

Navigating Adolescence: Strategies to Support Your Teen's Emotional Needs

Parents will learn strategies to better develop resilience and positive self-esteem in their teen, and help them navigate friendships and social media.



Care Plus in Rutherford Schools

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Objectives

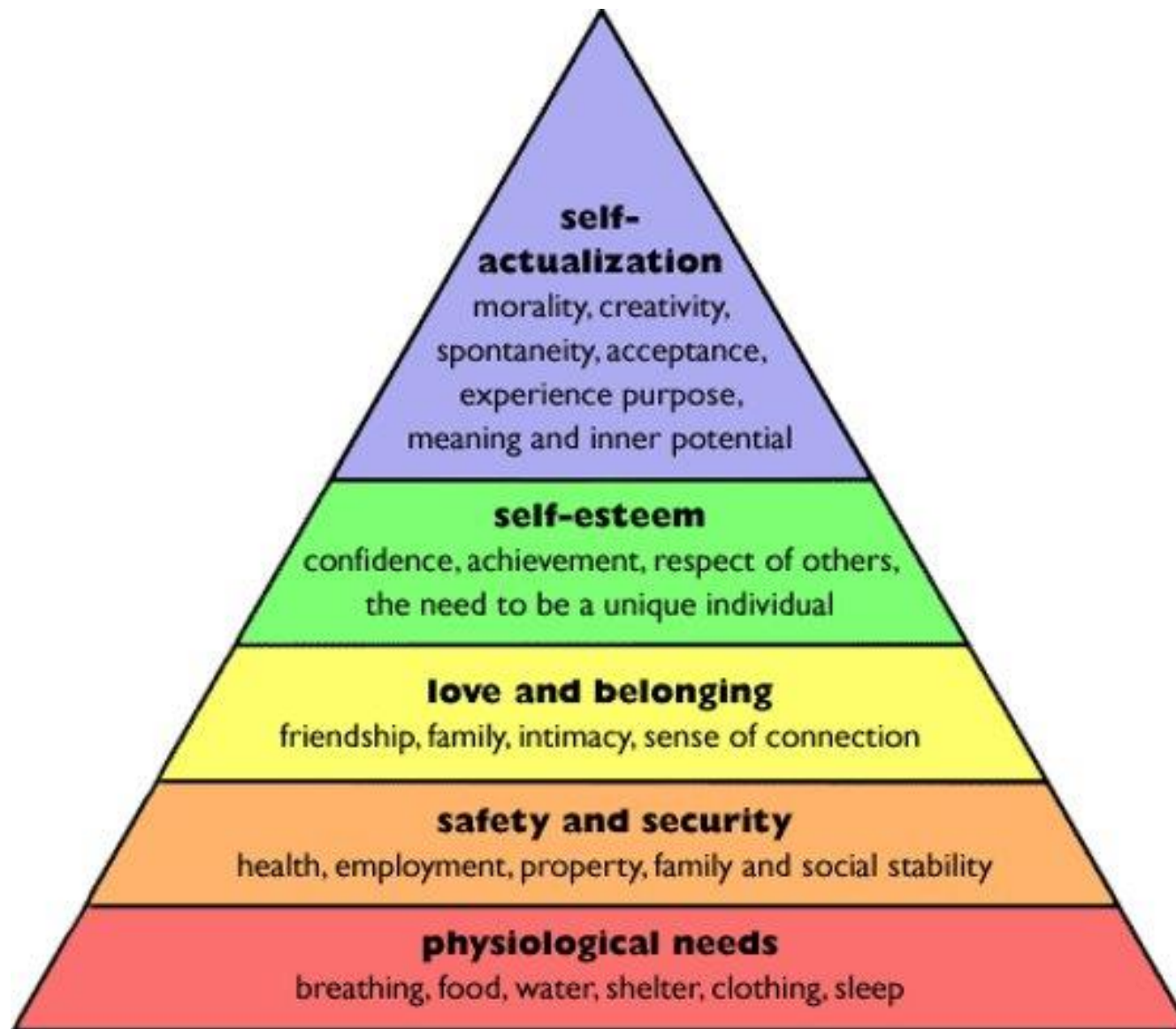
- ▶ Brief overview of adolescent development
- ▶ Learn and model communication strategies to reinforce appropriate communication of thoughts and feelings
- ▶ Learn tips to help your teen navigate friendships and social media
- ▶ Learn how to develop resiliency skills and positive self-esteem in your teen
- ▶ Gain awareness of warning signs of mental health struggles
- ▶ Learn strategies to support teens that are emotionally struggling

