

Parenting Teens - Challenges during Covid-19

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Plan for the session:

Managing sleep

Appropriate expectations and limits as lockdown eases

Managing social distancing and socialising

Tips for managing anxiety and low mood

What else can parents do?

Questions



Respectful



Open



Collaborative



Compassionate



Consistent

How much sleep do we need?

Ensuring that your child gets enough sleep:

How much sleep do you really need?	
Age	Sleep Needs
Newborns (0-3 months)	14-17 hours
Infants (4-11 months)	12-15 hours
Toddlers (1-2 years)	11-14 hours
Pre-Schoolers (3-5 years)	10-13 hours
School age children (6-13 years)	9-11 hours
Teens (14-17 years)	8-10 hours
Younger Adults (18-25 years)	7-9 hours
Adults (26-64 years)	7-9 hours
Older Adults (65 years plus)	7-8 hours
<i>Source: National Sleep Foundation (2015)</i>	



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Good sleep hygiene

- Rising early is better than going to bed early for getting adolescents back on track
- No napping!
- Relaxing but structured routine leading up to bedtime
- Beds are for sleeping, not for watching tv, doing homework, eating etc
- No screens for an hour before bedtime



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What can I do when my teen won't listen?!



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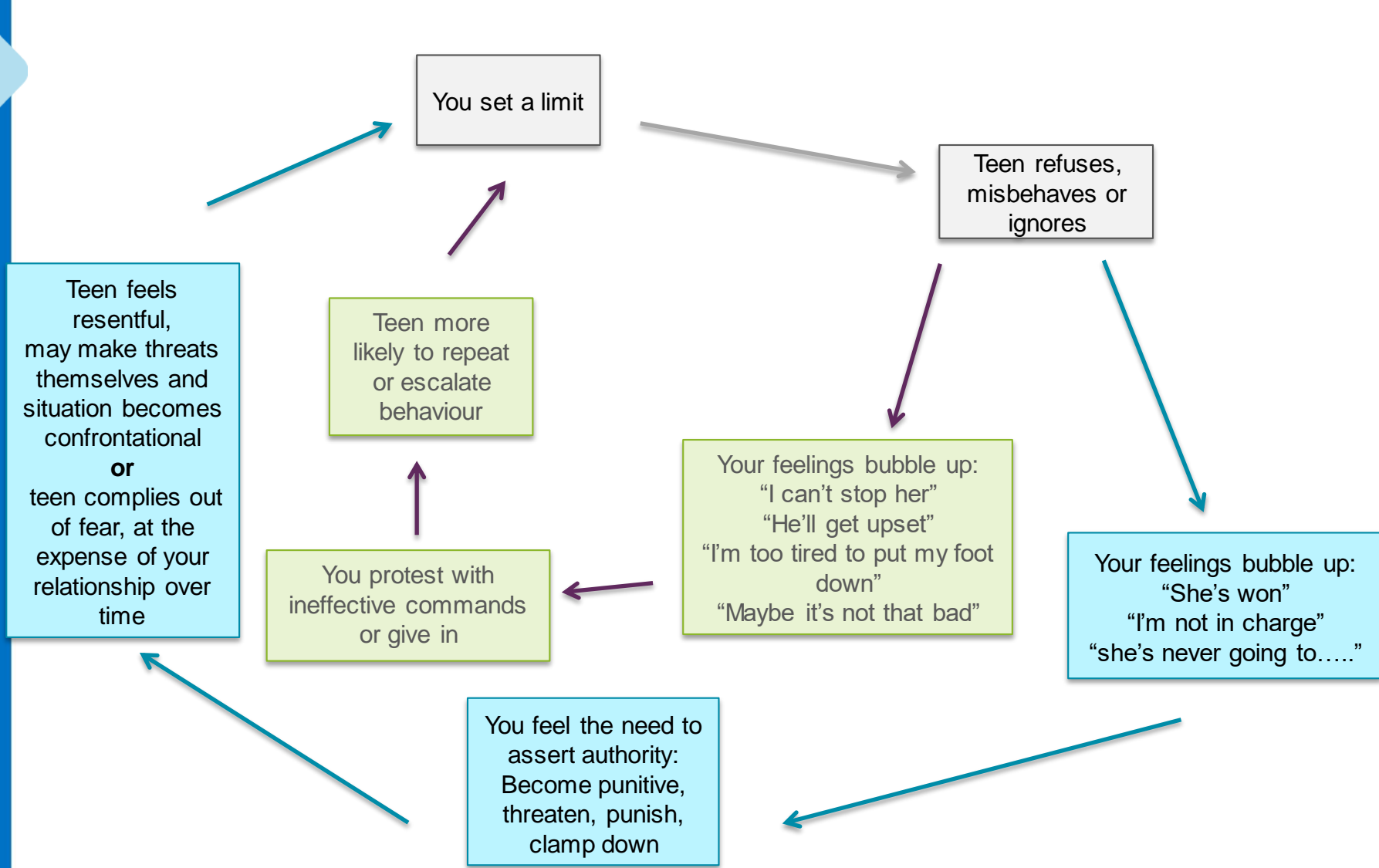


