

# Welcome to Adolescence

(Gr. 9-11)

## Help Children “Feel Good in their Own Skin” Appreciate & Value Differences

- Remind your child that being beautiful means being herself; show her that you love her exactly as she is
- Show a genuine interest in your child's ideas, his friends, and his personal values & goals
- Practice and model positive “self-talk” and respectful language about/attitudes toward others
- Help your adolescent have a realistic sense of her unique abilities and talents and encourage her to celebrate the abilities and talents of others
- Encourage your child to feel confident in his/her own values and decisions; teens with a strong sense of self have a greater capacity to resist risky or unhealthy choices
- Encourage genuine human connection with friends/family and opportunities for community with others

## What's Happening Now? (Typical)

- **Physical:** growth tends to slow down for girls, but often continues for boys during this period, capable of reproduction at the end of puberty; body looks more like an adult, but the brain is still developing into the early twenties
- **Cognitive:** broader questioning of one's self in relationship to the world, greater capacity for abstract thinking, increased capacity for collaborative problem solving
- **Social/Emotional:** increased separation from parents as early adulthood is approaching



CONTENT BY



Food for Thought

## Manage Stress & Anxiety Develop Resilience

- Encourage your teen to use talking or journaling to express emotions; remind him that emotions are transient, they don't define us
- Help your teen become aware of things that trigger her and physical signs of stress such as rapid heart rate or body tension
- Discuss healthy ways to manage emotions and stress, such as deep breathing, mindfulness practice, a hot bath, playing music, going for a walk
- Remember the acronym HEAR ME: Health (treat illness), Exercise, Avoid mood altering drugs, Rest (balanced sleep), Mastery (rewarding activity), Eating (regular meals, healthy foods)
- Help your teen reflect on his own achievements and set expectations that are realistic

TO DO

## Establish Expectations, Set Boundaries and Appropriate Consequences

- As your teen spends more time with friends, establish ground rules and expectations around when he can go out, when and how he will check in with you, when and where he can be with friends (including boyfriends/girlfriends) inside the house, peer choices, use of cars, or being in cars with others
- Help your teen establish her own boundaries by discussing what household rules should look like.
- Expect your teen to be an active participant in family activities and a contributing member of the household; connection to family is a strong protective factor against risky behavior
- Make explicit rules about no drug and alcohol use for your teen for reasons of health
- Reflect on your own relationship with substances and model the relationship you want your child to have
- Consequences should be logical and connected to the action; use discipline to guide your teen to make better choices in the future

## Balance the Need for Autonomy with the Need for Parental Supervision

- Be willing to give your teen control over decisions in areas she has demonstrated the ability to make good choices
- Know your child's friends and make a concerted effort to connect with friends' parents; talk about limits you set and your attitudes about drug and alcohol use with those parents to provide a wider “safety net”
- Remind your child that safety will always be prioritized over the desire for privacy

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