



#LIBERTYSTRONG

Newsletter from your Clinical Team

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How are we doing and what would you like to see in the Clinical Newsletter?

We want to connect with you! Please let Angie Huber know what you would like to see in the newsletter. We will do our best to meet your request. Send any requests to aahuber@fcps.edu.

Motivating Your Teenager

by: Angie Huber, School Social Worker Liberty MS



How do you motivate your teenager? Some may think that they are lazy and unmotivated due to increased amounts of time sleeping and the desires to hangout on social media or to play video games. When the teen years approach, inspiring and motivating your teenager can be more and more challenging! I know I personally get told “you don’t know” with numerous different topics. Somehow, we don’t know anything anymore. So frustrating! On the other hand, teens can be fun and full of life, as they develop into “their own person”. They are figuring out who they are and feeling the need to exert their opinions. It can be fun to watch them grow and develop! Part of their behaviors are attributed to their strong desires to be treated like an adult. They are learning skills and have more expectations. Often, they will question why they need to do something because they do not see the benefit for them in the long run. So, how do we become successful in inspiring and motivating them in the process without them displaying boredom or indifference? Keep these strategies in mind:

WHAT IS IN IT FOR ME.... Teens want to feel like what they are doing is important, and that they are being valued. Does it matter? If they feel it matters, motivation is more likely. Keep in mind, unfortunately, they do not always value a task in “making their parent’s life easier”. It is a good time for them to get their mind wrapped around the statement “*You have to do what you have to do so you can do what you want to do.*”. Teens can understand this statement more and more in their stage of development because they realize that they need some skills to reach some goals (i.e. do well in classes to get accepted to college, take driving lessons to get driver’s license). Strategies: **Avoid nagging, ongoing criticism and complaining because your teen will quickly tune you out. Find a way to use humor in addressing concerns or needs, such as setting up competition or serving the food on the table when your teen did not set the table before dinner. You could also teach them how to negotiate by using collateral (i.e. if I do this for you, you will do this for me).**

LET THEM HAVE A SAY... Approach your teenager with a flexible compromising position/tone. For example, let your teenager have a say on chores, possibly when and how they do them. If they cook a meal, let them decide what to cook and what to buy. Teach them how to problem solve together by listening to each other’s goals, and then coming up with a plan that is agreeable for both.

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Two things to make your day better
1. Do not watch the news.
2. Stay off the bathroom scales.

Good Communication: Some Fundamentals

by: Joanna Wheeler School Psychologist Liberty MS



Effective communication skills have been linked to improved self-efficacy, better empathy and compassion, and mental well-being. However, developing effective communication skills is sometimes difficult. In general, the more parents establish a pattern of talking with their children early on, the easier communication may be over time. Yet, sometimes students and parents reach a period where communication may seem difficult. When communication gets difficult try the following:

- Explain why you are reaching out to your child. Let them know that you care about them, and you want to feel more connected to them. Sometimes, open communication about feelings opens the door to better communication.
- Set times to routinely talk with your student. Taking opportunity to talk frequently in an uninterrupted manner may lead to better communication over time via practice.
- Be strategic about the time and place you set aside for communication. Some places and times are just better than others for communication. For example, driving in the car might be a good time to establish conversation. Also, don't be discouraged, teenagers don't always gush information but tend to share information bit by bit.
- Remember that a key component for effective communication is listening. As a parent, sometimes, you may need to be prepared not to talk and use the power of the "pause". Using a longer pause after asking a question may help bring about a response. However, at first, this technique can be uncomfortable given that our preference might be to fill the awkward silence.

THE MORE SENTENCES YOU COMPLETE, THE HIGHER YOUR SCORE! THE IDEA IS TO BLOCK THE OTHER GUY'S THOUGHTS AND EXPRESS YOUR OWN! THAT'S HOW YOU WIN!



Two Books about Communication

The following communication skills are from two excellent books that I recommend. *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High*, focuses on how to have good communication with anyone, and *How to Talk So Teens Will Listen and Listen So Teens Will Talk*, specifically targets communication with your teenager. If you have time, check these books out!

