

# Parenting Pre-teens and Teenagers

## Session 2 – Managing Challenges



**John Sharry**  
[www.solutiontalk.ie](http://www.solutiontalk.ie)

# The Relationship Bank Account

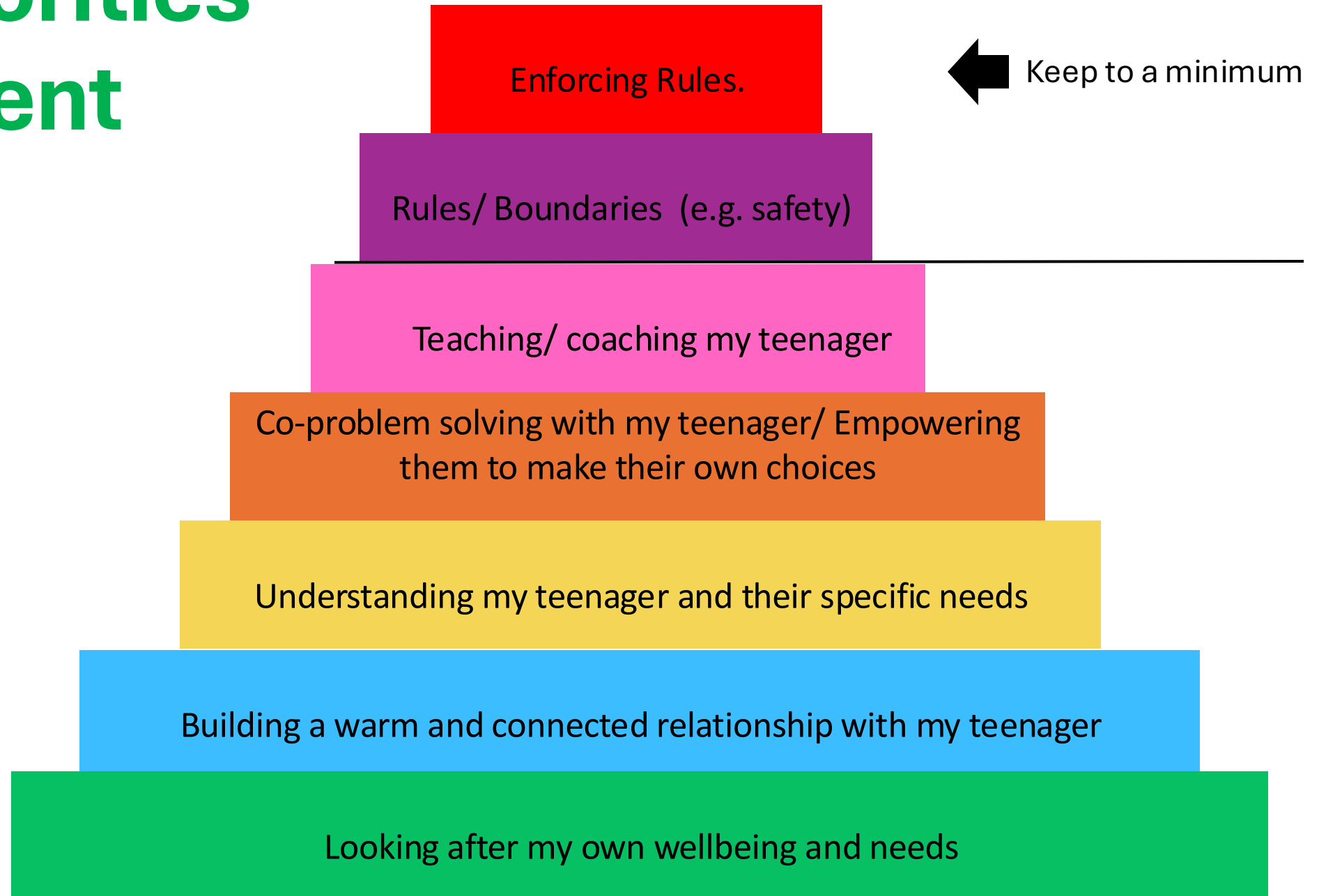
---

**Increase Deposits and  
Reduce Withdrawals**

**Make sure you are in credit!**



# Your Priorities as a Parent



# Session 1 Homework

---

1. Set aside time to talk, chat and **connect** with your teenager.
2. Get to **know their world** – see the 20 questions exercise.
3. Increase your **warm responses** to when your teen seeks your attention.
4. Press the **pause button** when faced by rows and arguments.  
Respond calmly and empathically.
5. Proactively **problem-solve** and **prevent problems**.
6. Address your **own stress** and think of what **you need**.

