

Parent - Teen Connect # 4: PROBLEM SOLVING AT HOME

心平气和地坐下来慢慢谈，家和万事兴



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What Do Adolescents and Parents Usually Fight About?

- Conflicts between parents and children involves **MUNDANE ISSUES**(curfews, leisure time, appearance, cleaning their rooms).
- Disagreements stem from different perspectives on issues and violations of expectations.
 - **Personal issues** (“I have a choice of what to do. My parent is being intrusive.”) vs. **conventional issue** (“Everyone needs to maintain the hygiene, so you should clean up the room.”)



Developmental Needs of Adolescents: Autonomy

- Autonomy as independence and self-reliance
 - Adolescents gaining ability for independent thinking and decision-making without the need for others' approval; ability to seek their own solutions
- Autonomy as volitional functioning
 - Adolescents experiencing themselves as enacting behaviors (or regulating behaviors) willingly on the basis of well-internalized values or true interests

≠ Rebellion

≠ Decrease in closeness with parents

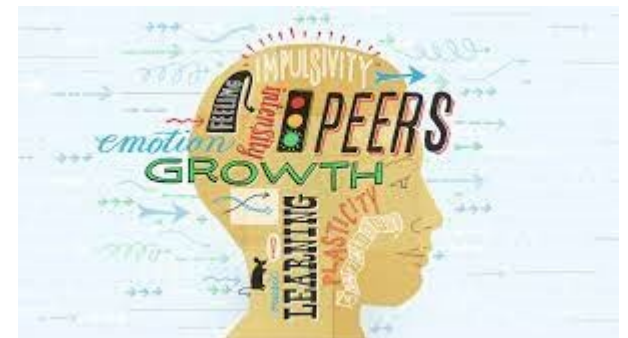
- Adolescents report *better* adjustment when they display elements of *autonomy* while staying *connected* to their parents.



Developmental Needs of Adolescents: Autonomy

How can parents help?

- Instead of disapproving, ask what they think their friends would do if faced with a similar situation and why.
- Provide more opportunities for your child to make their own decisions on things (e.g., styling their hair, decorating their room, or picking after-school activities).
- Invite your adolescent to help with the decision-making process in family activities (e.g., planning a family vacation, organizing a family holiday event, or choosing groceries for meal planning).
- Foster autonomy within guidance and rules.



Acknowledge Your and Your Children's Needs

Dr William Glasser's *Basic Needs*

				
<i>Love & Belonging</i>	Power	FUN	Survival	<i>Freedom</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ belonging✓ being loved✓ being respected✓ friendship✓ sharing✓ cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ recognition✓ success✓ importance✓ achievement✓ skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ enjoyment✓ laughter✓ learning✓ change	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ health✓ relaxation✓ sexual activity✓ food✓ warmth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ choices✓ independence✓ freedom from✓ freedom to

Acknowledge we ALL need to have FUN + REST.

Playing video game is FUN (Wii Sports).

Children want parents to be proud of them.

Autonomy and relationships are both important.

Think of a recent situation when you had a disagreement or discussion with a child.

Type it on a chat:

- What were your TOP 3 (most important) needs?
- What were your children's Top 3 needs?

Needs List

CONNECTION

acceptance
affection
appreciation
belonging
cooperation
communication
closeness
community
companionship
compassion
consideration
consistency
empathy
inclusion
intimacy
love
mutuality
nurturing
respect/self-respect
safety
security
stability
support
to know and be known
to see and be seen
to understand and be understood
trust
warmth

HONESTY

authenticity
integrity
presence

PLAY

joy
humor

PEACE

beauty
communion
ease
equality
harmony
inspiration
order

PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

air
food
movement/exercise
rest/sleep
sexual expression
safety
shelter
touch
water

MEANING

awareness
celebration of life
challenge
clarity
competence
consciousness
contribution
creativity
discovery
efficacy
effectiveness
growth
hope
learning
mourning
participation
purpose
self-expression
stimulation
to matter
understanding

AUTONOMY

choice
freedom
independence
space
spontaneity

WHAT IS PROBLEM - SOLVING?