Crucial Conversations

- Crucial Conversations* indicates that the first consideration to make when having an important conversation is to ask yourself what you really want from the conversation and what's a stake.
- Secondly, ask yourself whether the conversation is defensive. If defensiveness occurs, it may be best to apologize, and ask questions regarding the other person's views.
- Focus on defining what made you feel a certain way. Consider emotions and take time to choose the best way to respond.
- Share the conclusions you have drawn from the conversation.
- Think about the other person and make sure that you understand each other. Look for common ground.
- Come up with a game plan based on what was discussed.

In the book, *How to Talk So Teens Will Listen and Listen So Teens Will Talk*, the author discusses a lot of conversational strategies. Three of my favorites are listed below.

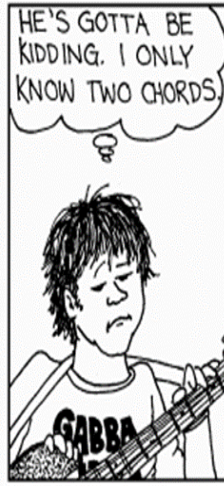
How to Talk So Teens Will Listen and Listen So Teens Will Talk

Instead of dismissing feelings, identify thoughts and feelings. An example of a parent identifying feelings would be the following.

Student "I don't know if I want to go to college."

Parent "Sounds like you are wondering if college is right for you."

Instead of logic and explanations, give in fantasy what you can't give in reality.



Give in Fantasy What You Can't Give in Reality



By giving his daughter what she wants in fantasy, Dad makes it a little easier for her to accept reality.

Instead of going against your better judgment, accept feelings as you redirect unacceptable behavior.

Student "Why do I always have to be the one to take out the garbage?"

Parent "It's not your favorite activity. Tomorrow let's talk about rotating chores. Right now I need your help."



Fun Activities to Promote Communication

Talk about famous pairs. For instance, peanut butter and jelly, Romeo and Juliet, Superman and Lois Lane, etc.

Ask your student to name 10 things they consider to be the best parts of their school.

Talk about three things you consider mysterious about yourself. (Take turns.)

Please Check out the Following Resources!!!

Miscommunication

<https://youtu.be/gCfzeONu3Mo>

How to be a Good Listener

<https://youtu.be/-BdbiZcNBXg>

How to Talk So Teens Will Listen and Listen So Teens Will Talk- Adele Faber, Elaine Mazlish (Book)

Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High- Al Switzler, Joseph Grenny, and Ron McMillan (Book)



LET THEM LEARN FROM FAILURE... Try not save your teen from failure. It is often in failure that we learn our biggest lessons. Your teen needs to learn to manage failure and to develop motivation and perseverance to keep going. Listen to your teen and ask them questions to help them to look at their failure and how they feel about it. What might they do differently next time? Try not to tell them what they will do differently but instead help them figure it out on their own.

HELP THEM TO REMEMBER... Teens are actually hardwired to be likely to forget more than they did before. This is due to their brains changing and trying to recall their new tasks and new expectations. They may need help in recalling and organizing but try to avoid nagging as this is a deterrent to motivation. Try these strategies instead: charts, visual reminders, rosters, timetables, apps. I use a family calendar app for my family. They can easily refer to it in their own time independently and load things on it when needed.

MAKE IT ACHIEVABLE... Sometimes your teen may need help with a task. They do not want to fail but might not know how to start. Maybe they need some help with planning? Make sure they have figured out a good strategy. You could ask them if they need suggestions, but only give what they ask and have them ask for more. They may need to break it up into smaller tasks with small rewards in between.

PROVIDE INCENTIVES.... Some teens lack motivation and/or do not have a natural ability to complete certain tasks, such as for example academic or athletic expectations. **Try to start conversations with complements and some type of praise, especially when your teen is questioning their ability. Let them know what you appreciate.** You might need to provide an extra incentive to help with motivation in valuing continuing to try and persevere. Keep in mind that it is also helpful to try to figure out your teenager's motivators, such as **encouraging words, gifts, quality time, physical affection, or some other form of affirmation?** **Ask your teen what they would like to hear and say it. You will then know what is important to your teen!!** Other possible motivators could be compliments, using humor, making deals, motivating through involvement, joint problem solving and consistent follow through.