Cognitive & Emotional Development in Adolescence

- ▶ Movement towards Independence
- ▶ Increased independent functioning
- ▶ Examination of inner experiences
- ▶ Ability to think ideas through
- ▶ Increased ability for delayed gratification and compromise
- ▶ Gradual increased emotional stability
- ▶ Demonstrate more concern for others

Cognitive & Emotional Development in Adolescence Ctd.

- ▶ Firmer and more cohesive sense of identity
- ▶ Increased self-reliance
- ▶ Peer relationships remain important and take an appropriate place among other interests
- ▶ Interests are further explored
- ▶ Work habits become more defined
- ▶ Increased concern for the future and life beyond high school
- ▶ More importance is placed on one's role in life



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The Importance of Listening



YouTube: Jason Headley Tells Stories, 2014

What is Active Listening?



YouTube: MindToolsVideos, 2015

Show that you're listening: Non-Verbal Skills

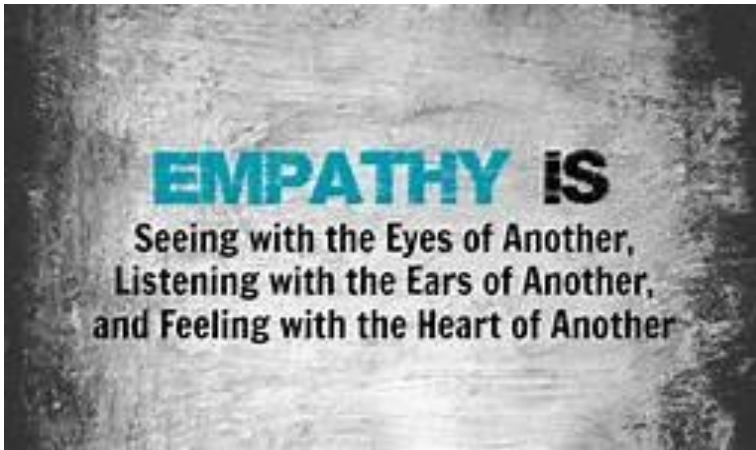
- ▶ Maintain eye contact
- ▶ Leaning forward or leaning in
- ▶ Nodding your head
- ▶ Keeping a calm and steady tone of voice
- ▶ Mirroring facial expressions
- ▶ Avoid distractions
 - ▶ Minimal or no fidgeting
 - ▶ Ignoring the clock or your phone
 - ▶ Putting any thoughts that come up to the side

Show You're Listening With Short Verbal Affirmations

- ▶ Use short, positive statements.
- ▶ Help to continue to keep the conversation going without interrupting or disrupting the flow of the conversation.
 - ▶ Example:
 - ▶ “I agree.” “That makes sense.” “Absolutely.” “I understand.”



Display Empathy



- ▶ Example:
 - ▶ I'm so sorry you are feeling overwhelmed. I can see how having so much on your plate can make you feel that way.
 - ▶ I'm sorry this situation made you feel excluded. It doesn't feel good to be excluded.

Open-ended Vs Close-ended Questions

- ▶ Close ended questions provide little information.
- ▶ Open ended questions are questions that cannot be answered with a simple yes or no and requires the respondent to elaborate.
- ▶ Basic examples:
 - ▶ What can we do to make this easier for you?
 - ▶ Why does it bother you when I...
 - ▶ How can I help?

Open vs. Closed Questions

- Open-ended questions begin with:
 - What...?
 - Why...?
 - How...?
- Closed-ended questions begin with:
 - Is / are...?
 - Do / did...?
 - Would / will...?
 - Could / can...?
 - Was / were...?
 - Have / has...?
 - Which...?
 - Who...?
 - When...?
 - Where...?

