



One-minute guide

How to handle difficult behaviour in Older Children

Many parents find their teenager's behaviour challenging. Teenagers' behaviour can be baffling, stressful, hurtful and often worrying. But in most cases it does not mean there is anything more serious going on than the natural process of becoming an adult.

Many of the common behaviour issues that parents find hard are an essential part of puberty and growing up. Surges of hormones, combined with body changes, struggling to find an identity, pressures from friends and a developing sense of independence, mean the teenage years are a confusing time for your child. It can mean they, for example, become aloof, want more time alone or with friends, feel misunderstood, reject your attempts to talk or show affection, or appear sullen and moody

Your feelings about your teen's behaviour

Teenagers can challenge even the calmest of parents. When you have further pressures in your life, such as other children, work, relationships, family commitments or illness, it can feel as though your teenager is going to push you over the edge.

Try to step back from the situation, and remember they have physiological reasons for behaving in ways that can be difficult to live with. They're probably not enjoying it either. You're the adult, and it is your responsibility to guide them through the difficult times. Do not expect to enjoy your time with them all of the time and remember to look after yourself.

How do I cope with the stress?

Parenting a teenager can be exhausting, so it's important to look after yourself, too. Family Lives, a charity dedicated to helping families, offers the following advice:

- make sure you set aside time for yourself
- give yourself permission to relax or even treat yourself occasionally
- talk about your concerns to your partner or friends, or join a support group or forum
- learn techniques for coping with low mood sadness and depression or anxiety. If you're concerned that you're depressed, anxious or stressed, talk to a GP

How should I act with my teenager?

Teenagers can be largely emotional rather than logical because of their hormones. It is not necessarily pleasant for them, and it can even feel frightening. Although it might be hard for you, they need you to maintain a calm consistent presence.



SURREY