- Problem-solving is the act of **identifying** an issue and coming up with possible **solutions**

problem
solving



What are some CHALLENGES?

- Adults and teenagers often want very different outcomes
- Teenagers may not communicate their **needs or wants** clearly
- Solving problems can be very emotional – the teen may get easily agitated or upset when there is no clear, easy solution
- Remember where your teen is developmentally! **Teens' brains are not fully developed** for impulse control, expressing emotions, and perspective taking
- 父母和孩子追求的目标不同
 - “聚会时如果我早回家，很丢脸”（**同伴关系/fit in**） vs
 - “你不按时回家我很担心”（**父母担心孩子的安全**）
- 双方都容易情绪化 THINK before you talk
 - “你从来不让我玩得开心” vs. “你从来都不听我的话”



THINK 三思而后言

TTrue 真实（不夸大）

“You never listen to me.” “You are always lazy”

Helpful 有帮助

Inspirational 鼓舞人心

Necessary 有必要

Kind 友好

PROBLEM - SOLVING STEPS

1

Stay calm!

2

**Identify the
problem**

3

**Brainstorm
solutions**

4

**Create a list of
pros and cons
for each
possible
solution**

5

**Pick a solution
from the list,
and make an
action plan**

6

**Review what
happened**

BENEFITS OF PROBLEM - SOLVING STEPS

Using these steps can help:

- Improve communication between parents and teens
- Teenagers learn to solve challenges in the future (both at home and at school, work, etc.)
- Teenagers (and adults) learn to see the opinions or needs of other people



What are your GOALS during conflict resolution?

- Solve the specific problem
 - Get my child to do things my way
 - Prove I am RIGHT
 - Protect our relationships
 - Teach my child the process of negotiation and compromising
 - Keep my child safe
 -

problem
solving



WHEN TO USE AND NOT USE

When to use the steps:

- ✓ For negotiable disagreements
- ✓ For problems in your child's life
- ✓ For common disagreements (before they happen again)

When NOT to use the steps:

- ✗ For problems you won't change your mind on (**non-negotiable**)
- ✗ When you are emotional or unable to stay calm during the steps

哪些问题是可以讨论的？

哪些问题是不可商榷的？

Note: The important piece is the process of using the steps, not the outcome!



STEP 1: STAY CALM AND FIND THE RIGHT TIMING

- When a problem arises, it is natural to get emotional or upset
 - This may make it harder to think clearly and to use the problem-solving steps
 - 放松训练
- If your teenager brings up a problem and you feel yourself getting angry or upset, **take a step back**
 - Tell your teenager that you understand their concerns and will talk to them about it at a later time (give a specific: “I will come talk to you about this in 30 minutes”)
 - 退一步海阔天空
 - 家和万事兴
- **Caveat: having positive relationship with your child is essential for problem solving steps**

Calm

STEP 2: IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM

- Identify one problem that is causing you or your teen difficulty
- Tips:
 - Get a clear definition of the problem and make the problem as specific as possible
 - Only consider one problem at a time – this makes problem-solving more manageable
 - Remember that you don't need to solve the problem right away!



IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM: EXAMPLE

- Your child comes to you and says...

“You don’t let me do anything fun!”

- This is an unclear definition, as you don’t know exactly what they need or want.
他们需要什么？
- *What could the parent say to better understand the problem?*
 - Use you active listening skills from week 3

IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM: EXAMPLE

Teen: You don't let me do anything fun!

Parent: Is there a particular activity or event you're thinking of that I won't let you go to?

Teen: You won't let me play video games with my friends!

