

PARENTING THE STRUGGLING TEEN

Parenting is hard, and there is no formula that ensures any child's path. There may be times when you're having serious problems with your teen and nothing seems to be working. You can quickly grow weary living in constant conflict and turmoil, when it seems that everything you do only adds fuel to the fire. Here are some helpful reminders as you navigate parenting a teen who's struggling.

Know that you are not alone.

Parenting troubled teens can feel isolating. Try to find other parents who have experienced similar struggles and can empathize with you and encourage you.

Your teen's behavior is not a direct reflection of your parenting.

Sometimes, in spite of great parenting, teens will make poor choices.

Keep your marriage strong and parent as a united front.

It is important for your child to see that you and your spouse are in agreement on parenting decisions. Discuss issues that you do not agree on behind closed doors until you come to resolution.

Take a break.

When you're feeling overwhelmed, step away from the situation. It may be a walk or a day away, but find a way to de-stress so you can calmly deal with the situation.

Ask a family member if they are observing something about the way you are approaching your child that may be causing them to go on the defense.

Choose your battles wisely and don't get caught up in petty arguments.

If your teen feels like talking, drop everything and talk. The opportunity may not present itself again.

Even when it's difficult, don't push your child away.

Try to spend more time together, especially doing activities that your child enjoys.

Any time the opportunity presents itself, give a hug or put your hand on your child's shoulder.

Physical touch is important. They need to know you love them unconditionally, even when they're pushing you away.

Avoid over-scheduling and make family time a priority.

Never give up on your child! Stay in the battle; it's worth it!

If you are concerned about the safety of your child or the safety of others, seek immediate help.

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