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Common parenting cycles





Authoritarian vs Permissive Parenting

- Fear of losing control – become overly strict
- Fear of conflict – become overly permissive



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Creating different cycles

- Move towards collaborative limit setting as children grow older
- Understand your 'red lines' and where you are willing to compromise
- Ask your child where they anticipate difficulties with your limits and expect them to brainstorm reasonable solutions
- Once a decision has been made, stand firm. Wobbly limits are unhelpful
- Focus on staying calm yourself
- Ensure you model the same limits yourself





My teenager refuses to see anyone or exercise...

1. Only discuss when you are both calm
2. Understand the context, ask them and LISTEN (avoid giving advice)
3. Ask if they would like things to be different, be curious about what's getting in the way
4. Show empathy for their position
5. Problem solve together and start with small steps



What does low mood look like in adolescents?

More than normal sadness or upset:

- Feelings of worthlessness and / or hopelessness
- Not getting enjoyment out of previously enjoyable activities
- Wanting to spend more time alone / social withdrawal
- Persistent thoughts about death and questioning the meaning of life (not necessarily suicidal)
- Flat affect (not feeling highs or lows as usual)
- Unable to hold onto positives / jumping to negative conclusions (self critical)



What to watch out for

- Flat feeling / little energy
- Deterioration in self – care
- Less engaged in activities
- Unexpected angry outbursts
- Getting into more trouble than usual
- Perplexing changes in attitude or behaviour
- **Consistent at home and school**
- **Ongoing over a sustained period of time**



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How can parents help?

- Spend 1 to 1 time with child/adolescent
- Listen, empathise and understand before problem solving
- Avoid nagging but do insist on some family time together
- Make time for exercise and activities with your child



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Anxious thinking

It'll be a
disaster

They will
ignore me

They will think I'm
boring and never
invite me again

Anxiety = Overestimate chance of danger
Underestimate ability to cope

I won't manage

I can't do it

I won't be able to
talk to anyone



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Anxious Behaviour



Ask lots of
questions

Outbursts

Withdrawn

Say difficult
statements

Avoidance

Aggressive

Cry



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Common parent responses to anxiety

Being drawn into giving too much reassurance

- Children and young people can become reliant on reassurance and depend on adults saying what's ok to feel safe
 - Ask questions instead: try to help your child work out whether their worry is realistic or not for themselves.

Becoming over protective / colluding with avoidance

- Stepping in to protect children from all their fears means they never get the chance to learn they can cope and find out it's not as scary as they thought
 - Instead, notice and praise sensible or brave behaviour
 - Encourage them to face their fears in small, manageable steps



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What Can Parents Do Instead?



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Take a step back from criticism

- ◆ Separate the behaviour from the child
- ◆ Problems with labelling and typecasting
- ◆ Comparisons tend to backfire



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What can we do instead?

1. Notice what *YOU* are feeling and try to stay calm
2. Try to think from your child's perspective – what might they be feeling?

“You look really upset”

“If that had happened to me, I think I would feel quite angry”



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Statements of high emotion

- It's all rubbish
- I can't do it
- I hate my life
- Nothing is good



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Managing emotive statements

Adults usually:

- **Refute** “You know that’s not right”
- **Question** “What do you mean?”
- **Persuade** “Last week you wrote a great essay...”
- **Give advice** “Why don’t you just....”



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Sitting with emotion

- That sounds very hard
- Those are difficult feelings to have
- No wonder you are frustrated
- What do you need?



QUESTIONS



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