

## When it comes to parenting adolescents, think of these 5 R's:



### 1. Re-set

This is a strategy that can begin when kids are younger; think of “time-outs”. Effective time-outs are not a punishment, but rather an opportunity for your child to calm down and make a better choice. The same logic applies to adolescents; give your child an opportunity to calm down if you see that an argument is getting heated. Model effective coping skills by showing your teen how you can calm down when you start to get angry; if you need to walk away from an argument to calm down, do it! Allow your child to walk away from you, but ALWAYS seek them out after a short while, specifically, when you can resume talking calmly.

### 2. Remove Privileges (but first set clear rules)

Before you get into your next argument with your child, discuss the rules of the house and the consequences for breaking these rules. Remember that cell phones, videos games, social media access, hanging out with friends, and driving are all privileges and can all be removed if your child chooses not to follow house rules. However, use removal of privileges wisely; for example, if you are always taking away the phone, it will no longer hold any value for your teen. If the phone is the most treasured possession, then save it for something extreme like physically harming a sibling or extreme disrespect. Also, remember that when you remove a privilege, start by removing it for short period of time (from a few hours to one day) so that if the behavior continues, you can increase the amount of time if needed. DO NOT give the privilege back until the amount of time you have specified is over. Be consistent and firm.

### 3. Rewards

Rewarding good behavior can be powerful if you are clear about what your teen has to do to earn something of value. Small rewards can be super effective too. For instance, watching a movie on TV with your child if they finish their homework early can be rewarding. Also, remember to praise! When it feels like the only time you pay attention to your child is because they have done something wrong, try extra hard to identify something they do well during the week and praise them!!! You may be surprised that your child is motivated more by positive reinforcement and not always a punishment. Remember, teens do value their parent's attention, even if they often don't show it and won't admit it.

### 4. Respect

We tend to respect those that show us respect. We value when someone considers our thoughts and feelings. We like it when someone in a position of power approaches us in a calm and clear manner when they give us a command or a task. The same goes for teens and adolescents; treat your child the way you want to be treated. If you lose your temper and say something hurtful to your child or someone else, apologize and discuss what happened. Model respectful behavior towards others and show your teen the appropriate way to handle conflict. When we model respect, our teens will learn how to respect.

### 5. Reach-out

Remember that parenting is NEVER simple and that you may need different support or additional techniques. Don't be afraid to talk to other parents, school psychologists, your child's pediatrician, or mental health professionals. Don't be afraid to show your child that it is okay to ask for help. Teach your child that it is ok to not have all of the answers and that it is always okay to reach out to others.

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## **Resources**

McNeil, C. & Hembree-Kigin, T. (2010). *Parent-Child Interaction Therapy, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.*, Springer: New York, NY

*Talking with your teen: Tips for parents.* American Academy of Pediatrics.

<http://patiented.solutions.aap.org/handout.aspx?gbosid=166251.%20Accessed%20Sept.%206,%202016>.

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## **Recommended Resources**

<https://www.mayoclinic.org>

<https://centerforparentingeducation.org>

<https://childmind.org>