

Positive conflict with your adolescent can be healthy and help relationships grow

Adolescence can be thought of as a journey from childhood into adulthood. Hormones, peer pressure, the struggle for independence and an emerging identity can be chaotic in the mind of adolescent. It is this change in relationship that parents can grapple with especially; how much independence to allow; what discipline is going to be effective and how to communicate with offspring that now challenge parental creativity, patience and courage.

Adolescents developing into their own person can mean there is increased conflict. Conflict is a normal part of every relationship but sometimes it is more intense because of developmental change. Conflict is usually expressed as a struggle between at least two people in this case, parent, teen and siblings, who express different concerns. Generally one party interferes [ie. the parent] in the other party achieving their goals [going to a nightclub on a school night].

There are positive conflict strategies to assist in effective problem solving and ways to ensure your teen becomes responsibly in charge of themselves and reasonably responsive to you. Adolescents often shift away from their parent's beliefs and questions can become deeper and more complex than they were in childhood. This can difficult process learning to respond to your adolescent and many parents focus on trying to control what their child thinks hoping that will control what the adolescent does. This is not the case.

Involving adolescence in establishing family rules and boundaries about appropriate behaviour and consequences can end arguments about rules and punishments. In addition, family rules can provide a sense of stability to an adolescent who is struggling to make sense of their relationships, roles and their own person.

Not only is your adolescent going though emotional changes but physical changes too, it can be uncomfortable and confusing and difficult to put pieces together.

Some positive tips for conflict resolution are:

- Be respectful, we are all humans going though our own life, if you are they are more likely to do so.
- Be willing to listen to points of view, everyone has one.
- Stay calm, good behaviour is a good model for your teen
- Don't blame it is not productive
- Stick to the issue, return to the issue ask questions like why, how come, what does that mean to you.

Kingston Youth Services are running parenting programs in 2008. For more information please call Rebecca on 1300 369 436.