

**HRIC
HELPFUL
HINTS**

**PARENTING
SKILLS:
TIPS FOR
RAISING
TEENS**

Adolescence can be a confusing time of change for teens and parents alike. Adolescence typically describes the ages 13-19 but the physical and psychological changes that occur can start earlier, during the preteen years (9-12). Adolescence can be a time of both disorientation and discovery.

Many adolescents face tough choices regarding schoolwork, sexuality, drugs, alcohol, and social life. The shift of importance between families to peers is inevitable in these years and parents become somewhat less regarded during this time. It is a time for them to individuate from their family and set their own course. Even if it seems as though they do not want you in their life, they need you and as hard as they push you away, remember, your emotional and compassionate safety net is what helps them develop through this stage functionally.

Remember that you are the parent.

Many parents believe they need to be their teen's friend. That is the furthest from the truth. It is more important to be a clear-sighted and compassionate mentor.

Remain calm and pick your battles.

Nothing gets resolved when you're too stressed or angry to think. If your teen wants to individuate, it's better if they do it through something temporary and harmless, so save your objections for when it matters for topics like drugs, tobacco, and alcohol. Try to understand their decisions and how they are feeling.

Talk less and listen more.

Teens deserve and want to be listened to with respect. You do not have to agree or accept what they are saying, but you need to give them the opportunity to talk openly without constant lectures. Help them problem solve instead.

Respect boundaries but be vigilant.

In order to help your teen become an adult, you have to give them more privacy as they earn it. They will make mistakes which is vital to their learning. However, if you notice warning signs, address it with them and get to the heart of it. Be cognizant of what they watch and read and don't be afraid to set limits, but also allow them to build on their autonomy.

They're always watching.

Make sure you're modeling values of trust, responsibility, honesty, resilience and good-heartedness in your own life.

Make your expectations prioritized, clear, and reasonable.

When kids know your core values, have bought into the family rules and are aware of the consequences for breaking them, they're more likely to make healthier choices online and off. They will not realistically succeed each time so create fair and appropriate consequences for their behaviors. Prioritizing rules will give you and your teen a chance to practice negotiating and compromising. Here are some tips for creating consequences:

Avoid ultimatums.

Be clear and concise.

Explain your decisions.

Be reasonable.

Be flexible as they demonstrate more responsibility.

Spend time with your teen to show him or her that you care.

Teens struggle with self-confidence. If they are not being self-critical, their peers will do it for them. Don't add your voice to the negativity. Actively look for things they are doing right. Your praise shows you notice more than their faults. It will also increase their feelings of competency. Don't assume that your teen knows how much you love him or her. Keep in mind that unconditional love doesn't mean unconditional approval.

Be real.

Father/mother do not always know best. Admit your own confusion and mistakes. Apologize when appropriate. Show them that we are all a "work in progress". Do not expect perfection, just progress.

Schedule regular unplugged time to enjoy being a family.

Cook. Eat. Walk. Bike. Bowl. Whatever. The point is: Relaxing together without screens in the way is a gift with long-lasting benefits.

Lighten up!

Humor is a great de-stressor. Remind them that life is not as intense as it feels at that age.

Contact Us
(+971) 4 365 8498
(+971) 50 778 2785
hric@hricdubai.com
www.hricdubai.com



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