

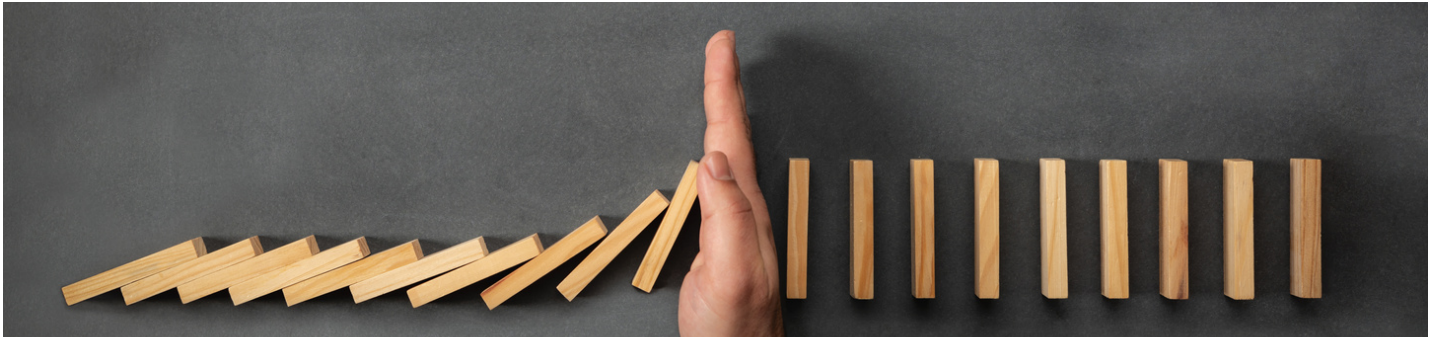
FAMILY TIMES

Teen Edition

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Moore Public Schools
Mental Health Team



In this Issue:

- Tips for connecting with your teen
- Fostering self-esteem and movement
- Upcoming Event Parenting Teens Session with the Mental Health Team - March 27

**"Daring to set boundaries is about having the courage to love ourselves, even when we risk disappointing others."
— Brene' Brown**

Boundaries are Self Care by Courtney Folsom, MSHR, LPC, CRC

Establishing, communicating, and maintaining boundaries is an essential part of relationships and self-care. Boundaries help protect your physical space, your time, your energy, your feelings, your needs, and your responsibilities. According to Brené Brown, boundaries are "finding a way to be generous towards others while continuing to lead with integrity and stay true to yourself. Setting boundaries means prioritizing your needs and practicing self-care without feeling guilty."

Boundaries are an essential part of relationships as we communicate how we will allow others to treat us and what we need. It is essential to be clear and not assume that people are aware of our expectations. We must inform others of our needs and limits, and we must take responsibility for maintaining these limits. While our hesitancy of setting boundaries is often rooted in fear of disappointing people, not setting boundaries can lead to feelings of frustration, resentment, and anger. Our choice not to set boundaries can leave us feeling mistreated, taken advantage of, or hurt.

Tips for setting boundaries:

- Be clear. Do not hint. Do not expect others to know if it has not been communicated. Clearly communicate your needs and feelings.
- Separate your feelings from the other person's. Allow short-term discomfort for the sake of the long-term health of the relationship.
- Avoid accusations and extreme language. Avoid "You" statements and absolutes such as "always" and "never". "You always talk over me."
- Focus on areas within your control. Boundaries are not about you dictating or controlling the actions of others but about your needs.
- Practice. Write down or rehearse what you want to say before the conversation occurs.
- Respect the boundaries of others. This can improve our relationships and show others an example of how to do the same for us.

Brene' Brown describes boundaries as the "key to self-love". This is why boundaries are essential for self-care. Becoming comfortable with boundary setting may take time and practice.

Establishing, communicating, and maintaining our own personal boundaries can help improve our relationships, reduce feelings of resentment, conserve our energy, and have a positive impact on our mental health and well-being.

