior later.
- Model non-aggressive behavior.

“Good habits formed at youth make all the difference.”

- Aristotle
When Parents and Teens Disagree:
Tips You Can Both Use Now
continued...

Use the Right Tools and Turn Conflicts Around

Conflicts are inevitable, but aggression is not. Lowering tension level and keeping a disagreement from becoming aggressive takes work, and like any other job, having the right equipment makes the work easier. These conflict tools can help in de-escalating a conflict:

- Use words like “let’s,” “we,” “our,” and “together.”
- Identify the problem without blaming the other person.
- Call the other person by name.
- Ask to hear the other point of view.
- Show respect for the other person.
- Relax your face and body.
- Use a calm voice.
- Brainstorm together.

Resources

Center for Disease Control and Prevention
The CDC’s ultimate goal is to stop youth violence before it starts. Check here for parenting guides and prevention strategies. cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/

Children’s Safety Network
Children’s Safety Network is dedicated to working with state, territorial, and community Maternal & Child Health and Injury & Violence prevention programs to create an environment where all children and youth are safe and healthy. childrenssafetynetwork.org/injury-topics/youth-violence-prevention

Family Resources
Family Resources offers a program called the Parent-Teen Conflict Program to enhance parenting skills and family functioning. familyresourcesofpa.org/our-services.html

Mendez Foundation
For more than thirty-five years, the Mendez Foundation has been developing and implementing unparalleled evidence-based, skill-building programs that equip students with the tools they need to live safe, healthy, and drug-fee lives.
FOR PARENTS AND FAMILIES

Your teen is participating in Too Good for Violence - Social Perspectives, a comprehensive character building violence prevention program. Teenagers who know their parents support them, communicate effectively with their parents, and live by clear non-violence standards are significantly less likely to be involved in violence. Use this newsletter as a resource to talk with your teen about living a safe and violence-free life.

Maximizing Life, Minimizing Stress

When teens are equipped with healthy coping strategies to manage stress, they are more resistant to risky behaviors. Recognizing the influence of stressors on their emotional, mental, and physical health helps them to problem solve, manage stress, and make responsible decisions to promote balance.

What Parents Can Do

Teens face higher levels of stress with the increasing demands and complexity of their adolescent years. At the same time, the challenges of raising teenagers bring mounting pressures for parents.

Parents often underestimate how much their own stress can affect their teen’s stress level. Stressed parents may unknowingly withhold affection and support causing emotional distress for their teens.

So what can parents do? It’s not possible to be stressed and relaxed at the same time. Practice relaxation techniques on your own and with your teen to model healthy approaches to stress management.

Explain that some of the relaxation techniques are good ways to prepare for a stressful situation, such as a job interview or taking an important exam. Others may be used to keep calm during a stressful event or to regain calm after a stressful situation.

Establish a household priority to manage stress at home and not let stress affect your relationship. Agree to look out for each other’s stress levels and step in to help the other feel at ease.

Relaxation Techniques

Try these quick exercises to keep calm in the face of a challenging event.

Mental Rehearsal

In your mind’s eye, picture yourself handling a stressful situation in a calm, relaxed, confident way. Imagine your calm feelings, your relaxed look, and your confident voice.

Mentally practice how you will handle anything that might happen. Repeat several times until you start to feel prepared to deal with the situation.

Head Roll

Close your eyes and sit up straight in your chair. Roll your head gently and slowly in a complete circle first one way, then the other way. This relaxes the neck muscles and increases circulation.

Rag Doll

Stand up and close your eyes. Take very slow, deep breaths. Bend forward at the waist and let your arms dangle like a rag doll while you count to ten. Now slowly straighten up.

“Parents learn a lot from their children about coping with life.”

- Muriel Spark
Relaxation Techniques
continued...

Loosen Up
Make tight fists and hold them for about 15 seconds. Make them as tight as you can. Now relax your hands. Concentrate on how it feels to have your hands relaxed. Don’t move. Just be still and “think” yourself relaxed. Now relax your arms, shoulders, back, neck, thighs, calves, and feet. Concentrate on your breathing again and open your eyes.

Rest Time
Put your head down and close your eyes. Take very slow, deep breaths. Play some relaxing music. Concentrate on the sound of your breathing. When you inhale, think “in” and when you exhale, think “out.”

