

# Year Care Team Booklet

## Year 12 and 13

### (Circle Time)

**Objective: To enable young men and women to develop positive relationships with their family**



## **Topic 1: Arguing With Parents**

Arguing with your parents is totally natural for teens. From your hairstyle to your friends your marks at school to your television habits, your future plans to your curfew, it might just seem like you argue with your parents about everything. While this is not generally a pleasant state of affairs, it is normal and it will most likely pass. In the meantime, remember to argue fairly, argue respectfully and argue only when needed. It might be hard to stay in control while arguing with parents, but it will certainly keep your relationship stronger than it would be otherwise.

## Task 1: Discuss with students the meaning of “arguing”



### *Argue Fairly*

Arguments between teens and parents generally come about when both parties believe that they know what is best for the teen. Parents have been caring for their teens for over a decade, but teens are quickly becoming adults and believe that they are able to take care of themselves. If you are a teen arguing with your parents, remember that your parents love you and only want what is best for you. If you must argue with them, argue fairly by:

- Allowing each person involved in the argument to speak their mind.

- Refusing to interrupt others when they are speaking.
- Refusing to draw others in solely for support if they do not have a place in the argument.
- Sticking only to the topic at hand. Bringing up past hurts or issues will not help anyone move forward.
- Suggesting compromises that will show your parents that you have thought about the issue and are trying to sort things for yourself.

### *Argue Respectfully*

No matter how heated things may get during an argument, try to remember that your parents still deserve your attention, respect and love. This may be hard when you're facing a month full of Friday nights stuck at home or a week's worth of laundry that you don't think you should have to do, but in the end you'll be glad that you always gave your parents the respect they deserve. During arguments, be respectful by:

- Keeping your voice lowered at all times and refusing to shout.
- Sitting still and staying calm.
- Refusing to engage in angry actions such as ripping, kicking, throwing or hitting anything.
- Rationally explaining the reasons for your opinions and making a case for your side of the story.

- Staying until a solution has been worked out. Stalking away and slamming doors doesn't help make any point other than that you are immature.

### *Argue Only When Needed*

There is a thin line between having a discussion and engaging in an argument, but smart teens know that keeping their interactions with their parents at the discussion level practically guarantees that they will be taken more seriously. No one likes to argue, and the parents of teens can be especially weary of it, so keeping things on a serious and even keel will work to everyone's advantage. Reserve your arguments for issues that you feel passionately about, and even then only descend into an argument if you see no other way to get your point across to your parents.

Arguing with parents is practically a hallmark of the teenaged years, but out of control arguments don't serve anyone well. Teens who can remain calm, speak rationally and defend their points are the teens who will best preserve their relationships with their parents. Before arguing with your parents, decide what type of teen you want to be and what compromises you are willing to make in order to achieve your goals. You never know, you might just avoid an argument all together.

## **Topic 2: Avoid Pocket Money Problem**

According to the 2006 Halifax Pocket Money Survey, the average amount of weekly pocket money given to 12-16 year olds in the UK is £9.76. If you are close to this age group and your jaw just dropped in amazement, whether from how much or how little this figure seems, understand that pocket money is generally a gift from your parents but that different parents attach different conditions to what it must be used for. To figure out how much pocket money you honestly need per week, read on to help you avoid pocket money problems later.

### **Task 1: Discuss with students the advantages and inconvenient of pocket money**



## **Task 2: Help them to assess their Needs**

In the past "pocket money" was a term that referred to fun money or money that was not required to pay for life's necessities. Today there seems to be a lot more necessities, so when determining how much pocket money you think you need be very clear about what your pocket money must pay for. Take into account:

- Food and snacks.
- Entertainment such as cinema tickets, DVD rentals, books and magazines.
- Mobile phones and phone credit.
- School supplies.
- Public transport and other travel expenses.
- Birthday and holiday presents.
- Clothes and accessories.
- Beauty and personal care items.
- Savings.

### ***Understand the Terms***

When you have totalled up what you believe is a suitable amount for weekly pocket money, discuss this figure with your parents. Make sure that you are all clear about the terms of your pocket money, including:

- What it must cover.
- If it is being given freely or you if need to "work" for it by doing chores, keeping up your grades, etc.