MAKE IT FUN... Show interest and value what your teen enjoys. It may not be what you enjoy. Encourage your teen to do activities that they enjoy and try to do the activities with them if possible. Boys tend to respond to anything competitive. Any type of technology is often valuable in getting motivation from teens these days.

Resources: Chris Hudson, Youth Specialist; *Positive Discipline for Teenagers* by Jane Nelson and Lyon Lott

HOPE CHATS!!



Your students will have the opportunity to participate in HOPE CHATS. This will be a time when the students can send in questions or concerns that they would like to have addressed by a multicultural and multiprofessional team. Students will be given an opportunity to send in topics or questions each week. We will be available to answer questions during that time or individually at a different time, if they would prefer. If you would like your student to send questions or concerns, please send them to the following link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc_4bQMb9gOPrVQfbCo9RqVDSml1knspZ11cX7jI93uj7W8XQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

Angie Huber, School Social Worker, will reach out to you to set up a time to chat.

More resources that you may find helpful!

FCPS Parent Resource Center- (You can sign up for email notifications or trainings below by hovering over the link and hitting Ctrl and then click)

They are offering many virtual trainings, such as:

Encouraging Positive Behaviors at Home Series

- **10/22/20: Challenging Behaviors: Prevention Strategies and Teaching Self-Control**

Parents/guardians will review strategies and methods to teach self-control strategies and general tips on how to proactively prevent challenging behaviors

Thursday October 22, 2020, 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. and 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

[Register for Challenging Behaviors: Prevention Strategies and Teaching Self-Control](#)

Dyslexia Awareness Month: A Webinar for Families

Join the FCPS Dyslexia Specialist, Carrie Leestma for an Update on FCPS Resources.

Wednesday, October 28, 2020 10 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

[Register for Dyslexia Awareness Month: A Webinar for Families](#)

Launching Your Adolescent into Adulthood

A recent survey of young adults in the US reported that nearly 45% of young adults between the ages of 18 and 34 now live with their parents - even though they are employed.

This session will provide:

- 10 Tips to help launch your young adult successfully into adulthood

Strategies to teach your child "soft" employment, money management and communication/self-advocacy skills.

Presented by Dr. Amy Fortney Parks, LPC, ACS, Owner of The Wise Family Counseling & Assessment Services in Alexandria and Arlington

Friday, October 30, 2020 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

[Register for: Launching Your Adolescent into Adulthood](#)

You can't calm the storm...
so stop trying. What you can
do is calm yourself.
The storm will pass.

— Timber Hawkeye

RAISE YOUR
HAND IF YOU THINK
THE WHOLE
WORLD HAS GONE CRAZY

For more social-emotional resources and lessons please visit the LS Clinical Team's website (see the link below- works best in Google Chrome):

<https://sites.google.com/view/liberty-ms-clinical-team/mental-wellness-topics>

Sometimes
the easiest way to
solve a problem is
to stop participating
in the problem.

QUOTUNG.COM

"Everyone you meet is fighting a battle you know nothing about. Be kind. Always." ~ Robin Williams (1951-2014)



Things you can control:

1. Your beliefs
2. Your attitude
3. Your thoughts
4. Your perspective
5. How honest you are
6. Who your friends are
7. What books you read
8. How often you exercise
9. The type of food you eat
10. How many risks you take
11. How you interpret situations
12. How kind you are to others
13. How kind you are to yourself
14. How often you say "I love you"
15. How often you say "thank you"
16. How you express your feelings
17. Whether or not you ask for help
18. How often you practice gratitude
19. How many times you smile today
20. The amount of effort you put forth
21. How you spend/invest your money
22. How much time you spend worrying
23. How often you think about your past
24. Whether or not you judge other people
25. Whether or not you try again after a setback
26. How much you appreciate the things you have

BY RUBEN CHAVEZ // THINKGROWPROSPER

The Four Steps for Effective Follow-Through



When parenting, follow through needs to be consistent and thoughtful. Start by having a friendly discussion with your teen to gather information about what is happening with the present problem. (Listen first and then share your thoughts.)

Brainstorm solutions with your teen. (Use your humor and throw in some exaggerations.)