"The hardest thing about implementing boundaries is accepting that some people won't like, understand, or agree with yours. Once you grow beyond pleasing others, setting your standards becomes easier. Not being liked by everyone is a small consequence when you consider the overall reward of healthier relationships." — Nedra Glover Tawwab

Sources: Wilsey, P. How to set healthy boundaries in close relationships. Psychology Today. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/packing-success/202105/how-set-healthy-boundaries-in-close-relationships>
Hansen, S. What Brené Brown taught me about boundaries: How to set clear boundaries. <https://www.blueosa.com/what-brene-brown-taught-me-about-setting-boundaries/>

BOOSTING SELF-ESTEEM

by Deanna Wasson, LMSW U/S



February is **International Boost Self-Esteem** month. Self-esteem is very important with how we relate to ourselves and others. Healthy self-esteem promotes helping others, positive relationships, and trying new tasks or experiences. Individuals with lower self-esteem are more likely to experience increased symptoms of depression. As parents, we may not always understand our child's perception of themselves, but there are some ways to help promote positive self-esteem.

Sources: Masselink, M., Van Roekel, E., & Oldehinkel, A. J. (2018). Self-esteem in Early Adolescence as Predictor of Depressive Symptoms in Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood: The Mediating Role of Motivational and Social Factors. *Journal of youth and adolescence*, 47(5), 932-946. Help Your Teenager Feel More Confident. <https://parents.au.reachout.com/common-concerns/everyday-issues/things-to-try-self-esteem/help-your-teenager-feel-more-confident>

ENCOURAGING WORDS

1. Praise effort or character, rather than only results. "You really stuck with getting that assignment done. You are perseverant."
2. Praise often, even with little things. "You are so helpful. Thank you for taking out the trash."
3. Praise genuinely. "I enjoy having dinner with you. You are so funny."

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

1. Listen to and validate their feelings. "It sounds like this is really hard for you."
2. Encourage them to work on a solution. "What do you want to do? How do you want to respond?"
3. Offer support. "How can I be helpful to you during this?"
4. Affirm their identity and abilities. "You are thoughtful. That's a lot to consider and work through."

Calming Technique PUSH PULL

TAKE BOTH HANDS AND WITH THE PALMS FACING EACH OTHER, PUSH THEM TOGETHER.

CONTINUE TO PUSH THEM TOGETHER FOR 10 SECONDS WHILE REMEMBERING TO FOCUS ON YOUR BREATHING. INHALE AND EXHALE.

RELEASE THE TENSION FROM YOUR HANDS AND TURN THEM SIDEWAYS WITH YOUR ELBOWS OUT AND ONE PALM TURNED AWAY FROM THE BODY AND ONE TOWARDS THE BODY. CURL FINGERS AND INTERLOCK TOGETHER.

PULL, VISUALIZING YOUR SHOULDER BLADES GOING TOWARD EACH OTHER. CONTINUE PULLING FOR 10 SECONDS WHILE FOCUSING ON YOUR BREATHING. RELEASE AND REPEAT 3-5 TIMES.



COPING CORNER

Coping Skills for Teen Stressors

by Jeanette Henson, M.Ed., LPC

Being a teenager is stressful for many reasons. Healthy coping skills can improve mental and emotional health. Being consistent in using coping skills until they become habit can help teens keep perspective and focus on stressors. Here are ideas of coping skills that adolescents can use to decrease the feelings of being overwhelmed:

- **Problem-Focused Coping:** Get as much information as possible about the situation, including people who can offer support in finding a solution. Breaking down the situation into manageable chunks will decrease the feeling of being overwhelmed and anxious.
- **Emotion-Focused Coping:** Try breathing and relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, pressure points, or meditation. Creative expression, such as drawing, writing, and music can be helpful to relax the brain.
- **Social Support Coping:** Connect with friends or reach out to a trusted adult that will listen and offer positive support.
- **Physical Coping:** Take some time to get the body moving. It increases endorphins and positive mood. Take a walk outdoors, yoga, kick-boxing, weightlifting, go for a jog, etc.

TECH TAKEOVER by Candace Ladd, MHR, LPC

Lately we hear a lot of information on the dangers of technology, social media, and screen time. We sometimes forget that there are many benefits to having access to technology at our fingertips. It is through technology that we connect with people all over the world, we can figure out quickly how to make and repair things, and we can tap into our creative sides. How does that saying go? "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em." As parents we can be so caught up in the fight against technology, phones, and social media that we miss some cool ways to connect with our teens.

