


Parenting Pre-teens and Teenagers

Session 3

Co-problem solving



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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

CHILD MAKES DECISIONS

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

PARENT MAKE DECISIONS

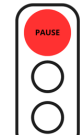
- Guide and protect
- Set rules
- Teach how to behave



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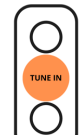
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Solving Childhood Problems




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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Plan

PREVENTION PLAN

- Build relationship
- Listening /Encouragement
- Co-Problem Solving

RESPONSE PLAN

- Responding in the moment to a challenge
- Co-regulation and de-escalation
- Step by step plan

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Step-by-Step Response Plan

Anger/ 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.

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Prevention Plan

1. **Tune In**
 - Understand **triggers**.
 - What is going on for **your teenager**?
 - What is going on for **you**?
2. **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?"

- 3. **Build Your Relationship**

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Your Priorities as a Parent

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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.
- Complete relationship checklist from handout
- 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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Encouragement and Affirmation

- How important is encouragement for teenagers?
- How important is it that parents encourage teenagers?
- How important is it that teenagers feel **affirmed, liked and understood** by their parents?

Yet teenagers receive less encouragement and affirmation from their parents than when they were children....
Why is this?



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What Positive Qualities Do You Appreciate in Your Teen?

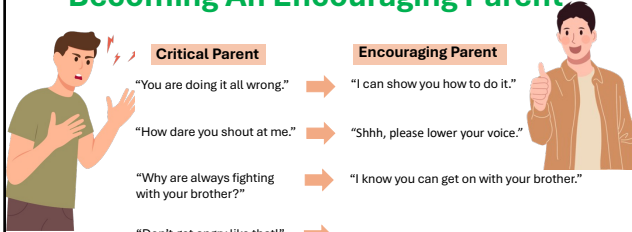
✓ idealistic	✓ always gives an opinion
✓ great sense of humour	✓ challenges my ideas
✓ caring towards his grandmother	✓ freer/ less inhibited than me
✓ good with younger kids	✓ great spirit and drive
✓ has great energy	✓ chooses good friends
✓ keeps me young	✓ very chatty with people
✓ quiet and deep thinker	✓ sensitive to other's feelings

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Becoming An Encouraging Parent

Critical Parent	➔	Encouraging Parent
"You are doing it all wrong."	➔	"I can show you how to do it."
"How dare you shout at me."	➔	"Shhh, please lower your voice."
"Why are always fighting with your brother?"	➔	"I know you can get on with your brother."
"Don't get angry like that!"	➔	"You sound quite stressed at the moment ..tell me what is going on for you."



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The Best Way to Encourage


Affirm What Is Going Right <i>"You got the books out, that is a good start."</i>	Acknowledge Feelings <i>"You look upset... what's going on?"</i>	Affirm Positive Intentions <i>"I appreciate you trying to help."</i>
Express Belief <i>"You can be so kind to your brother."</i>	Make It Personal <i>"It's a real help to me when you clear the dishes."</i>	

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Pause and Reflect

- Think of an **encouraging message** you would like to give your teenager? (you might want to write it down)
- Think how you might deliver this message so they take it on board – in person or by text




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Encouraging Parents

just as your teenager needs you to see their positives you need to adopt this encouraging attitude towards yourself.

- What did I do **well** as a parent last week?
- What is something I did recently that I am **proud** of?



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The Importance of Listening

- Listening is probably the **most important** way of giving your teenager positive attention.
- Builds their **confidence**.
- Helps your teen **express themselves** and **understand** their own **feelings**.
- Helps them understand the feelings of **other people**.
- Allows parents to **get to know** their teen and to really get close to them.
- Is the basis for helping children **solve problems**.



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Are You Really Listening?

Teen comes to parent really upset:

- "James just turned the TV over to his channel."

Parent replies:

- "Well, I'm sure it was his turn." (**Arguing**)
- "You shouldn't be watching so much TV." (**Criticism**)
- "Why don't you just do something else?" (**Advice**)
- "Oh don't worry, it's not so bad." (**Coaching**)
- "Let me go and talk to James." (**Rescuing**)



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Active Listening

Active listening involves:

- **Genuinely** trying to understand.
- Stopping what you are doing and **attending**.
- Giving full attention via your **body language** and eye contact.
- Acknowledging what your teenager is **feeling**.
- Repeating what your teenager has said, to check you have **understood**.
- **Encouraging** your teenager to continue by nodding, being silent, repeating the last word they have said, asking gentle questions...

Active listening is reserved for special times such as high conflicts when your teenager feels really strongly about something.



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Listening: Example

Teen comes to parent really upset:

- "James just turned the TV over to his channel."

Parent replies:


- "Sounds like you are upset. Sit down and tell me what happened." (picks up on **feelings** and **encourages** teen to say more)
- "I'm sorry, I know how much you like watching that programme." (**acknowledges feelings**)



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Pause and Reflect



- **Where** and **when** do you get a good chance to **listen** to your teenager?
- What helps them **open up** and talk to you ?

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Problem-Solving in Families

Stages of Problem-solving

- Step 1** - Pick a good **place** and **time** to talk.
- Step 2** - Start **positive** and state **goal**.
- Step 3** - **Listen** to your teenager – help them say what they think and feel.
- Step 4** - State your **own point of view** respectfully.
- Step 5** - Brainstorm **solutions** – ask your teen to come up with ideas **first**.
- Step 6** - Agree a **plan** - try and find a 'win-win' solution.
- Step 7** - Set time to meet again to **review**.



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Pick a Good Time

- During the problem or in the **heat of the moment**
though may need to co-regulate first
- A **scheduled time**
"let's talk after dinner or when we go for a walk."
- When **child comes to you** about problem
you choose to drop tools and listen
- **Spontaneous opportunity**
e.g. when a dilemma comes up during a TV show you are watching



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Parent- Self Care

In case of emergency put on your own oxygen mask first.

- Focus on your own **care** and **relaxation**.
- Get your **own needs met**.
- Let go expectations **that don't work** for you.
- Prioritise **one** or **two daily things** that relax and recharge you such as: ringing a friend for a chat, listening to a podcast you love, walking the dog, cooking a meal you like, spending time in nature, doing ten minutes meditation.
- Seek **support**, counselling, parenting group positive services support.
- Identify what you need and find out what **works for you**.



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Further Support and Next Steps

- Look out for upcoming talks/courses in the newsletter and instagram page.
- Additional workshop '**Helping Children Manage Anxiety and Stress**' **May 6th**
- If you think your child might be neurodivergent, a 3 week '**Parenting Exceptional Children**' course starting in autumn
- Longer version, Parents Plus 'Parenting Teenagers' course, check out www.parentline.ie/courses.
- Lots of articles on parenting teenagers on my website, www.solutiontalk.ie.

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