


Parenting Pre-teens and Teenagers

Session 2 – Managing Challenges



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The Relationship Bank Account

Increase Deposits and
Reduce Withdrawals

Make sure you are in credit!

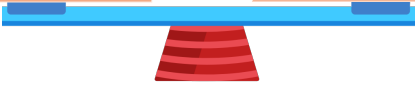


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Parenting Getting the Balance Right

CARING FOR PARENTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looking after your own needs Self-care 	CARING FOR CHILDREN <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looking after your child's needs Supporting children
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Parenting Getting the Balance Right

PARENT TAKES LEAD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guide and protect Set rules Encourage child to behave certain way 	CHILD TAKES LEAD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support them to decide Listen to them Encourage independence
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Session 1 Homework

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

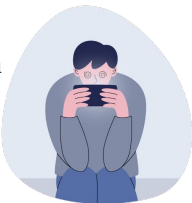
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Managing Screens and Technology

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

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



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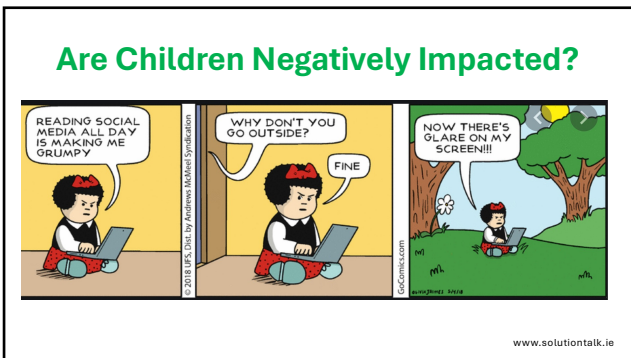
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What Research Says..

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).

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Managing Screentime 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**.


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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.



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Solving Childhood Problems




- PAUSE**
 - How am I reacting to the problem?
 - What responses **work well** already?
 - What responses make things **worse**?
- TUNE IN**
 - 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?
- RESPOND**
 - What is the best way to **respond**?
 - How can I address my **child's** needs?
 - How can I address my **own** needs?

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Siblings Conflicts and Fighting




Two children are always fighting, constant tension in the house. The older child seems to be always picking on the younger, which greatly annoys the parents. They find themselves constantly refereeing the two of them. The younger one often runs crying to the parent for help, who feel very angry at older child.

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'Tuning in' to Sibling Fighting



Sibling disputes, can have many different sources

- Child has substantial needs that take lots of parental time
- A 'velcro child' needs parent exclusively as 'safe person' – finds it hard to share
- A PDA child needs to be in control and manage other sibling
- Child feels neglected or that the parent loves/ favours the other child more


In responding as a parent the key is
Don't take a side in disputes: Be on both their sides
Understand both of their perspectives equally.
Understand each child's individual needs

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Step-by-Step Response Plan

Sibling Rivalry




- Press pause** - When you hear them fighting, don't jump in immediately.
- Don't take a side** - Listen to both of their perspectives equally.
- Positive Instruction** - "Listen guys, you need to sort it out yourselves."
- Encourage** - "Come on, I know the two of you can get on well together." Usually you can be such good brothers."
- Co-regulate with both** - "Let's all calm down/ let's take a break for a minute".
- Co-problem solve** - "How can I help you sort things out?"
- Use an equal consequence** - "Look guys, if you continue to fight the TV will get turned off or you will have to go to your rooms for a minute to calm down."
- Problem-solve** later if the situation is ongoing.

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Prevention Plan

Sibling Rivalry



- Co-problem solve together** - Sit down with both children and help them discuss ways they can get on. The focus is on finding a solution rather than analysing who is wrong.
- Reflect about your relationship with each** - Do you inadvertently have a favourite/ get on better with one? Do you have different expectations for each due to differing needs?
- Problem-solve individually** - Sit down with each child, without taking sides, listen to their perspective and help them find a solution - "How can you get on with your sister?" or "I need your help managing your brother."
- Build your relationship with each child** - Set aside one-to-one time with each child, when you can enjoy their company and listen to them alone.
- Support their relationship with each other** - Set up play/connecting time with both children supporting them playing cooperatively together e.g. put them on the same team.
- Encourage and affirm together** - "You are great brothers sharing like that."
- Always encourage both** - "J put out the plates and B you did the cutlery."

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Parenting Getting the Balance Right

- PARENT TAKES LEAD**
 - Guide and protect
 - Set rules
 - Encourage child to behave certain way
- CHILD TAKES LEAD**
 - Support them to decide
 - Listen to them
 - Encourage independence

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Expectations, Rules and Boundaries

- What **rules** and **boundaries** should you set with your teenagers?
- What **expectations** do you have for your children?
- What areas can you **let your teen decide**?
- What expectations can you **adjust** to meet their **needs**?

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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.

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Assertive Communication

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

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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."
- Remember** 1) consequences only have to be small to work
2) Let the consequences do the work, not your anger.

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Consequence Examples




- Rob is late by an hour home, then he has to be home an hour earlier the next night.
- If Peter does not wash his own laundry, then he has no clean clothes on Saturday.
- If the washing up/ chores rota is not working, you will discuss it again at the next family meeting.*
- If Orla does not do her chores for the week, then she doesn't get half her pocket money for the week.
- If Sue does not get up early enough, then she has to walk to school without a lift.

*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.

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Prevention Plan

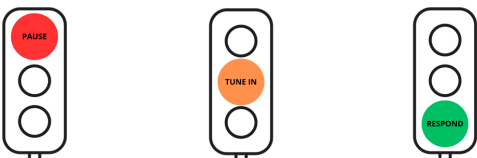


- Tune In**
 - Understand **triggers**.
 - What is going on for **your teenager**?
 - What is going on for **you**?
- Change environment**
 - Create **better routines at home**
 - Address stresses and problems in school
- Co-Problem Solve**
 - Listen to your teen** "What was bothering you then?" "What is going on for you?"
 - Respectfully explain** "I was upset when you shouted at me..." "How can we make sure to have respectful conversations?"
 - Explore solutions** "how can we make things easier in school for you?"
- Build Your Relationship**

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Solving Childhood Problems

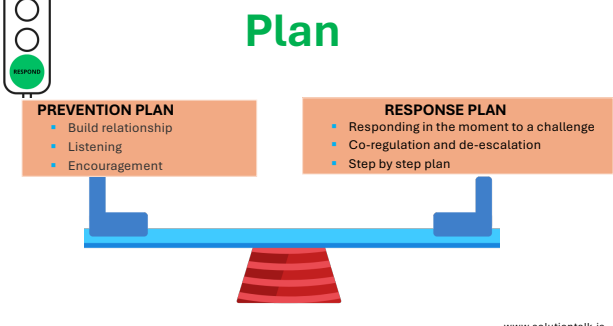


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Plan



- PREVENTION PLAN**
 - Build relationship
 - Listening
 - Encouragement
- RESPONSE PLAN**
 - Responding in the moment to a challenge
 - Co-regulation and de-escalation
 - Step by step plan

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Session 2 Homework

- Continue to make deposits in your relationship with your teen. Find new ways to chat and **connect** with them.
- Press the **pause button** when faced by rows and arguments. Respond calmly and empathically.
- Identify an **ongoing problem**. (such as **sibling rivalry, screen conflicts and rudeness/ conflict**)
 - Pause and stop reacting.
 - Tune in to understand.
 - Come up with a response plan.
- Focus on **something nice** for yourself as a parent.

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