Amy Challenger wrote in Your Teen for Parents magazine:

9 Positive Ways to Use Technology with Your Teens

1. Tap into their expertise
2. Plan online parties with distant relatives
3. Surrender to Snap Chat and laugh
4. Encourage physical activity through apps
5. Play games
6. Share photos and videos
7. Text
8. Compare notes
9. Support timeouts.

Whether we are having our teens teach us how to play Call of Duty, watching their favorite anime show, or keeping up streaks with them on Snap Chat we are building valuable connections and getting to know them in their world. There are many things that we enjoy about technology, and we must learn to use it to our advantage when it comes to our teenagers. Take time to play a game, watch old videos from their childhood on your phone, look up new recipes on Tik Tok and make something together. Just like us, teens often grab their phones out of habit or boredom. Rather than shame them for doing so, model healthy ways to utilize technology and setting boundaries for yourself. Balance is the key here, let us not miss opportunities to stay connected.

Source: Challenger, Amy (2020). <https://yourteenmag.com/technology/family-technology>



MOVING FOR MENTAL HEALTH

by Lori Stuart-Worth, LCSW

Participating in regular movement has proven benefits for both our minds and bodies. Exercise and movement can help reduce stress and improve self-confidence, productivity, and sleep. However, we know movement can often be our last priority. When you think of exercise you may imagine hours of intense exercise, but movement can take several forms. Look at your family's routine, find something your teen enjoys, and start small.

To sneak small moments of movement into down time, try one of these ideas today: Turn on some music and have an impromptu dance party before dinner, see who can do the most crunches, leg lifts, or push-ups during a commercial break, park farther away and take the stairs - even a short amount of activity counts. When you have a little more time, encourage walks or bike rides. Throwing a frisbee around or playing tag can get your heart rate up. You can also find several get moving videos online for the whole family to do together that don't require any special equipment.

Talk to your teen about the benefits of physical activity and help them identify barriers to being active. Motivate your teen to incorporate movement into things they enjoy like skateboarding or water balloon fights and encourage them to include their friends to make it more fun. Modeling physical activity and sharing how you feel after being active can also help encourage your teen, but as with most things, nagging doesn't often help. If you notice this is an area of tension, take a step back and remember that offering encouragement, inviting your teen to join you, and giving praise when exercise is accomplished can build their success and self-confidence in the area of physical activity.

There are so many ways to move your body and all types of movement count. Use small moments and encouragement to connect with your teen and get your family moving.

Source: Kimberly Beecher, M. D. (2022, May 2). Help your teen get more exercise. Mayo Clinic Health System. Retrieved from <https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/teens-and-exercise>

Upcoming Event

Are you interested in learning strategies to address difficult behavior?

Scan this QR code to find more information and to register online.



Parenting Teens Event

SUPPORTING TEEN MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

NAVIGATING CHALLENGES AND BEHAVIOR

March 27th
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Southmoore High School

Registration Not Required

Teen Connection Tammy Mayer, M.Ed., LPC

The following, by Raising Healthy Teens, is a great article for any parent looking for ideas to connect with your teen. Connection is vital for growth, emotional support, and safety. Try one of these ideas this week!

Teenage Connection: The 11 Best Ways To Connect With Your Teen By Raising Healthy Teens

Whether your child is just approaching adolescence or fully submerged in it, you may have noticed a difference. Your cuddly baby is now a teenager, and it can be challenging to navigate your relationship.

It can be tough to stay connected to our children in these years. They spend more and more time with their friends and seem to want to have nothing to do with us. Unless we are intentional about spending time together, it's easy to drift apart.

During these years, teens need to stretch out and cultivate their independence, all while staying connected to us. If their job is to stretch out, our job is to keep them connected.

Connecting with your teens keeps your relationship strong, and it's easier than you think. Your teens might roll their eyes at some of these ideas, but once they give it a try, they might realize they actually enjoyed it. And, despite any immediate complaints, they will likely reflect fondly on these times together in the long run.