# Parenting

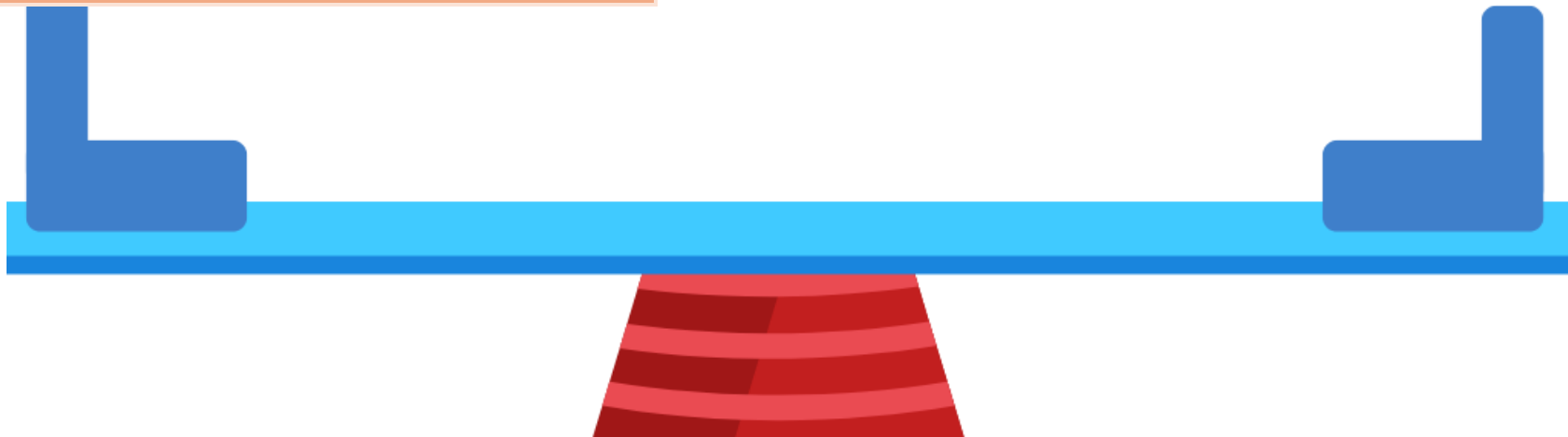
## Getting the Balance Right

### PARENT MAKE DECISIONS

- Guide and protect
- Set rules
- Teach how to behave

### CHILD MAKES DECISIONS

- Empowering children to decide
- Letting them learn by own decisions



# Expectations, Rules and Boundaries

---

- What are the important **rules** and **boundaries** in your home?
- What **expectations** do you have for your children?
- What rules can you drop for **the moment** and **let your teen decide**?
- What expectations can you **adjust** to meet their **needs**?



# Assertive Communication

---

1. Be **clear** about what **outcome** you are looking for.
2. **Connect first** – join with your teenager.
3. **Start positive** – praise something, *“I really like...”*
4. State **positive request** – Use a “Do” not a “Don’t”
5. Use an **“I” message** – *“I need some help with the washing up”, “I feel upset when you shout.”*
6. Have a **plan** for what you will do if your teenager does not do what you want.
7. Look at **prevention**: How can you avoid this problem in the first place?



# Managing Rudeness/ Aggression

---

## Your Goals and Questions

- Could we have a little more detail on how to manage rudeness - reacting to door slamming / " I hate you" / "you're such a bad parent."
- We worry that if there is no consequence to speaking to us in such a way - are we teaching our daughter that its ok to speak to people like that? Or if we just ignore/don't react, will it just subside?
- My challenge at the moment is that if I try to enforce any rules my son really punishes me. I actually feel bullied at times by him. Hard to know what to do in this situation.