Asking Open Ended Questions

- ▶ Examples:
 - ▶ You're right, the amount of school work you have is really challenging to keep up with. What changes could we make to help it feel more manageable?
 - ▶ I can see why you're frustrated with your friend for not including you in the group chat. Why do you think they are not including you in the chat?
 - ▶ I would be upset too if I saw my friends doing something together on social media without me. How do you think you can address it with them?

Provide Feedback: Ask Specific, Probing Questions

- ▶ The takeaway of this strategy is for you to get more specific details about what your child has shared.
 - ▶ Examples:
 - ▶ Tell me more about the assignments you have to complete.
 - ▶ Tell me more about your relationship with your friends and what you think may have changed.
 - ▶ Tell me about how you found out about the social media post.

Recalling Past Information

- ▶ Try to remember other things that your child has shared with you in the past that relates to what they are sharing with you now.
 - ▶ Example:
 - ▶ “Last week you mentioned feeling overwhelmed with school work. I remember when you had that science fair project that was overwhelming due to all the pieces needing to be completed. What helped you deal with that situation back then?”

When Parents React & Respond...

- ▶ Defer judgement
 - ▶ Make sure that the speaker finishes what they have to say before responding
 - ▶ Avoid interrupting with counter arguments
- ▶ Use active listening as a means of encouraging respect and understanding (it is designed for this)
 - ▶ Be candid, open, and honest in your responses
 - ▶ Assert your opinions respectfully
 - ▶ Try to summarize your understanding of the problem before you provide a response
 - ▶ Model communication the way you would want your child to communicate with you

Active Listening in Action- Take 1



YouTube: Life's Secret Sauce, 2018

Active Listening in Action- Take 2



YouTube: Life's Secret Sauce, 2018

What are the benefits of Active Listening?

- ▶ **Feelings get resolved**
- ▶ **Feelings are accepted**
- ▶ **Feelings are understood**
- ▶ **Children become better active listeners**
- ▶ **Children become problem-solvers**

Creative Ways to Communicate

- ▶ Share highs and lows as a family during dinner or before bed (other names include “roses and thorns” or “peak and pit” of the day).
- ▶ Communicate using a shared journal.



How to Help Teens Navigate Friendships

- ▶ Embracing possibilities
 - ▶ Be open to many friends and friend types
- ▶ Create a foundation of honesty
 - ▶ Teach the importance of honesty balanced with privacy
- ▶ Practicing forgiveness
 - ▶ Learn to resolve conflict and forgive in healthy relationships; also learn to let go when a relationship doesn't serve them
- ▶ Teach boundary setting
 - ▶ Model this as a parent and they will use these skills in their relationships
- ▶ Preparing for peer pressure
 - ▶ Start the conversation early on how to handle peer pressure; more likely to bring it up to you if it comes up
- ▶ Choose friends wisely and put in the work
 - ▶ Key friendship skills include talking about what you need, sharing your true feelings, being flexible, giving time and space to the relationship, and caring about each other.
- ▶ Growing apart
 - ▶ Teach teens that it is okay when friends outgrow each other.

Social Media

Benefits

- ▶ Ability to communicate with others
- ▶ Teens can build social networks which can provide valuable support (especially for those who experience exclusion, have disabilities, or chronic illness)
- ▶ Entertainment (can be humorous or distracting from stressors)
- ▶ Self-expression
- ▶ Expose teens to current events
- ▶ Can teach teens about a variety of subjects, including healthy behaviors

Harmful Impact

- ▶ Distraction
- ▶ Can disrupt sleep
- ▶ Possible exposure to bullying or rumor spreading
- ▶ Unrealistic view of other people's lives
- ▶ Peer pressure
- ▶ May cause anxiety/depression
- ▶ Teens may be at risk of sharing intimate photos or highly personal stories, which can result in bullying or harassment

Helping Teens Develop a Healthy Relationship with Social Media

- ▶ **Set reasonable limits:** Talk to your teen about how to avoid letting social media interfere with their activities, sleep, meals, or homework. Encourage a bedtime routine that avoids use of electronics
- ▶ **Explain what's not okay:** Discourage your teen from gossiping, spreading rumors, bullying, or damaging someone's reputation. Talk about what is appropriate and safe to share on social media
- ▶ **Model Good Behavior-** Teens will replicate your behaviors
- ▶ **Check In:** How is the content they are viewing making them feel? Empower their power of CHOICE. Remind your teen that social media is full of unrealistic images
- ▶ **Unplug:** Try this as a family or as part of a family ritual
- ▶ **Use parental controls:** Let your teen know that you will be monitoring their online activities and accounts
- ▶ **Encourage face-to-face contact with friends:** This is particularly important for teens who have social anxiety or depression

<https://www.swgeneral.com/blog/2022/january/helping-teens-navigate-social-media-the-healthy/>

Why Focus on Teen Mental Health?

