

How To Help Your Teen Through Changes

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04/29/2024



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Going through transitions in life can be tough at any developmental stage. Adults may be tempted at times to minimize the adolescent experience in comparison to the major life events that occur in adulthood. But teens are impacted and transformed in profound ways as they pass through various physical and emotional transitions. They need support for these transitions to be productive and put them on a trajectory for lifelong success.

Parents are the first line of defense for their children. When our children become teenagers, it can be difficult to remember that they still lack full capabilities to cope with every transition they go through alone. Exploring your teen's perceptions of changes that they are going through will allow you to best assist them through the transitions.

Changes in responsibilities

As children grow into teens, they will feel more burdens from parents and teachers to do and accomplish things they have not been accustomed to doing. While these changes in expectations and responsibilities seem to be fairly common, these transitions impose stress on teens and can impact aspects of their life such as performance in school and in their family/peer relationships. But the increased stress associated with greater responsibilities placed on teens does not mean that parents should remove this stress by simply removing the added

responsibility. Adolescents can thrive on responsibility if they feel they are contributing to the needs of the family and their future wellbeing.

Meeting teens where they are in their understanding and capabilities will help them in their willingness to take on more responsibilities – if they understand the reasons behind their parents' motives. As parents exercise the principles of showing appreciation and admiration for their teen and keep conversation youth-centered, the worries regarding changes in expectations are likely to decrease and the parent-child relationship can be strengthened.

Changes in the body

While today's pop culture primarily focuses on puberty's effect on girls' self-esteem, we should keep in mind that though girls do struggle in this area, boys do as well. While girls' self-esteem is correlated with their appearance, boys' self-esteem is tied to being less satisfied with their sexual organs than girls. Hormones also impact both boys and girls as their bodies change, causing a host of emotional turmoil. The hormones that are supposed to be regulating emotions and those that should regulate logic are rarely in sync during this time, so teens may have a harder time controlling their emotions.

Understanding the causes of puberty can help us navigate not only how to act and react around our pubescent teenagers, but also how to teach them about what is going on in their bodies. Knowledge is power. As we consider the needs of our teens we can provide a leg-up on helping our children understand why they feel and act the way they do. Doing this can reduce some of the anxiety that comes with this transition and can help our teens feel more in control of their thoughts and actions.

Change in the future

In small doses, anxiety and stress can be for our benefit; they can help us move from one activity to the next or get things done. However, when in larger, more chronic doses, anxiety and stress can actually cause problems. Change is inevitable. So, worries about future change can be especially distressing to teens if they do not have the skills to handle their anxieties. If future events are not discussed in a healthy manner by teens, they may experience higher and more chronic levels of stress which can cause a number of long-term problems such as depression and anxiety, weight gain or loss, or even digestive issues.

As parents, we can help teens prepare for the future by taking time to understand what about the future might worry them. Asking questions to find out about which

aspects of the future are worrisome and about the goals that our teens have for the future can help our children feel understood. Teens may not always explicitly state what they are worried or anxious about. However, by asking questions and providing the space for teens to explore and discuss their thoughts, we and our teenagers can come up with solutions to alleviate stress that may come from future change.

Conclusion

The journey through adolescence presents unique challenges that can shape young people's development and well-being. These transitions are not only essential for their growth but also have a profound impact on their emotional, psychological, and social lives. As teens navigate these sometimes tumultuous waters, the support they receive plays a pivotal role in their ability to cope and thrive. By acknowledging their changing responsibilities, helping them understand their changing bodies, and addressing their anxieties about the future, parents can play a pivotal role in enhancing our children's coping capacities. In doing so, we contribute not only to our teen's immediate well-being but also to their long-term development as resilient and empowered individuals ready to embrace the challenges of adulthood.