# Step-by-Step Response Plan

---

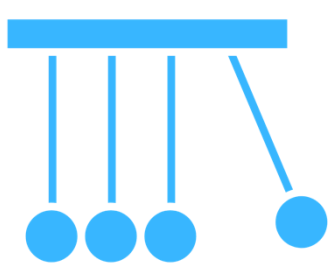


## Rudeness from Your Teenager

1. **Don't react** - remain calm and respectful.
2. **Acknowledge feelings** *"You sound stressed...tell me what's going on."*
3. **Address disrespect** *"You are shouting, please lower your voice so I can hear you."*
4. **Co-regulate and soothe** *"You sound stressed...let's take a moment to calm down."*
5. **End conversation if disrespect continues** *"Let's take a break and talk later, when we are calmer."* *"when you speak politely they I will be able to help you"*
6. **If rudeness continues, take action** - walk away
7. **Follow-up later** - to co-problem solve when things are calmer.

# Rules and Consequences

---



- Start with a **positive request** to behave.  
*“John, please speak politely”*. *“Come on guys let’s see the two of calm down.”*
- Give children a **choice**.  
*“If you shout, the conversation will end”*, *“Screens get turned off until you two agree.”*
- Be **respectful** and **encouraging**.  
*“C’mon John, I don’t want you to lose your TV programme, let’s calm down now.”*
- Enforce consequences **calmly**.  
*This is a time for action and not words.*
- Use extra consequences if the problem **continues**.  
*“If you continue to fight, you will have to take a break in your rooms.”*  
*“If you continue to shout, you will only lose some of your pocket money.”*
- **Let the consequences do the work, not your anger.**

# Consequence Examples

---

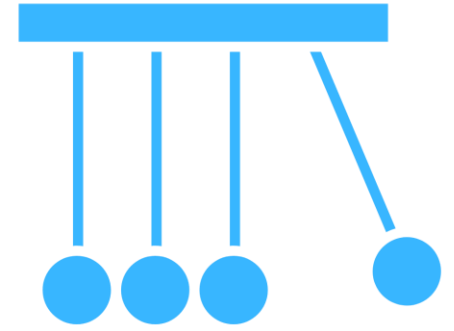
Rob is late by an hour home, then he has to be home an hour earlier the next night.

If Orla does not do her chores for the week, then she doesn't get half her pocket money for the week.

If Peter does not wash his own laundry, then he has no clean clothes on Saturday.

If Sue does not get up early enough, then she has to walk to school without a lift.

If the washing up/ chores rota is not working, you will discuss it again at the next family meeting.\*



\*The last consequence is an important one. If an agreement is not working it should be discussed again rather than forgotten about. Knowing that there is a **review time**, when they will be **accountable** to other family members, is a powerful motivating factor for teenagers.

# Prevention Plan

---



## Rudeness from Your Teenager

### 1. Tune In

- Understand **triggers**.
- What is going on for **your teenager**?
- What is going on for **you**?

### 2. Co-Problem Solve

- **Listen to your teen** “*What was bothering you then?’ What is going on for you?’*”
- **Respectfully explain** “*I was upset when you shouted at me... can you speak politely.’*”
- **Explore solutions** “*How can we make sure to have respectful conversations?’*”

### 3. Build Your Relationship

# Adjust rules and expectations

---

**Reducing demands and adjusting your rules based on your child's needs, can reduce unnecessary stress and create a much more harmonious home.**

