

HOW TO HAVE HARD CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUR TEEN

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OVERVIEW

- PARENTING IS A CHALLENGE
- DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES AND PSYCHOLOGY OF TEEN YEARS
 - WHAT IS YOUR TEEN CAPABLE OF/NOT CAPABLE OF
 - NORMAL DEVELOPMENT/EXPECTATIONS/REACTIONS
 - TOUGH TOPICS TO CONSIDER
 - RED FLAGS, WARNING SIGNS
- STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY



PARENTING IS HARD!

- CHILDREN LEARN DIFFERENTLY
- CHILDREN EXPRESS THEMSELVES DIFFERENTLY
- CHILDREN RESPOND IN DIFFERENT WAYS
- TRUST YOUR GUT- YOU KNOW YOUR CHILD BETTER THAN ANYONE
- DON'T GET DISCOURAGED
- GET TO KNOW YOUR CHILD

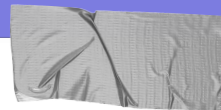
HOW DO YOU GET TO KNOW YOUR CHILD?

YOU PROBABLY ALREADY KNOW MORE THAN YOU REALIZE!

WATCH

LISTEN

PAY ATTENTION TO THE THINGS THAT ARE STRESSFUL FOR THEM AND THE THINGS THEY DO WELL.



If we are mindful of our
children's strengths
and weaknesses, we
can highlight their
strengths and provide
them opportunities for
success

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF ADOLESCENCE

EARLY ADOLESCENCE (AGES 10-13)

- **During this stage, children often start to grow more quickly and their bodies are rapidly changing**
- **These body changes can inspire curiosity and anxiety in some—especially if they do not know what to expect or what is normal**
- **This is a common time for children to begin to question their gender identity and sexuality**
- **Early adolescents have concrete, black-and-white thinking.** Things are either right or wrong, great or terrible
- **It is normal at this stage for young people to center their thinking on themselves (called "egocentrism").** As part of this, preteens and early teens are often self-conscious about their appearance and feel as though they are always being judged by their peers
- **Pre-teens feel an increased need for privacy.** They may start to explore ways of being independent from their family. In this process, they may push boundaries and may react strongly if parents or guardians reinforce limits

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF ADOLESCENCE

MIDDLE ADOLESCENCE (AGES 14-17)

- **Physical changes from puberty continue during middle adolescence.**
- **At this age, many teens become interested in romantic and sexual relationships.** They may question and explore their sexual identity—which may be stressful if they do not have support from peers, family, or community. Another typical way of exploring for teens of all genders is self-stimulation.
- **Many middle adolescents have more arguments with their parents as they struggle for more independence.** They may spend less time with family and more time with friends. They are very concerned about their appearance and peer pressure may peak at this age.
- **The brain continues to change and mature in this stage, but there are still many differences in how a normal middle adolescent thinks compared to an adult**
- **Strong emotions often continue to drive their decisions when impulses come into play**

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF ADOLESCENCE

LATE ADOLESCENCE (AGES 18-21+)

- Late adolescents generally have completed physical development and grown to their full adult height.
- They usually have more impulse control by now and **may** be better able to gauge risks and rewards accurately
- Teens entering early adulthood have a stronger sense of their own individuality now and can identify their own values (which may not match up with yours!)
- They may become more focused on the future and base decisions on their hopes and ideals.
- Friendships and romantic relationships become more stable.
- They become more emotionally and physically separated from their family. However, many reestablish an "adult" relationship with their parents, considering them more an equal from whom to ask advice and discuss mature topics with, rather than an authority figure.

