NAVIGATING THE TEENAGE YEARS FOR PARENTS

BOUNDARIES, DIFFICULT BEHAVIOUR, CELEBRATION, COMMUNICATION
HOW TO ENCOURAGE YOUR TEENAGER - CREATIVITY, INDIVIDUATION, POTENTIAL, ENTHUSIASM

1. Teenagers get a lot of bad press but it’s a wonderful time - full of potential and creativity.
2. As their brains are forming, what they build an interest in during the teen years has the potential to stay with them into adulthood.
3. Engage in philosophical discussions - try to stay open to them and take a non-judgemental approach.
4. Ask them for their views on things.
CELEBRATION CONT...

5. Try to express an interest in what they’re into.
6. Supporting them at events.
7. Celebrate milestones, achievements, efforts and everyday moments.
8. We love our kids but we don’t always love their behaviour - try to pick out some of their wonderful qualities and comment on them and praise them.
9. We all want our children to be successful and fulfil their potential. We want them to have enough money, a comfortable house, a nice husband or wife, children but we also want them to be happy. They need the space to dream. Encourage their passions and encourage them to do the things that genuinely make them happy.
WHAT ARE GOOD BOUNDARIES? HOW TO IMPLEMENT THEM AND THE BENEFITS.

1. Clear lines that provide a setting for understanding and learning what is right and wrong, what is acceptable and unacceptable.
2. Boundaries keep young people safe - not just physically but also mentally and emotionally.
3. Set boundaries that really matter to you.
4. 95% of what kids learn is from what we model - the best way to teach your kids is to demonstrate the behaviour that you would like them to exhibit.
BOUNDARIES CONT...

5. Talking back - once you’ve set a line and given a brief explanation as to why, leave it at that. Try not to get into lengthy explanations - they will end up thinking you’re open to negotiation.

6. The best time to set boundaries... Is when things are good and calm.

7. Teenagers need some freedom, autonomy and independence - it can be helpful to sometimes find a compromise that you’re comfortable with. Ask them what they think is reasonable and come to an agreement. This helps them to feel heard and valued.

8. Backing down - it’s easy to back down when you’re tired or you just want them to be happy but you make your life harder in the long run.
9. Try to stick to boundaries as best you can but occasionally you may want to give them a little extra freedom. Just make sure you communicate that this is an exception.

10. It’s never too late to set boundaries!
DIFFICULT BEHAVIOUR

HORMONAL AND PHYSIOLOGICAL CHANGES - ANGER, SADNESS, CONFUSION, ATTITUDE, IDENTITY, SEPARATION, RISK TAKING.

1. Huge hormonal changes. Surges of testosterone and other hormones will make them more prone to anger, sadness and other strong emotions.
2. The brain loses 50% of the synaptic connections ready to create new ones. They lose half their minds! They only really keep the more basic ones i.e. walking, talking etc.
3. The prefrontal cortex - one of the most important parts of the brain. But the last to develop. Needed for attention, organisation, reasoning, and controlling impulses.
4. Teenagers have difficulty reading facial expressions - they can easily misinterpret expressions such as sadness and mild irritation, as anger. This means they easily feel ‘got at’ and understandably defensive.
5. Fortunately the brain does eventually mature!
6. The brain has a plasticity, particularly in adolescence, which means that it is always able to learn new things and adapt to different situations. This means that the teenage years are a great time to create new synaptic connections - interests last into adult life.
7. Mobile phones... VERY important part of their world. Friends are so important.
DIFFICULT BEHAVIOUR CONT... SEPARATION

1. Separation is a VERY important part of growing up.
2. It is a healthy, normal process.
3. It is important but it is hard for both the young person and the parents - on some levels there is a sense of loss.
4. Separation often happens through pushing boundaries and a lot of attitude!
5. If it feels like they are rejecting you - try not to take it personally.
6. Separation is about: forming their own views on things, finding out who they are, becoming an individual, gaining some independence and their own autonomy.
Difficult Behaviour Cont... Risk Taking

1. As mentioned, the prefrontal cortex is still developing and it is the part of the brain needed for controlling impulses. It is not completely formed until age 25.
2. Teenagers are less able to stop themselves from acting impulsively than adults.
3. When faced with potential rewards, teenagers respond very differently to adults. A teenager is much more likely to do their homework with a reward of 500nrs tonight than a reward of 2,500nrs next week.
4. This may underlie some of their risk-taking behaviour.
5. It is a normal and adaptive process.
6. It obviously carries potential for negative outcomes.... But...
7. It also allows them to be curious...
8. Allows them to explore more adult behaviour and privileges...
9. Allows them to accomplish normal developmental tasks...
10. Importantly it allows them to learn from their mistakes.
11. What they need from you: Parental influence and guidance
12. Patience and understanding
13. Reminders of consequences of their actions
14. Appropriate amounts of independence, freedom and responsibility.
COMMUNICATION

COMMORT, REASSURANCE, ACCEPTANCE, RESPECT, LOVE

1. Listening to them.
2. Hear what they are telling you without judgement - respect and acceptance of who they are.
3. Communicate that you’re proud of them from time to time - this will only encourage the things in them that you are complimenting. Due to us all having a negativity bias, teenagers, in particular, often feel like parents spend more time criticising than congratulating.
4. Maybe make some space for some quality time with them - even perhaps doing something with them that they love doing that you wouldn’t usually do.
TELL THEM YOU LOVE THEM!

HANG IN THERE!