- **Cook Together.** Invite your teen to help make dinner one night or breakfast one weekend morning. They can choose the recipe and the music, and you can get some much-needed help in the kitchen. Making a snack together works, too. Even the surliest of teens will have trouble resisting an invitation to throw together a plate of nachos or bake a sheet of cookies.
- **Eat Together.** Make a point of sharing at least one meal together every day. It can be breakfast, lunch, dinner, or a weekend brunch. Use this time to share stories from your day, to talk about current events or upcoming family plans, to name three things you feel grateful for, or to go around the table answering fun get-to-know you questions (start with, "Tell me about a time where you laughed the hardest?" or "If you could have one superpower, what would it be?").
- **Listen to Music Together.** Ask your teens (in a low-key way) to play you a few of their favorite songs. Listen closely and ask them to tell you what they love about each one. You might be surprised by how much they light up. Whether you like the music or not, try to get in touch with why they like it. Notice the energy and the emotion of the song and the way it moves them. This is a gesture of love that won't go unnoticed.
- **Tell Them a Story about Them.** Share a memory of something hilarious, maddening, adorable, or amazing that your teen did when they were younger. Teenagers love hearing stories about themselves, and they won't be able to resist laughing at their childhood antics. Every story you tell will allow them to develop their sense of themselves, deepen their connection with the family, feel your love, and know that they belong.
- **Work Together.** Chores aren't at the top of anyone's list of favorite things to do. But working together can make the experience more efficient and more enjoyable. It can also be easier to have a conversation when your hands are busy, and you don't have to make eye contact. Who knows what topics might come up while you're doing the dishes, raking leaves, or organizing a bookshelf together?
- **Make a Date.** Once or twice a month, plan something fun for you and your teen to do one-on-one. This could be going to the movies, taking a hike, seeing a concert, volunteering, getting a haircut or pedicure, going out for ice cream, or staying in and playing a game. Avoid the standard arguments and just enjoy each other's company.
- **Invite your Teen's Friends Over.** Then again, who says it has to be one-on-one time? Your teenager's friends are one of the most important things – if not THE most important thing – in their life right now. Invite your teen to have their friends over to your house as often as you comfortably can, allowing your house to be the hangout. This will allow you to get to know your child's friends and to stay connected with what's going on without having to pry.
- **Be Honest with Them.** Encourage your teenager to come to you for straight talk – and then deliver. Whether the topic is relationships, sex, drinking, drugs, or anything else, if they know you will tell them the unvarnished truth and offer advice in an adult-to-adult way, they will keep coming back for more.
- **Be Available When Your Teen Wants to Talk.** Although the timing may not be ideal, your teen may want to talk when something is bothering them. This can be challenging when we're also managing a demanding job and other responsibilities but setting everything else aside when they are looking for a listening ear lets them know how important they are.
- **Just Listen.** It's no coincidence that the words "listen" and "silent" are spelled with the same letters. Sometimes, with the best of intentions, we try to help our teenagers by minimizing or trying to solve the problems they bring to us. But that gives them the impression that we don't take them seriously or that we think they are incapable of finding solutions themselves. Rather than offer your own opinion or approach, try to serve as a sounding board and ask questions that can help them pinpoint their emotions and achieve greater clarity on the issue. Above all, validate their feelings and tell them that you love them and believe in them. But your phones down and laptops away and just listen to your teen. They need you!
- **Show Some Love.** Even though your teenager may act like they are all grown up now and way too cool for this sort of thing, they still need your love and affection. Keep doing all the things you have done naturally as a parent up to now. Tell them you love them. Say "good morning" and "goodnight." Hug them hello and goodbye. Sure, you might hold back if your teen's friends are there. But then again, you might just hug their friend's goodbye, too

Source: Teens, R. H. (2019, July 24). TEENAGE CONNECTION: THE 11 BEST WAYS TO CONNECT WITH YOUR TEEN. Raising Healthy Teens. Retrieved January 17, 2023, from https://raisinghealthyteens.org/rht_blog/teenage-connection-the-11-best-ways-to-connect-with-your-teen/

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Mental Health Resources
for more information

<https://www.moore.schools.com/Page/52192>

**Free App for
Mental Health and
Wellbeing**