Find a solution you both like and can agree to may take some negotiating because your favorite solution may be different from your teen's favorite.

Agree on a date and time deadline.

Understand teens well enough to know that the deadline probably won't be met and be prepared to simply follow through on the agreement by kindly and firmly holding your teen accountable. You may need to write a simple visible contract when negotiating so there is no miscommunication.

Four Traps That Defeat Follow-Through

1. Believing that teens think the way you think and have the same priorities you have.
2. Getting into judgments and criticism instead of sticking to the issue.
3. Not getting agreements in advance that include a specific time deadline.
4. Not respecting each other's opinions.
5. Giving in to your teen when you know this is not acceptable.

Four Hints for Effective Follow-Through

1. Keep comments simple, concise, and friendly. ("I notice you didn't do your task. Would you please do that now?")
2. In response to objections, ask, "What was our agreement?"
3. In response to further objections, shut your mouth and use nonverbal communication. (Point to your watch after every argument. Smile knowingly. Give a hug and point to your watch again.) It helps to understand the concept of "less is more." The less you say the more effective you will be. The more you say, the more ammunition you give your kids for an argument—which they will win every time.
4. When your teen concedes (sometimes with great annoyance), say, "Thank you for keeping our agreement."

Consistent follow through can be hard but it helps to use fewer words and less nagging. You will spend more time nagging than you will if you set up effective follow through and do it consistently. Writing your agreements down in a contract format can be very effective. Don't forget to use humor when you can to remind and to encourage follow through.

Positive Discipline for Teenagers by Jane Nelson and Lyon Lott

See Resources from School Social Worker on Liberty MS Website:

<https://libertyms.fcps.edu/social-work-resources>

Counseling is often a good approach to help people to work through struggles that they are having in their life. Many feel comfortable with the idea of counseling and many do not feel comfortable. One of the benefits of counseling is that it can help you to find solutions or to problem solve more quickly than without it. However, some still may not be comfortable and to add to the challenges of becoming comfortable with the idea of counseling, during COVID, it is difficult to find counselors who are not meeting virtually, as some do not feel comfortable with meeting virtually. A good alternative is to use journaling. Here are some journal prompts for anxiety:

JOURNAL PROMPTS FOR ANXIETY



1. Write about 3 things that always make you smile.
2. Describe your biggest accomplishment.
3. Where do you feel the safest and what are the reasons why you feel safe?
4. What are your talents and what are you doing to grow those talents?
5. What brings you peace and why?
6. Write down your reoccurring negative thoughts and the reasons why they keep repeating.
7. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being the worst and 10 being the best) what would you say your anxiety is right now and why.
8. Write about three of the best lessons you have learned from your anxiety.
9. What do you feel the most anxious about and why?
10. What is the worst and "most realistic" scenario that is likely to play out and what is your evidence?
11. Write three positive things that happened to you today in as much detail as you can.
12. Make two lists of everything you are worried about. Write as many things as you can big or small. In the first list, put the ones you control and in the 2nd list the ones you do not control.
13. What have you learned today and is your life better because of this new knowledge?
14. Make a list of your favorite compliments that you have received from others.

Try these activities for your student!

⇒ Liberty Middle School Afterschool Program

<https://libertyms.fcps.edu/activities/after-school-program>

⇒ Fairfax County Park Authority Programs

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes>

Resources:

If you or someone you care about is in crisis, please call [911](tel:911) or access one of the mental health resources below:

- ⇒ **Reach out to a trusted adult (parent, counselor, teacher, coach, etc.); <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/talk>**
- ⇒ **Text NEEDHELP to 85511 for the [Crisis Link](https://www.needhelp.org/) Hotline at or call them at 703-527-4077**
- ⇒ **Chat online with a specialist at [CrisisChat.org](https://www.crisischat.org/) or [ImAlive.org](https://www.imalive.org/)**
- ⇒ **Call an emergency mental health center at 703 573-5679 (Merrifield Center), 703-536-2000 (Dominion Hospital), or 703-289-7560 (INOVA emergency services)**
- ⇒ **CR2 – 844-627-4747**
- ⇒ **Go to the nearest emergency room at your local hospital**

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