Thinking Back
Remember something you enjoyed doing a long time ago like riding a bike, swinging, or skating. Imagine it’s a warm, sunny day and think back to the way you felt when you were carefree and doing something you enjoyed.

“Do not anticipate trouble or worry about what may never happen. Keep in the sunlight.”
- Benjamin Franklin

Resources

Mentalhealth.gov
For Parents and Caregivers
As a parent or caregiver, you want the best for your children or other dependents. You may be concerned or have questions about certain behaviors they exhibit and how to ensure they get help.
mentalhealth.gov/talk/parents-caregivers/

Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide
The mission of the Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide is to reduce the number of youth suicides and attempted suicides by encouraging public awareness through the development and promotion of educational training programs.
sptsusa.org

Teen Life
TeenLife is the leading resource for opportunities that inspire passion in teens. They connect students, parents and educators with community service organizations, summer and gap programs, schools, colleges, and services that help teens find their purpose.
teenlife.com

Mendez Foundation
For more than thirty-five years, the Mendez Foundation has been developing and implementing unparalleled evidence-based, skill-building programs that equip students with the tools they need to live safe, healthy, and drug-free lives.
Your teen is participating in Too Good for Violence - Social Perspectives, a comprehensive character building violence prevention program. Teenagers who know their parents support them, communicate effectively with their parents, and live by clear non-violence standards are significantly less likely to be involved in violence. Use this newsletter as a resource to talk with your teen about living a safe and violence-free life.

Your Values

Talking to your sons and daughters about healthy dating relationships and how to treat a partner with respect enables teenagers to develop healthy dating expectations and standards. Your values are the ones that matter most to your teens. Create opportunities to talk with your teen about unhealthy relationships and dating violence. Discuss the expectation you have for your teen to not tolerate harmful or negative behaviors. Reassure your teen that if they are in an unhealthy relationship, you are there to support them and keep them safe.

Starting the Conversation

Make the most of teachable moments. Use TV episodes, movies, music lyrics, news, community events, or the experiences of friends to discuss healthy and unhealthy relationships. Teen dating abuse is actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual, psychological, and verbal harm by a dating partner. It can also include using the internet, social media, cell phones, or text messages to harass, pressure, or victimize the dating partner.

Teen Dating Violence

Speaking openly and honestly about relationships with your teenager can help them speak openly and honestly with you. Sometimes, in an effort to be more independent, teens don’t share everything that’s going on in their lives. For this reason, it is essential to know the warning signs that your teen may be in an unhealthy or abusive relationship.

Warning Signs of Dating Violence:

- Casually mentioning their dating partner’s obsessive, jealous, or abusive behavior, but laughing it off as a joke.
- Receiving excessive text messages, phone calls, or visits from their dating partner.
- Giving up or losing interest in things that used to be important to them.
- Being put down or called names by their significant other.
- Declining grades or missing school.
- Being pressured by a dating partner about what to do, where to go, or what to wear.
- Constantly worrying about upsetting their dating partner.
- Apologizing or making excuses for their dating partner’s behavior.
- Coming home with injuries they try to cover up or can’t explain.

“Even as kids reach adolescence, they need more than ever for us to watch over them. Adolescence is not about letting go. It’s about hanging on during a very bumpy ride.”

- Ron Taffel

National Dating Abuse Helpline

1-866-331-9474

If you or your teen needs assistance, please call the National Dating Abuse helpline for more resources.
Do you notice your daughter or son...

- spending less time with family and friends and becomes more and more isolated?
- casually mention his or her dating partner’s obsessive, jealous, or abusive behavior, but laughs it off as a joke?
- receiving excessive text messages, phone calls, or visits from his or her dating partner?
- giving up or losing interest in things that used to be important to her or him?
- being put down or called names by his or her significant other?
- start having declining grades or missing school?
- being pressured by a dating partner about what to do, where to go, or what to wear?
- worried about upsetting her or his dating partner?
- apologizing or making excuses for his or her dating partner’s behavior?
- has injuries she or he tries to cover up or can’t explain?

National Dating Abuse Helpline
1-866-331-9474
If you or your teen needs assistance, please call the National Dating Abuse helpline for more resources.