EXAMPLE

STEP 3: BRAINSTORM SOLUTIONS

- With your child, generate as many possible solutions as you can
- Tips:
 - Consider ALL solutions, even if you don't think they're good ideas
 - Try to **withhold judgment or evaluation**
 - **Do NOT** say "This is a stupid idea. It will NEVER work."
 - Use your imagination, or ask other family members or friends for solutions. The more ideas, the better!



BRAINSTORM SOLUTIONS: EXAMPLE

Teen: You won't let me play video games with my friends!

Parent: I know you want to spend time with your friends online. I am worried about your sleep and your mood. Let's brainstorm some solutions to this problem together.

What possible solutions might your teen suggest?

What would you suggest?




Poor Listening Styles

- Selective listening
 - Only hearing words/phrases that pertains to your own interests
- Attention to words
 - Only listening to the words and ignoring other nonverbal languages (e.g., tones, feelings, or body languages)
- Self-centered listening
 - Taking only your point of view and not considering the other's perspectives.


Recognize common COGNITIVE ERRORS!

- Patterns of thoughts that are inaccurate or unrealistic interpretations of events
- Cognitive distortions that can impact our communication and relationship with our children.

Unhelpful Thinking Styles

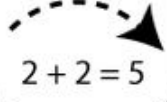
All or nothing thinking
Sometimes called 'black and white thinking'

If I'm not perfect I have failed
Either I do it right or not at all


Over-generalizing
"everything is always rubbish"
"nothing good ever happens"
Seeing a pattern based upon a single event, or being overly broad in the conclusions we draw


Mental filter
Only paying attention to certain types of evidence

Noticing our failures but not seeing our successes

Disqualifying the positive
Discounting the good things that have happened or that you have done for some reason or another

That doesn't count

Jumping to conclusions
There are two key types of jumping to conclusions:

• **Mind reading** (imagining we know what others are thinking)
• **Fortune telling** (predicting the future)

Magnification (catastrophizing) & minimization
Blowing things out of proportion (catastrophizing), or inappropriately shrinking something to make it seem less important


Emotional reasoning
Assuming that because we feel a certain way what we think must be true

I feel embarrassed so I must be an idiot

should
must
Using critical words like 'should', 'must', or 'ought' can make us feel guilty, or like we have already failed
If we apply 'shoulds' to other people the result is often frustration

Labelling
Assigning labels to ourselves or other people

I'm a loser
I'm completely useless
They're such an idiot

Personalization
"this is my fault"
Blaming yourself or taking responsibility for something that wasn't completely your fault
Conversely, blaming other people for something that was your fault

Examples of (Unhelpful) Cognitive Errors Impacting Communication

- Overgeneralization
 - “You only like to have fun!” “You are not doing well in school because you are playing all the time!”
- Labeling
 - “You are lazy! Are you like this in school, too?”
- “should” “must”
 - “You can’t be sad by this now. Suck it up and move on.”
- Comparison - overgeneralization
 - “I was never like you when I was younger.”
- “should” “must”
 - “Of course, shouldn’t students focus on studying?” “You are older now, so shouldn’t you be more responsible?”
- Binocular vision
 - “You are terrible at playing piano” – when only made 1 mistake
- Fortune telling
 - “if you keep playing video games and get bad grads, you will be picking up trash when you grow up”
- Blame game
 - “If it was not for you, I would have not been late to my work today.”; “I will be living in China having a much better life;sacrifice”

LET'S PRACTICE

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NJh_5ayj33w
- What are some emotions that the daughter may be feeling?
- What is the problem?
- What are some possible solutions?
- How would you say it differently?

STEP 4: EVALUATE THE SOLUTIONS 评估方案

- Identify the pros (advantages) and cons (disadvantages) of each solution
- Tips
 - You can either write down the pros and cons, or do this out loud
 - Remember, no solution will be perfect! Every idea will have some faults, and both you and your child will likely need to compromise



EVALUATE THE SOLUTIONS: EXAMPLE

Parent: Let's talk about the pros and cons of each idea. First, what do you think are the pros and cons of me allowing you to play the video game after setting a time to log off?