- ▶ Mental health problems are *common* and often develop *during adolescence*
- ▶ Youth and young adults experience mental health problems *differently than adults*
- ▶ Youth may **not be well informed**
 - ▶ The *sooner* an individual gets help, the more likely they are to have a *positive outcome*

Signs of a Mental Health Problem

- ▶ Symptoms of a mental health issues can often seem like normal development during adolescence
- ▶ Examine the **significance** and **impact** of change on your child
- ▶ Is your child struggling...
 - ▶ In school
 - ▶ In social settings
 - ▶ In daily activities

5 General Warning Signs

- ▶ Long-lasting mood swings
 - ▶ Lasts for two weeks
 - ▶ Ranges from hyperactive to melancholy in a short span
- ▶ Excessive fears or worries that interfere with daily functioning
- ▶ Extreme behavioral changes
 - ▶ Significant defiant or dangerous behavior
 - ▶ Uses weapons, desire to badly hurt others
- ▶ Sudden physical changes
 - ▶ Weight gain or loss
 - ▶ Gain or loss of appetite
- ▶ Lack of concentration
 - ▶ Trouble focusing or sitting still

Resiliency Builds Self Esteem

Resiliency is the ability to recover from or adjust to change.

How do we help youth to be more resilient?

- 1. Give choices
- 2. Empower by providing opportunities for mastering skills
- 3. Connectedness



Tips for Fostering Resilience & Improving Self Esteem

- ▶ Don't accommodate every need.
- ▶ Avoid eliminating all risk.
- ▶ Teach them to problem solve.
- ▶ Let your kids make mistakes.
- ▶ Help them manage their emotions.
- ▶ Model resilience.

Strategies for Anxiety

- ▶ Encourage relaxing activities
- ▶ Shift "What if" thinking to "What is"
- ▶ F.E.E.L.
 - ▶ Freeze
 - ▶ Empathize
 - ▶ Evaluate
 - ▶ Let Go
- ▶ Grounding techniques

Grounding Techniques

- ▶ 5,4,3,2,1
- ▶ [Progressive muscle relaxation](#)
- ▶ Hold an object or playing with a fidget toy
- ▶ Explain a painting/ picture to yourself
- ▶ Think in categories
- ▶ Use math or numbers
- ▶ Deep breathing
- ▶ Mindfulness

The 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique

Ease your state of mind in stressful moments.



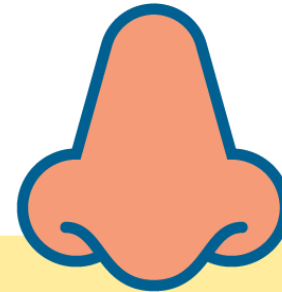
Acknowledge **5** things that you can see around you.



Acknowledge **4** things that you can touch around you.



Acknowledge **3** things that you can hear around you.