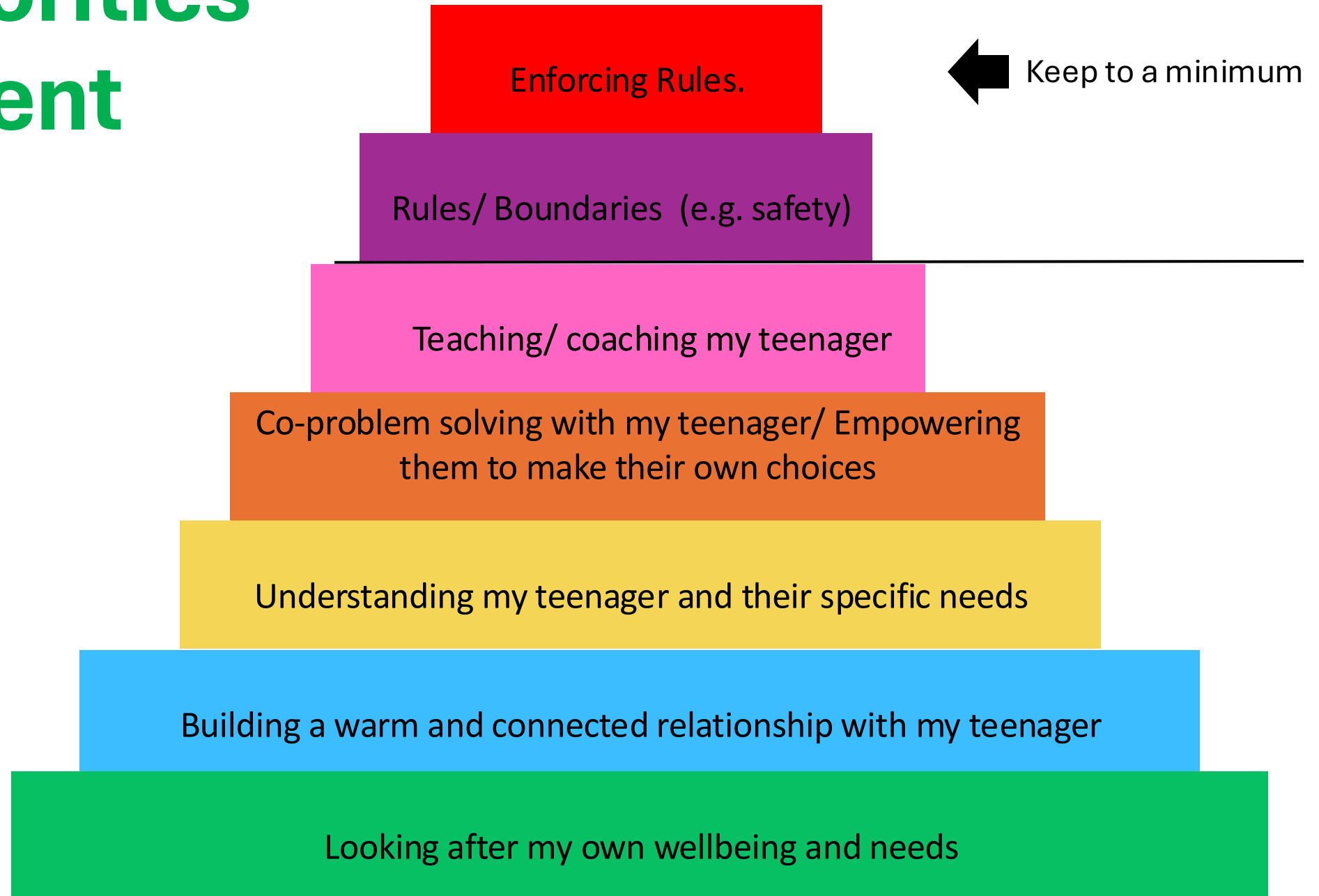
Rather than insisting his daughter clean her room when she was highly stressed, Peter reduced demands and gave her space to decompress after school

Sue realised her son was overwhelmed during a meltdown (rather than defiant) and so took time to coregulate rather than insist on compliance.

Paul realised his son used video games to regulate and relax and sometimes needed more time on hard days

Rather than seeing her son as 'lazy', Julie realised her son was struggling with organisation skills and needed some support.

# Your Priorities as a Parent



# How can I manage conflict?

---

Think of an ongoing conflict with your teenager...

1. What is going on for **your teenager**?
2. What is going on for **you**? - What is your rule/expectation?
3. Can you **alter** or **change** your expectations?
4. How can you **best manage/ communicate** as a parent?