What pros and cons might the parent and teen come up with for this solution?



EVALUATE THE SOLUTIONS: EXAMPLE

Solution: You play the video game as long and stick to the bedtime.

Teen Pros:

-I get to play video games with my friends

Teen Cons:

-I have to log off when my friends are still on and miss out on the fun.

Parent Pros:

-I'll feel more comfortable knowing that you stick to your routines.

Parent Cons:

-You'll be distracted from other school work.

Think about a situation
of *conflict / disagreement*
you had with your child.

In a breakout room:

- What was the problem?
- Brainstorm solutions (as many as you can).
- Pick 1 solution & identify pros and cons.
- (Recognize) what was the common cognitive error(s) you or your child made, if any?

NOTICE:

Do you recognize any common goal
between the parent and the teen?

STEP 5: PICK A SOLUTION, MAKE A PLAN

- Pick a solution or a combination of solutions which are most likely to solve the problem for everyone involved. Then, create a detailed plan to implement it
- Tips :
 - Choose a solution that is easily implemented – this will increase the likelihood that it will actually happen
 - Plan out step-by-step how you and your teen will carry out the solution. Who will do what? When?



STEP 5: QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Do you have the necessary resources to implement the solution (time, skills, equipment)?
- Is everyone involved on-board with the solution?
大家都认同这个方案么？
- What exactly needs to be done to implement the solution? Who will do each part?
具体步骤和分工明确么？
- When will each part of the solution be implemented?
什么时候开始行动？



PICK A SOLUTION: EXAMPLE

Parent: Which solution do you think works best?

Teen: I really want to play video games everyday with my friends, but it will take time away from my schoolwork. What if I set a time to log off?

Parent: That sounds like a good idea, but I also want to make sure you do not go past your bedtime.

Teen: That is really uncool. But if it means I can still play my video games with my friends, then fine.

EXAMPLE

MAKE A PLAN: EXAMPLE

Solution: You play the video game only until your “log out” time AND you stick to your bedtime, 11pm

What: You choose a “log out” time and put an alarm to make sure you log off well before your bedtime by 11pm

When: Decide on the “log out” time before your next play time.

STEP 6: REVIEW WHAT HAPPENED



- Review how the solution went. If there is more that you and your child need to do to solve the problem, you can re-start the problem solving process or go back to the brainstorming phase
- Tips :
 - Oftentimes, problems are not solved after the first solution. Remember this and prepare your teen that the first solution you try might not work
 - If you or your child is unhappy with the outcome, talk about why this is the case and what can be done to make everyone as happy as possible
 - Remember it may not be possible for everyone to be happy.

REVIEW WHAT HAPPENED: EXAMPLE 1

- **Outcome:** You and your child agree on a “log out” time together. Your child plays video games and remembers to turn off their computer before their “log out” time /bedtime.
- **Next step:** Discuss with your child how it felt to solve the problem together so that you and the teen are happy. How can you use this process together in the future?
- 总结谈论



REVIEW WHAT HAPPENED: EXAMPLE 2

- **Outcome:** You and your child agrees on the “log out” time, but it does not align with the friends’ screen time.
- **Next step:** Go back to the brainstorming list. Determine if any of the options will make both you and your child happy. If not, come up with other possible options
 - Ex: Your child can play the video game, but you will agree on a “modified log out” time for that night and make sure that your child sticks to it.



THINGS TO REMEMBER

keep
in
mind

- There may not always be a solution that works for both you and your child. Try to find a combination of solutions that have advantages for both you and your teen
- If a solution doesn't work, have an open conversation with your teen about why this is the case. Make it clear that other problems WILL have solutions. Try to come up with a small solution to show your child you are listening
- Use your communication skills! Stay calm. Use reflective listening.
- Remember your goal: teach them how to solve problems (compromise and negotiate) V.S. prove you are always RIGHT “家和万事兴”
- Remember that your child (and you) may be feeling emotional

QUESTIONS?