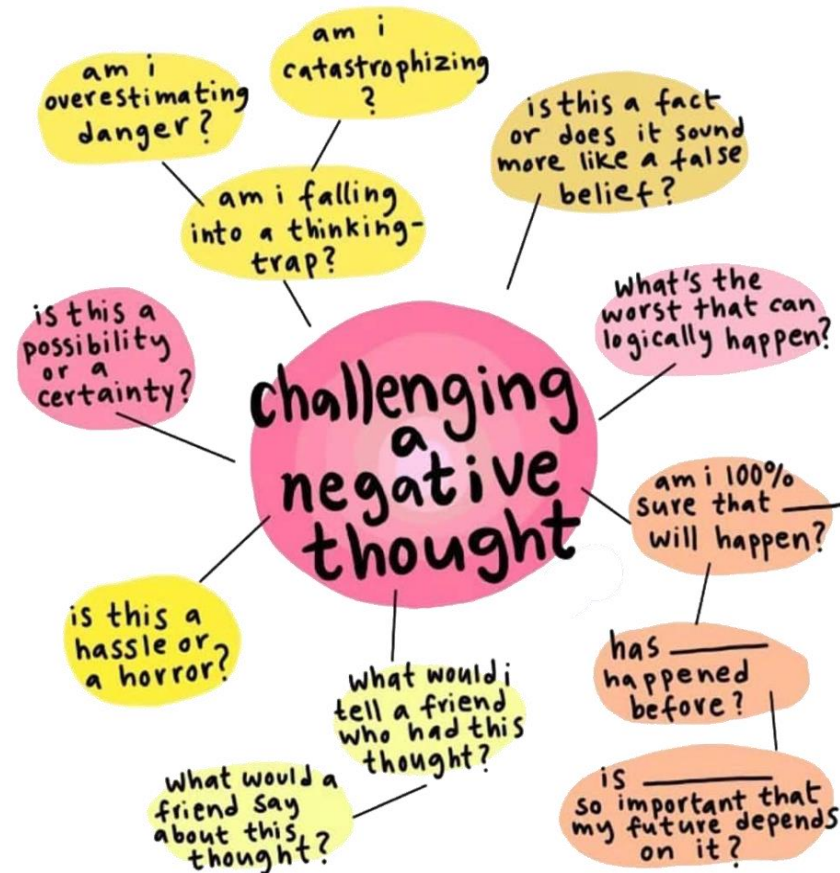
Acknowledge **2** things that you can smell around you.



Acknowledge **1** thing that you can taste around you.

Strategies for Depression

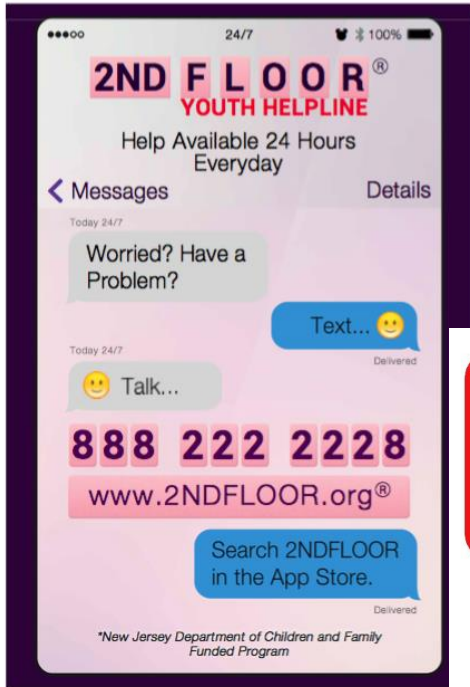
- ▶ Positivity Journal
- ▶ Reframing negative thoughts
 - ▶ Evaluate the evidence
 - ▶ Identify cognitive distortions
 - ▶ Encourage use of positive self-talk
- ▶ Opposite Action
 - ▶ Avoid isolation when sad
- ▶ Positive affirmations
 - ▶ Examples
 - ▶ Practice self-compassion



Reaching a Suicidal Teen



YouTube: Mayo Clinic. 2022



There is hope.



If you or someone you know needs support now, call or text **988** or chat **988lifeline.org**



PEP22-08-03-005

CRISIS TEXT LINE |

Text HELLO to 741741
Free, 24/7, Confidential



[My3 App](#)



[Suicide Safety Plan App](#)

Suicide Prevention Hotlines/Apps

Community Mental Health Agencies

- ▶ **Perform Care 1-877-652-7624 www.performcarenj.org
Children's Mobile Response/Crisis Stabilization and
Bergen's Promise
24/7 help; crisis de-escalation; short-and long-term
support; in home support**
- ▶ **Care Plus New Jersey 201-265-5000**
- ▶ **West Bergen Mental Health 201-485-7172**
- ▶ **Vantage Health 201-567-0059**
- ▶ **CBH Care 201-646-0195**
- ▶ **BergenResourceNet.org**

Questions?
Comments?

THANK YOU