

Helping Our Pre-Teens and Teens Thrive: Parenting Strategies for the Adolescent Years

Adolescence is a time of change, exploration, and growth. There is a strong link between adolescent and adult health, which is why empowering teens and maximizing their health and wellbeing is so important. Here are 7 tips Dr. Abraham shared to help our teens thrive:

1

Make communication effective. Listen more than talk. If they won't share what's going on with them, ask what's happening with their friends.

2

Talk about identity and belonging. Adolescence is a time when teens develop body image, gender and sexual identity, and cultural identity.

3

Build on unique strengths. Focusing on strengths can support youth during challenging times. Self-esteem and confidence are built in adolescence.

4

Embrace technology, but enforce limits. Similar to a driver's license, provide instruction and boundaries on phone/media use before complete autonomy.

5

Create an anti-stress toolkit. Help create a plan and outline specific anti-stress strategies; model behaviors, self-care, and kindness.

6

Stay attuned to warning signs. Changes in sleep, appetite, social activity, academic performance, motivation, pleasure; be proactive in seeking help.

7

Build resilience and problem-solving. Don't step in to solve your teens' problems. Provide opportunities for independent problem-solving.

Additional tips on effective communication with teens

- 50% rule: only say 50% of what you plan to say
- Duct tape: imagine you have duct tape on your mouth to help you speak less (Hoefle)
- Be a houseplant: be physically present, with no active agenda (Damour)
- Bring in other trusted adults if your teen resists speaking with you
- Build in family routines - including family dinners, family meetings so that teens come to expect and certain times for conversation

About Cartwheel:

We partner with school districts to provide students and families with rapid access to mental health assessments, evidence-based therapy, medication management and consultation, and parent/guardian guidance. All of our services are via telehealth with licensed clinicians. We are committed to providing affordable care for everyone - including uninsured families and those covered by Medicaid. **To learn if Cartwheel's services are a good fit for your child or family, please contact a member of your school's counseling or guidance team.**

