

HOW TO GET THROUGH

DOES IT SOMETIMES SEEM LIKE YOUR CHILD IS LOST IN ANOTHER WORLD? TEENS AND TWEENS OFTEN ARE. HERE'S WHY - AND WHAT YOU CAN DO TO CONNECT.

Panel 1: ...BLAH...BLAH...BLAH... ARE YOU LISTENING?...
MOM'S MAD AGAIN ...WHATEVER...SCHOOL'S BEEN SO ROUGH...

Panel 2: I'M SO WORRIED BUT I CAN'T SEEM TO GET THROUGH TO THEM. THEY NEED TO THINK ABOUT THEIR FUTURE!

Panel 3: I FEEL LIKE MY FRIENDS ARE IGNORING ME. ...UGH, NOW THEY'RE HANGING OUT WITHOUT ME AND POSTING THE PICTURES ONLINE!
...I HATE MY CLOTHES - EVERYONE ELSE LOOKS AMAZING AND I STILL DRESS LIKE THIS...
I'M SO GONNA FLUNK MY MATH TEST TOMORROW BUT IT'S HARD TO STUDY WITH EVERYTHING ELSE ON MY MIND.

TEENS AND TWEENS FACE A LOT OF PRESSURE - FROM PARENTS, PEERS, SCHOOL, AND EVERYWHERE ELSE.

KIDS THIS AGE ARE:

- DEVELOPING THEIR IDENTITIES
- DISCOVERING THEIR SEXUALITY
- FACING COMPETING PRIORITIES
- TRYING TO MEET PARENTS' AND TEACHERS' EXPECTATIONS
- MAKING BIG DECISIONS ABOUT THEIR FUTURE
- COMPARING THEMSELVES TO OTHERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

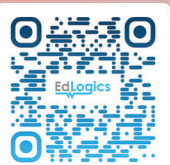
... ALL WHILE THEIR BODIES ARE CHANGING AND THEIR BRAINS ARE STILL DEVELOPING.

WARNING SIGNS OF PROBLEMS

- FREQUENT AND INTENSE MOOD SWINGS
- RISKY BEHAVIOR
- CHANGES IN EATING HABITS
- WITHDRAWING FROM FRIENDS
- POOR GRADES
- INCREASED IRRITABILITY
- SLEEPING TOO MUCH OR TOO LITTLE
- CUTTING OR OTHERWISE HURTING THEMSELVES

WHAT TO DO: 9 TIPS

- 1. START THE CONVERSATION.**
LOOK FOR TIMES TO TALK ONE-ON-ONE WHEN YOUR CHILD ISN'T BUSY DOING SOMETHING ELSE, LIKE WHEN YOU'RE IN THE CAR. IT HELPS IF THEY DON'T HAVE TO MAKE EYE CONTACT.
- 2. STATE THE FACTS.**
AVOID GIVING AN OPINION. BE SPECIFIC ABOUT WHAT YOU'VE OBSERVED: "I NOTICED YOU'VE FAILED YOUR LAST TWO MATH TESTS AND I REMEMBER HOW YOU USED TO LOVE MATH."
- 3. STAY CALM.**
USE YOUR NORMAL VOICE. DON'T LET YOUR CONCERN COME OFF AS ANGER OR FEAR - IT CAN MAKE THEM FEEL DEFENSIVE.
- 4. STICK TO THE PRESENT.**
DON'T DIG UP PAST MISTAKES OR LECTURE THEM ABOUT HOW THEIR ACTIONS NOW MAY AFFECT THEIR FUTURE. KIDS' BRAINS AREN'T DEVELOPED ENOUGH TO THINK THROUGH LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES.
- 5. ASK WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP.**
IT'S IMPORTANT TO ASK FIRST RATHER THAN SIMPLY ANNOUNCE WHAT YOU PLAN TO DO - EVEN IF YOU'VE THOUGHT LONG AND HARD ABOUT IT. KIDS WANT MORE INDEPENDENCE AS THEY GROW UP, NOT LESS.
- 6. SUGGEST IDEAS.**
IF THEY'RE NOT SURE WHAT TO DO, TRY SAYING SOMETHING LIKE "I HAVE SOME IDEAS THAT MIGHT HELP - WOULD YOU LIKE TO HEAR THEM?" IT WILL MAKE THEM FEEL MORE IN CONTROL.
- 7. ASK FOR HELP.**
TREAT MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES THE SAME WAY YOU TREAT PHYSICAL PROBLEMS: SEE A DOCTOR. IF YOUR CHILD HAS THOUGHTS OF HURTING THEMSELVES, CALL 911 OR GO TO YOUR NEAREST EMERGENCY ROOM.
- 8. BE A GOOD ROLE MODEL.**
SHOW YOUR CHILD IT'S OK TO TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS. LET THEM SEE HOW YOU TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, TOO. YOU CAN EVEN BRING UP TIMES WHEN YOU'VE STRUGGLED WITH THE PROBLEMS THEY'RE FACING RIGHT NOW.
- 9. FIND SUPPORT.**
YOU AND YOUR CHILD ARE NOT ALONE. ONE IN FIVE KIDS HAS A MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM. REACH OUT TO YOUR CHILD'S DOCTOR, A MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL, OR LOCAL OR ONLINE GROUPS.



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