

Problem solving

Instead of punishing your teen for missing their curfew again and again why not help them to understand why the lateness is a problem and help them solve it.

Step 1) invite your teen to offer their point of view. "None of my friends have to be home that early"

Step 2) state your point of view "When we agree a time and you are not home I worry."

Step 3) invite them to brainstorm with you.

Step 4) write down all ideas.

*let them stay out as long as they want and parent just accepts that. (teen)

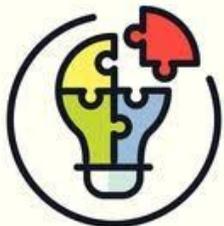
*never let the teen out again. (parent)

*move curfew to midnight. (teen)

*Move curfew to 10.30pm temporarily (parent)

Step 5) review the ideas and decide which ones helpful.

* agree 10.30pm is better. Can become permanent if teen can be on time from now on.



The way you say it

Teenagers have a great way of pressing our buttons. It is easy to respond with:

- Name calling
- Irritation
- Blaming
- Sarcasm

Although these may feel good in the moment, it just encourages your teen to use that way to communicate with you. If you yell, it will likely become a power struggle, and it teaches them that yelling is an acceptable way to communicate.

Consider carefully your tone of voice when talking to your child.



You don't have to accept every invite

Teenagers will regularly try and entice you into an argument with them. You do not have to attend every argument. You can choose to walk away and end the conversation.

Make time for talking. If you respond well to the small stuff they are more likely to talk to you about the big stuff.

Communicating with your teenager.



Inclusion Service– Outreach Team

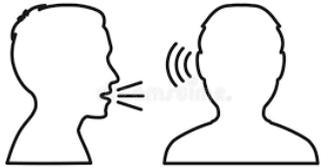


'The Amazing Everyday'

Dealing with their feelings

Teenagers can be very frustrating and dramatic. It can take a great deal of patience to communicate effectively with them.

It can be really easy to dismiss their feelings or try to step in and give advice too soon. The intentions are good– to try and make them feel better, but it can have the opposite effect.



Important to **identify feelings** and try and get them to put their thoughts/feelings into words.

- **Be curious.** “Something is making you unhappy?”
- If your child starts talking **let them talk**, don't take over. Try acknowledging their feelings with a sound “oh... mmmmm...uh...I see”
- If you can't help them in reality, try offering a **fantasy reply** e.g. “wouldn't it be great if you could clone yourself, then you could go to the beach AND work”
- **Validate their feelings** as you redirect their behaviour e.g. “I can hear how much you would rather go the

beach. The problem is that you have agreed to work and they are counting on you”

Trying to get their cooperation

Teens do not respond well to being told what to do.

“Turn the music off!” Instead you could try:

- **Describing the problem;** “I can't think or have a conversation when the music is blaring.”
- **Describe what you feel;** “It hurts my ears.”
- **Give information;** “Frequent exposure to loud noises can damage a person's hearing.”
- **Offer a choice;** “Would you rather turn the volume right down, or turn it down a bit and close the door.”
- **Say it in a word;** “The volume”
- **State your values/expectations;** “We all need to tune into each others tolerances for loud music..”
- **Do the unexpected:** Put your hand over your ears, make the motion of turning volume down, then put hands together to say thank you.
- **Put it in writing;** Music this loud is cool for a crowd, but for just me and you it is much too....loud.



Alternatives to punishment

It can feel like all you do sometimes is offer punishments to your child. Instead of falling into that negative spiral you could try the following:

Example– child talking to parent “you swore you would quit smoking and you haven't. You are so full of it.”

- **State your feeling;** “That kind of talk makes me feel angry.”
- **State your expectation;** “When I am trying to stop smoking, what I expect from my son is support– not an attack.”
- **Offer a choice;** “Name calling hurts. You can either talk to me about what you think might help me quit, or you can write it down.”
- **Show how to make amends;** “When you realise that you have offended someone, it is a good idea to apologise.”
- **Take action** (as you leave the room); “This conversation is over, I am not available for insults.”
- There is a place for punishments, but ideally they need to learn something from it. The above options give them scope to learn a different way of communicating with you.