

April 1, 2002

EAP News #96

LIVING WITH TEENS

You Can Do It, With Time And Patience

Adolescence can be a trying period for both parent and teenager. Many dilemmas – the wide variety of choices, intense pressures to succeed, and the availability of drugs and alcohol – can complicate a teenager’s life. With time and patience, you can assure that this period is rich and rewarding for your family. You can create an environment for growth.

WHAT IS ADOLESCENCE?

By the age of 13, most children are breaking away from their families. Friends appear to have more influence than parents. The young teen is taking care of him or herself more and more.

Two opposing viewpoints can start friction.

1. You may not be ready to let go. You worry that your child won’t benefit from your experience. You’re concerned about what friends may pressure your teen to try or do.
2. Your teenager sees a big world outside your home. New activities and interests may not be shared with family members. It’s time to start thinking about an individual identity. It’s time to experiment, test the limits, explore and search for oneself.

A LOVING INTERDEPENDENCE

The basis for a positive relationship with your teenager starts with an understanding of your interdependence. You may see your responsibility as caring for your child. Your child, as you see it, needs to learn that the way to becoming his or her own person is by respecting and following your guidelines.

BEING THERE

In helping to develop your teen’s judgment and sense of personal responsibility, you need to be a loving guide. This means being there at all hours to listen, to answer questions and to offer positive support.

It might help to recall what you went through as a teen. You may remember that part of the process was scary. At the same time you were feeling independent, you may have felt highly vulnerable. *Continued on page 2*

Financial Planning, Why You Need It

Would you get in the car and drive for hundreds or even thousands of miles without knowing where you were going? With no destination in mind, how will you ever know if you’ve arrived?

Many of us deal with our finances in the same unplanned way. We think, wrongly, that financial planning is only for people who have lots of money to put away. But financial planning is a map of your spending and saving regardless of your income. It’s an overview of where you are now, what your destination is and what you’ll have to do in order to reach it. By understanding the benefits of planning and establishing financial priorities, you can gain control of the money trip.

BENEFITS OF PLANNING

By knowing exactly what your current financial picture is, you are more in control and better able to plan for both immediate and long-term expenditures. Thus, your “wish list” will become an attainable goal. By taking control of your finances, you’ll know what you need and when you will need it.

Try not to assume that you will be able to retire comfortably, or that others will take care of you financially. Lay-off, illness or other catastrophes can leave you with nothing to fall back on. With planning, you’ll be less susceptible to financial ruin.

ESTABLISH PRIORITIES

Financial planning helps you establish priorities. When you determine your financial priorities, you’ll find it easier to say “no” to your own spending. You’ll be more likely to know where your money is going and less likely to spend it without thinking. More importantly, you’ll know that you’re building a brighter and more secure future by beginning to develop your financial plan today. Call HBA for a referral to a financial planner.

EAP NEWSLETTER

Characteristics of Codependency

The following is a commonly used list of characteristics of codependency. If any of these apply to you may be co-dependent

- ? My good feelings about who I am stem from being liked by you.
- ? My good feelings about who I am stem from receiving approval from you.
- ? Your struggles affect MY serenity. MY mental attention focuses on solving YOUR problems or relieving YOUR pain.
- ? My mental attention is focused on PLEASING YOU.
- ? My mental attention is focused on PROTECTING YOU.
- ? My mental attention is focused on manipulating you "to do it my way".
- ? My self-esteem is bolstered by solving YOUR problems.
- ? My self-esteem is bolstered by relieving YOUR pain.
- ? My own hobbies and interests are put aside. My time is spent sharing YOUR interests and hobbies.
- ? YOUR clothing and personal appearance are dictated by my desires as I feel that YOU ARE A REFLECTION OF ME.
- ? YOUR behavior is dictated by my desires as I feel that YOU ARE A REFLECTION OF ME.
- ? I AM NOT AWARE OF HOW I FEEL. I am aware of how YOU feel. I am not aware of what I want. I ask what YOU want. IF I AM NOT AWARE, I ASSUME.
- ? The dreams that I have for MY future are linked to YOU.
- ? My fear of rejection determines what I say or do.
- ? My fear of YOUR anger determines what I say or do.
- ? I use GIVING as a way of feeling safe in our relationship.
- ? My social circle diminishes as I involve myself with YOU.

- ? I put MY values aside in order to connect with YOU.
- ? I value YOUR opinion and way of doing things MORE THAN MY OWN.
- ? The quality of my life is in relation to the quality of yours.

Codependency is a term used to describe a kind of addiction, a relationship addiction. A codependent individual strives to protect their loved ones from the consequences of various forms of addictions (i.e., drugs, alcohol, gambling, etc.) The behavior of the codependent individual actually hinders, rather than assists in the addict's recovery. Contact HBA for further information or assistance regarding codependency issues.

Living with Teens – *Continued*

For most teenagers, setting limits helps them to feel more secure in the long run. The trick is to establish and enforce your limits with mutual understanding and respect.

SUGGESTIONS

To provide the best possible environment for your teenager's journey into adulthood consider the following:

1. An attitude of specific expectations. You should agree on reasonable rules for living together.
2. An ability to let go when the situation is not harmful. Experience can be the best teacher.
3. Positive reinforcement whenever possible. Teens, in trying to prove themselves, need all the support you can give.
4. A stable point of reference. Consistent, fair treatment and logical consequences provide the best framework for getting along.
5. Recognition of your own limits. Drug and alcohol abuse, or self-destructive behavior, can be beyond your ability to help. Do not hesitate to seek professional assistance.

You can teach responsibility if love and trust are the basis of your relationship. A positive attitude, realistic expectations, and open communication can help you succeed.

HBA is your 24-hour employee assistance program. Eligible employees and family members may call for confidential assistance with personal, legal, childcare, financial, alcohol/drug and other problems. HBA has identified a variety of community resources and self help associations. Also available is a panel of professional counselors and hospitals that have agreed to provide free or low cost counseling and treatment services to persons who have been referred by Human Behavior Associates. Dial 1-800-937-7770 for information or assistance.