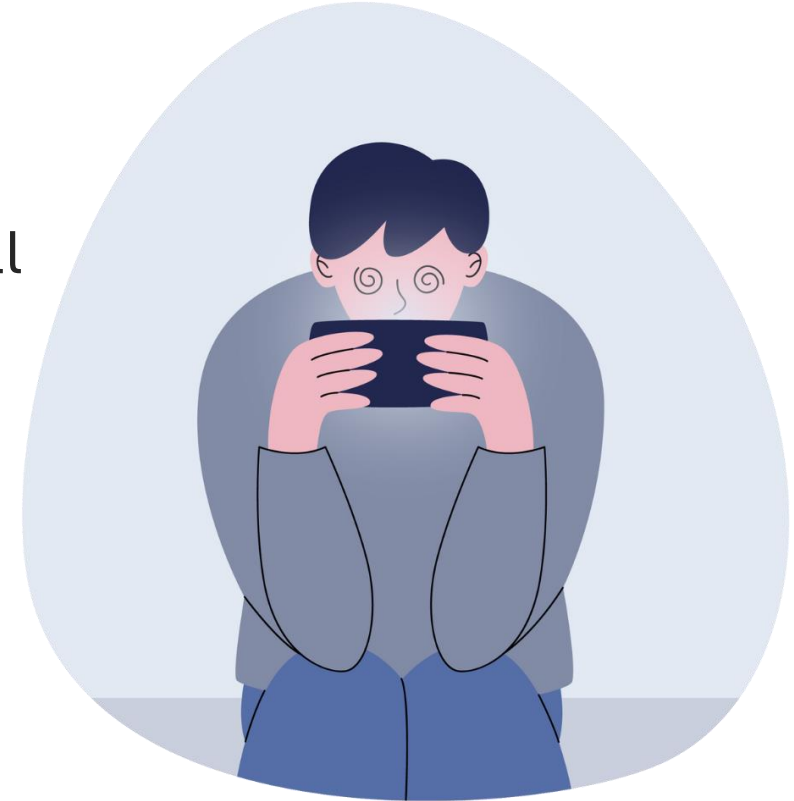


# Managing Screens and Technology

---

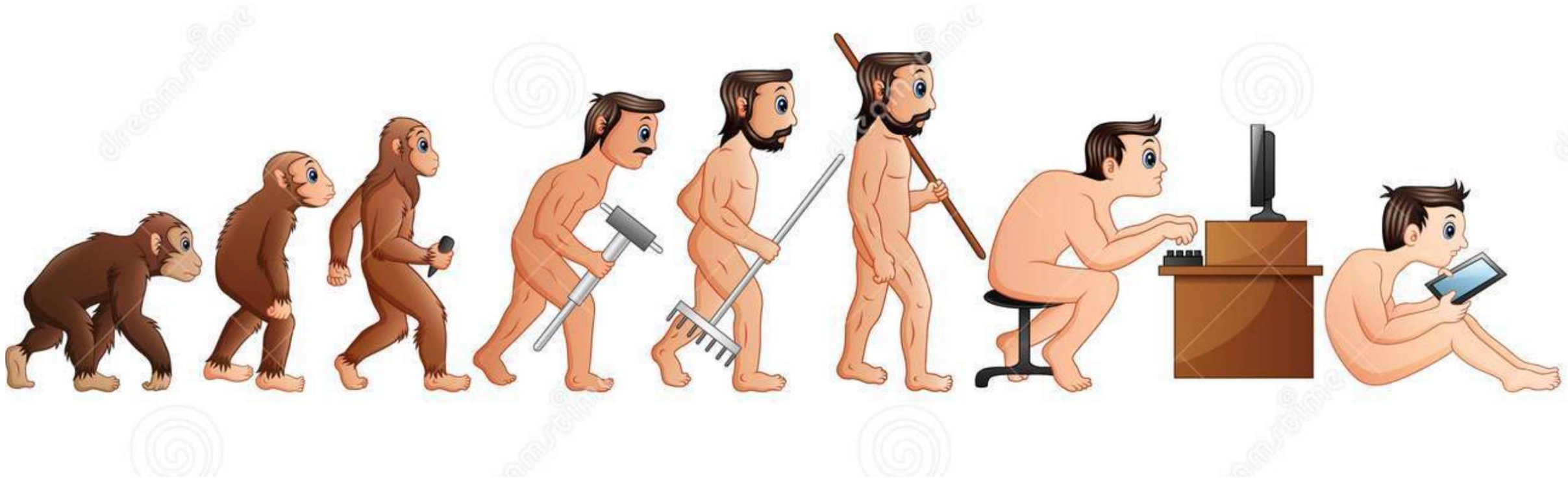
1. **Growth of smartphone use** amongst children, teens and adults has been **super-exponential**.
2. Social media, internet are **now ubiquitous**, taken over all aspects of life.
3. Biggest source of **parent-child conflict** is now screens/technology.