Resources

LoveIsRespect.org
A website for teens for support and resources about healthy teen dating and teen dating violence. A chatline is available for immediate support.
loveisrespect.org

Respect.org
This website offers information for individuals who perpetrate dating or domestic violence.
respectphoneline.org.uk/pages/resources-for-working-with-domestic-violence-perpetrators.html

Break the Cycle
Break the Cycle motivates and supports young people to speak out about dating violence in their schools and communities. This site also encourages everyone who works with young adults and teens to create safe environments that protect students and youth out of school.
breakthecycle.org/youth-leadership-education

Mendez Foundation
For more than thirty-five years, the Mendez Foundation has been developing and implementing unparalleled evidence-based, skill-building programs that equip students with the tools they need to live safe, healthy, and drug-fee lives.
The Fear of Missing Out

Having a fear of being left out or missing out on something friends are doing can create anxiety in teens. Social media real-time status and photo updates only serves to enhance that anxiety.

Seeing what your friends are doing right now can create pressure to regret or abandon less social but important activities like studying or writing an essay or visiting family. The regret associated with decisions to spend time without friends can negatively impact goals, self-esteem, and confidence in their decision-making.

If your teen chooses to study or work on reaching another goal instead of going out with friends, compliment him or her for their commitment and remind them that hard work pays off. A little positive reinforcement goes a long way.

You can also support your teen by helping them to reconnect with themselves offline. Taking time for self-discovery and self-awareness will strengthen your teen’s confidence about their offline, real identity.

Besides, as difficult it is for a teen to understand now, there will be other Friday nights.

"The biggest communities in which young people now reside are online communities."

- Howard Gardner

"Social media has given us this idea that we should all have a posse of friends when in reality, if we have one or two really good friends, we are lucky."

- Brene Brown

Reconnected to Yourself

**Power down.** Turn off all electronic devices during dinner or while doing homework.

**Prioritize your offline life.** Plan for special activities with your teen or for your teen with his or her friends, but make the rule “no pictures or updates allowed.” Help your teen practice keeping some memories in their hearts and heads rather than staging moments for social media.

**Be mindful of your goals.** Remind your teen that in order to reach personal goals, they may have to sacrifice time away from friends. There will be many more moments to share with friends. All it takes is time management and planning to coordinate around the more mundane events they may need to partake to get ahead in life.

**You don’t have to like everything.** Help your teen to determine what kind of information popping up on their social networks is worth replying to. They don’t have to keep up with or reply to everything they see online.
Online Aggression

The wide use of online communication presents risks and benefits. Monitoring your teen’s online activity can help keep them safe from online aggression or prevent them from engaging in aggressive behavior online.

Online aggression includes “cyberbullying,” “internet bullying,” and “electronic aggression.”

Online aggression causes emotional distress and leads to conduct problems at home and at school. Often the aggression continues offline in the form of teasing or harassing the target.

Know what to look for as you monitor your teen’s online activity. Here are a few examples of aggressive online behavior:

- Sending a mean email or IM to someone
- Posting mean things about someone on a website
- Making fun of someone in an online chat
- Doing mean things to someone’s character in an online world
- Creating a hostile environment in an online world or game
- Impersonating someone online including creating a fake profile
- Repeatedly texting someone to the point of harassment
- Threatening or intimidating someone online or in a text
- Starting rumors or spreading gossip online
- Stealing someone’s password and logging into their account
- Taking a photo or video and sharing it without the subject’s consent with the intent to embarrass or knowing it might be embarrassing

“
What gets posted online is not short term, and is open for easy misinterpretation. Messages and pictures spread faster through the Internet than they ever could by word of mouth.”

- Anna Maria Chavez

Resources

Connect Safely
ConnectSafely.org is a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating users of connected technology about safety, privacy and security. You’ll find research-based safety tips, parents’ guidebooks, advice, news, and commentary on all aspects of tech use and policy.
connectsafely.org

Safe, Smart & Social
Provides digital citizenship assemblies and social media training to schools, educators, and parents.
safesmartsocial.com

National Crime Prevention Council
The National Crime Prevention Council’s mission is to help people keep themselves, their families, and their communities safe from crime. The NCPC produces publications and teaching materials on internet safety.
ncpc.org

Mendez Foundation
For more than thirty-five years, the Mendez Foundation has been developing and implementing unparalleled evidence-based, skill-building programs that equip students with the tools they need to live safe, healthy, and drug-free lives.