

Proactive problem solving with your adolescent can be healthy and help relationships grow

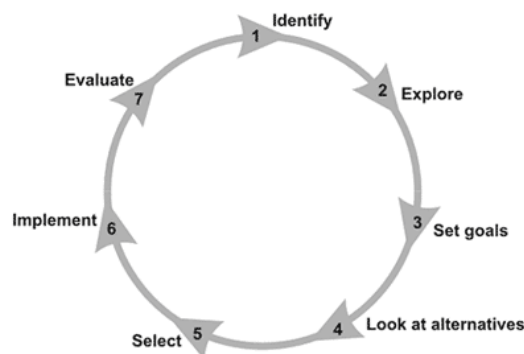
Problem solving is a skill and a process. You can learn the steps and begun to implement the process problem solving at home. For problem solving to be effective, parents need to take a proactive stance in developing positive relationships with their off-spring and communicating that they are available, respectful and open to communication.

Areas crucial to developing a good foundation for the parent–adolescent relationship are those that involve connection, active participation and psychological autonomy. When adolescences have a problem, it is important that parents respond to it less with behavioural control and more with psychology understanding. Adolescence are likely to act out about living up to certain standards, however when expectations are demanding but fair the adolescent will flourish.

Spending recreational time with your adolescent can assist in getting to know them, their friends and reduces amount of free time spent without supervision. So when problems arise there is a rapport between parent and child and the problem solving process can be implemented. Be respectful when discussing any areas of disagreement and be willing to listen. Try not to blame and by staying calm you are more likely to focus on the issue. Sometimes using a whole family approach to problem solving can be a great way to brainstorm ideas and gather different opinions.

A few questions to begin the problem solving process:

- **Identify exactly what the problem is;** “What is going on?” “How does this affect the person?”, “Who is involved?”, “Where is this occurring, in a particular location or activity?” and “Why does this seem to be happening, are there any obvious reasons?”.
- **Brainstorm possible solutions;** “What can be done?”, “Who can we talk to about this?”, “How can we work together to change the circumstances?”
- **Think about the consequences of each possible solution;** If we choose this solution what could be the possible consequences?”
- **Choose one idea and follow it through**
- **Follow up did the idea work?** If yes congratulate yourself, if not then try another idea.



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