**What do you think? Let's do a poll.....**





# Our Evolution with Technology



# Are Phones good or bad?



# Are Children Negatively Impacted?



# What Research Says..

---



1. Big increase in **depression, anxiety** and mental problems in children, teens and adults.
2. Some association with **mental health problems** and social media.
3. Evidence that some types of screentime can be **addictive** and interfere with other important life areas.
4. However, research is complex as:
  - not all technology is the **same** ( e.g. video games, social media, news sites).
  - weighing-up **positives** and **negatives**.
  - depends on **child's needs** (e.g. neurodivergent children).

# It's all about context...

Technology is a powerful tool for good and bad.



# Managing Screen time in the Home

---

1. **Join in** with your children.
2. **Understand and listen** to their views.
3. Adopt a **gradual** step-by-step approach when introducing new technology.
4. Teach **safety** and prepare your children.
5. Negotiate a **family media plan**.





# Set Up a Family Media Plan

- Take time to negotiate over **several family meetings.**

“I am worried that there is too much phone and tablet use in the house. We need to agree a better plan around this.”

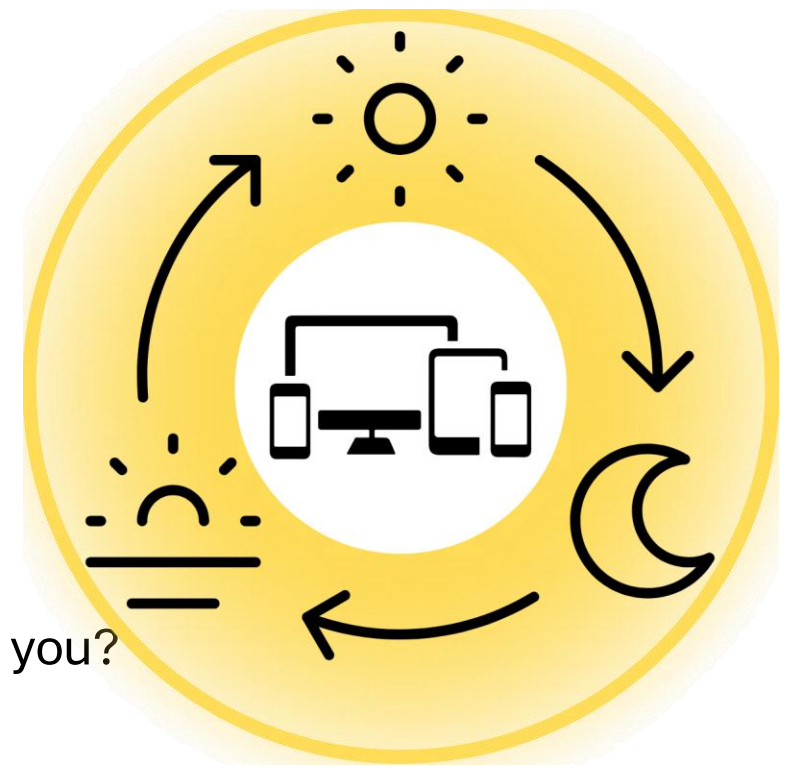
- **Listen to your teenager**

“Tell me what you think. What are the benefits of social media for you?  
“What are the downsides?”

