

Parent-Adolescent Relationship – Connection and Closeness

Healthy, open relationships are developed and sustained in many ways. All relationships take time and effort and rely on being responsive, supportive and accepting of each other.

Quality relationships are built on time spent together, good communication and trust. Adolescence is often a time of testing and trying new things, spending less time with parents and a greater need for personal independence. Given the nature of adolescence, it is often challenging to bring all these elements of a “good relationship” together. All relationships take time and effort and the parent-adolescent relationship is no different.

Time spent with your adolescent is an opportunity for developing closeness and communicating that they are deserving of your time. This ‘time’ doesn’t necessarily need to be planned – in fact, a lot of time spent with adolescents is spontaneous and casual in nature. Make the most of moments when your adolescent approaches you and wants to talk, and give them your full attention.

Taking time to organize specific parent-adolescent time together is also important. This may include planning special days or outings and celebrating significant events. Take a genuine interest in your adolescent’s interests and share your interests and experiences with them.

Building parent-adolescent closeness is a process of developing awareness and respect for each other’s views. It is sometimes helpful to put yourself in your adolescent’s shoes to help understand and appreciate their point of view, their feelings or their behaviour in certain situations. Attempt to understand your adolescent’s actions as achieving something for themselves, rather than acting out against you.

Trust generally underpins the quality of the parent-adolescent relationship. Create trust through being available to listen, discuss issues, to be non-judgmental and offer advice when asked. Be prepared for disappointments along the way – it is natural for young people to test boundaries and breach trust from time to time. What is more important is that these issues are talked about

Connecting and building closeness in a relationship is a lifelong process – it is important to put time and effort into this process in order for your relationship to grow.

Kingston Youth Services are running Parenting Programs in 2008 – please call 1300 36 94 36 and speak to Rebecca for more information