

THE PREVENTATIVE PARENT

HELPING PARENTS BE PROTECTIVE FACTORS IN THE
LIVES OF THEIR TEENS

In this Newsletter:

- The Power of Perspective
- Screen Time and Teens
- Community Resources



The Power of Perspective

Maddie Louder - Student Assistance
Professional Monroe High School

There is so much power in our perspective. How we view the world and interpret what happens to us can deepen the understanding we have for ourselves and others, help us problem solve, and expand our knowledge. For teens, I bet you can imagine how much having a positive perspective could influence their development. Throughout my time working with adolescents, I so often run into a pattern of thought that causes teens to spiral deeper into whatever struggles they're facing. Whether that is an upcoming test, friend drama, or butting heads with adults in their life, a negative perspective will more times than not cause the teen to struggle even more. How do we expand a teens perspective when they are stuck in an emotional tunnel? Here are some things to try:

Face the challenge head on: Teens tend to live in the emotional center of the brain (aka the amygdala) which causes them to have all or nothing thinking about a challenge. They think of the worst possible scenario, but

typically the worst case is never the outcome. When a teen faces their challenge, they are able to gain new perspective and realize that their challenge may not have been as bad as they originally thought

Help teens take the perspective of others: "How do you think your actions made others feel?" "What life experiences have they had that could make them think or act in that way?" Sometimes asking these questions can help us zoom out and see the bigger picture of a situation. Taking on the perspective of others also helps teens develop a strong sense of empathy which is vital for healthy social interactions.

Help your teen understand their underlying perspective: Teens sometimes think before they act or speak. This can put them in a bit of a pickle. Helping teens understand why they think a certain way or act a certain way can help them understand how they interact in social arenas, broadening their perspective.

Reframe: My favorite skill is challenging a teen to a good old fashion reframe. We often get so stuck in our own thoughts and in our own world that taking a different look at a situation can be difficult but so good for someone. Try adding "and" instead of "but." For example instead of "I need to do my homework, *but* I am so tired." try: "I am so tired, *and* I can still do my homework." This helps teach teens they can do the things that might feel hard with a simple shift toward a positive perspective.

Screen Time and Teens

We see it all the time: the teen glued to their phone screen. Their world is online; it is the way they connect, interact, and engage. But how do we help teens navigate the digital age in a healthy way?

There are benefits to technology. We have the ability to stay connected across the country, information is at our finger tips, and help can be a short phone call away. However, research studies have shown the detrimental impacts social media and screens can have on an person's well being. Constant comparison and decreased boundaries online can take a toll. Friend conflicts that happen at school can easily continue online, causing teens to never take a break from the drama. Not to mention, communicating behind a screen leaves it easy to say comments you might not say to someone's face. The reward that teens also receive from social media sites cause them to keep coming back, potentially leading to the same effects as substance addiction.

Parents have tried a multitude of things to keep kids safe online from monitoring social media sites, enforcing app time limits, or limiting overall screen time. While all these are great, teens are smart and will always find ways to push the limits. Focusing on building non-tech based habits can help combat the desire to immerse oneself only online. Help your teen sign up for a sport or club at school. Not only does this help them get off their screen for a couple hours, but it also helps them build in-person social connections. Help your teen find a hobby. There are so many things a teen can pursue from painting, to skateboarding, swimming, finding a job, volunteering, getting outside in nature, or helping out around the house--many of these are off-line! You could also have your teen set aside 30 minutes of dedicated homework time each day. During this time, place their phone in another room. Teaching your teen to put their phone away from their bed when they sleep helps them put their phone down sooner, and not pick their phone up first thing in the morning. Little habits can make a big difference when it comes to screen time! The biggest thing to remember is acknowledging how your screen time might impact your teen's screen time. Try some of these habits for yourself. Not only will you see a difference in your mental health, but you will also be modeling positive behaviors for your teen!



Community Resources

SEE WHAT RESOURCES ARE IN THE COMMUNITY

After School Programs for Children & Youth:

Take the Next Steps Kidz Club:

<https://www.tns.org/kidz-club-after-school-program>

Monroe Boys & Girls Club:

<https://bgcsc.org/clubs/monroe-club/>

Sky Valley YMCA After School Care: <https://ymca-snoco.org/programs/child-care/school-age-care/>

Mental Health Services

CH Counseling Services

<https://www.chcounselingservices.org/counselors>

Stories of Hope

<https://www.rosydeprado-storiesofhope.com/>

SeaMar Behavioral Health

<https://www.seamar.org/snohomish-bh-monroe.html>

Community Support Groups for Teens

Queer and Trans Youth Community Group:

<https://www.rosydeprado-storiesofhope.com/groups>

Want to learn more about becoming a Preventative Parent? Join us for our monthly Zoom!

Last Tuesday of every Month @ 6pm.

www.zoomlink.com

Ask questions, join the conversation, or just listen!