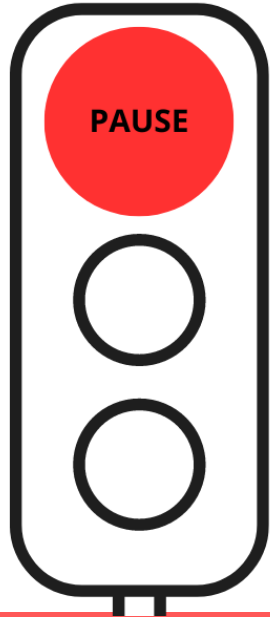
- Over a **series of discussions** try to agree:

- **Where** are the screen-free zones? *family dinner, bedroom...*
- **When** are the screen-free times? *bedtime, before school...*
- What **time limits** do we set on screens? *two hours during week, more at weekend...*
- What are **good** educational and recreational screentime activities? *watching a TV series, playing a video game together...*

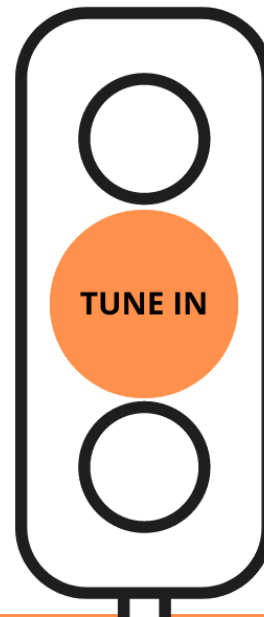
**Remember:** The agreement is for you too



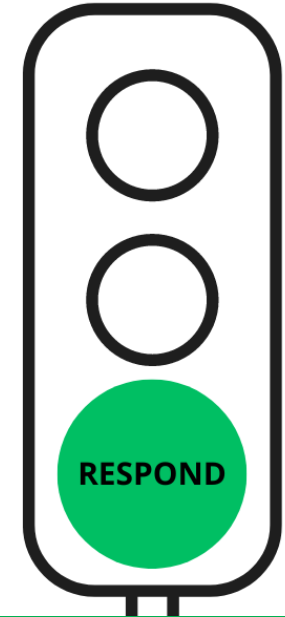
# Solving Childhood Problems



- How am I **reacting** to the problem?
- What responses **work well** already?
- What responses make things **worse**?



- What is going on for my **child**?
- What needs is my child **communicating**?
- What is going on for me as a **parent**?
- What are **my needs**?



- What is the best way to **respond**?
- How can I address my **child's needs**?
- How can I address my **own needs**?



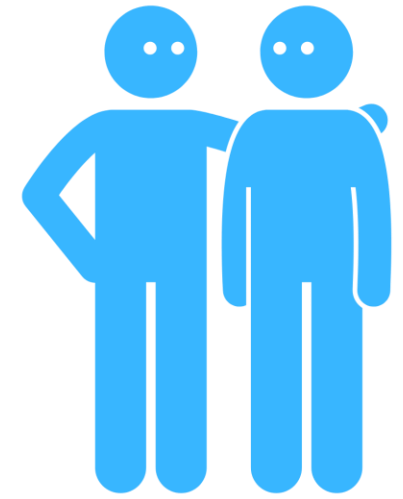
# Session 2 Homework

---

1. Continue to make deposits in your relationship with your teen. Find new ways to chat and **connect** with them.
2. Complete relationship checklist from handout
3. Press the **pause button** when faced by rows and arguments. Respond calmly and empathically.
4. Identify an **ongoing problem**. Take time to problem solve:
  1. Pause and stop reacting.
  2. Tune in to understand.
  3. Come up with a response plan.
5. Focus on **something nice** for yourself as a parent.

# Co-Regulation

---



- Being a **warm** and **calming** presence.
- Being **close by** or **giving space** depending on what your child needs.
- Showing you understand by your **body language**, tone of voice and what you say (or don't say).
- Touching or **physically comforting** your child in a way that soothes them (or not touching them if that works better).
- Reducing **sensory triggers** in the environment (dimming lights, turning TV off).
- Creating a **safe environment** that relaxes your child (sitting on bean bags, putting on music, giving them a drink, or a snack).