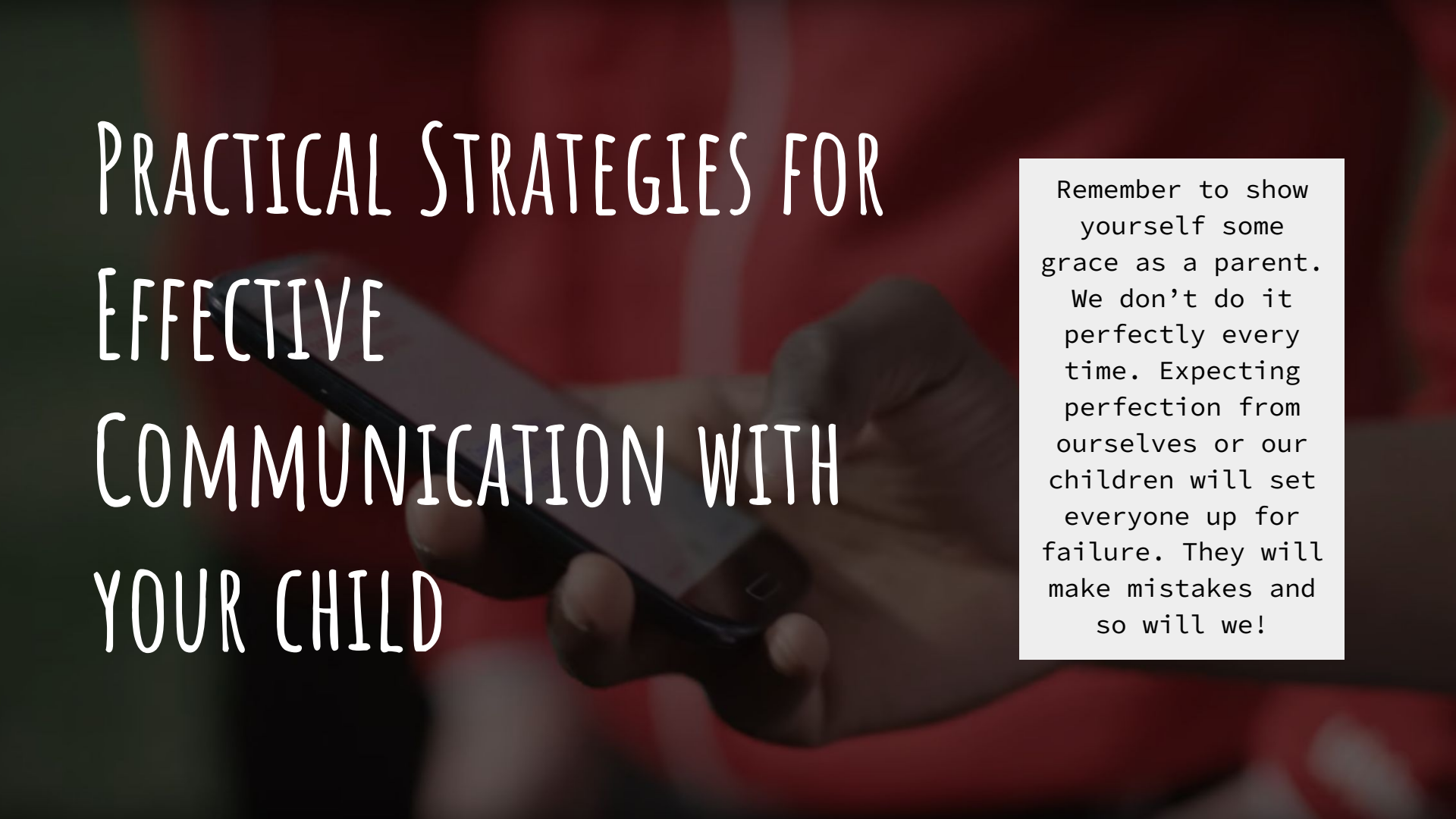
SEX
SEXUALITY
BULLYING
CELL PHONE USE (SOCIAL MEDIA, SEXTING, INTERNET)
SOCIAL DIFFICULTIES/CONFLICT WITH RELATIONSHIPS
CURFEW
BODY ODOR*
BODY MODIFICATION
MONEY
LYING
SUBSTANCE USE
SELF HARM/ SUICIDE
MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLES (DEPRESSION/ANXIETY/ETC)
EATING DISORDERS

TOUGH TOPICS



Red Flags/ Warning Signs

- CHANGES IN SLEEP PATTERNS
- DECLINE IN ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
- EXCESSIVE MOODINESS OR CRYING
- EATING HABITS THAT RESULT IN NOTICEABLE WEIGHT LOSS OR GAIN
- EXPRESSIONS OF HOPELESSNESS OR WORTHLESSNESS
- PARANOIA AND EXCESSIVE SECRECY
- SELF MUTILATION OR MENTION OF HURTING THEMSELVES
- OBSESSIVE BODY-IMAGE CONCERNS
- EXCESSIVE ISOLATION
- ABANDONMENT OF FRIENDS AND SOCIAL GROUPS
- PERSONALITY SHIFTS AND CHANGES, SUCH AS AGGRESSIVENESS AND EXCESS ANGER THAT ARE SHARPLY OUT OF CHARACTER

A hand holding a smartphone against a blurred red background. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR CHILD

Remember to show yourself some grace as a parent.

We don't do it perfectly every time. Expecting perfection from ourselves or our children will set everyone up for failure. They will make mistakes and so will we!



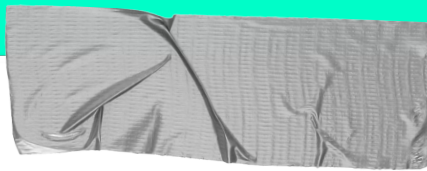
Strategies

- You get comfortable first
- Be careful not to “finger point”
- “I” language versus “you” language
- LISTEN!!!!!!
- **Don't Fix**
You may not be able to “fix” your child's problem or concern, and that’s ok. Often, just having someone to share your problems with is as helpful as finding a solution
- Anticipate change
- Start conversations early



Strategies

- **Keep conversations positive**
Celebrate success and point out strengths
- **Set clear limits and remain consistent**
- **Model behavior you desire**
Emotionally and physically
- **Honor independence and individuality**



Strategies

- Be honest and open
- Don't set your child up for failure
(for example-lying)
- Recognize their need to feel in control and utilize that
- Active consequences versus withdrawal remember the cell phone is a lifeline

YOU CAN DO THIS!! PARENTING
IS A CHALLENGE. KEEP
TALKING. KEEP LISTENING!