- If it can ever be withheld, such as for punishment or until you perform a certain chore.
- If you will be able to reassess this figure or ask for a "pay rise" in the future.
- If other money, such as birthday money or holiday money must be earmarked for certain expenses or put into savings.

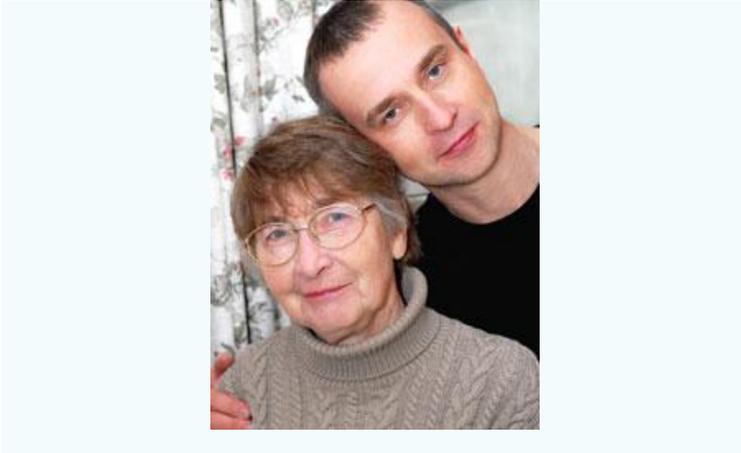
### *Supplementing Your Pocket Money*

If you consider your pocket money allowance too small, there may be ways to supplement this figure. Consider:

- Taking on a steady part time job.
- Taking on extra chores around the house.
- Helping your parents with their work, such as by typing or running errands for them.
- Tutoring other students.
- Babysitting for family.
- Asking your parents about joining a car boot sale, rummage sale or posting items on eBay or another online auction site.

Pocket money can be the bane of any teenager's existence. No matter how much you get, it never seems enough. Of course this is the point of pocket money, to teach you to budget and save and become responsible for your purchases. Prove to your parents that you are equal to the task and you just might be pleasantly surprised by the results!

## Topic 3: Caring for a Parent



It may not be fair, but teens are often called upon to care for a parent. Whether it is due to a short virus, broken limb or long-term illness, there are times that parents can't do it all on their own and a teen is the most suitable person in the home to lend a helping hand. However, just because you are available to help care for a parent does not mean that caring should become your full-time job. You are still a young person who should be concentrating on your own education and social life, so finding support if you need it is imperative.

## **Task 1: Discuss with students the followings:**

### ***Understanding the Situation***

For teens who are called upon to care for a parent, understanding the situation is of the utmost importance. If you don't already know, find out what the injury or illness is, what the prognosis for the future is, who your parent's doctors or therapists are and if there are any types of medications that will be taken (and when, and how). When you are armed with all of this information you can begin to make informed decisions about what you can do and what you will not be able to do. For example, while you may have no trouble cooking dinner for your parent you likely won't be home to feed them breakfast and lunch as well. Once you know your own limitations you can begin to find help for when you are need it.

### ***Finding Extra Help***

As a teen, no one would expect you to devote your life to caring for a parent and you should not feel as though you need to do so either. Your ability to care for a parent is not linked to your love for that parent, so don't feel guilty or as though you are letting your parent down simply because you are unable to attend to his or her every need. Talk over your situation with your parent's doctors and therapists, your relatives and adult friends, adult members of your religious community, your teachers or even a school counsellor. These adults should be able to help you sort

out plans for caring for your parent in the short term, or viable options regarding a parent's care for the long term.

### *Knowing Your Limits*

Not only is it important to understand the physical limits of how much you can do for a parent, but it is important to understand your emotional limits as well. As a teenager you are not supposed to be as mature and responsible as other adults, but you are meant to have free time to sort out your thoughts and feelings about many different subjects. Drawing up a list of activities that you enjoy doing and can do on your own, such as indulging in a bath, taking a walk, going to the gym or even letting all your cares go away and napping for a little while, is a great way of always having an idea on hand when you need one.

Caring for a parent isn't easy at any age, but it can be extremely difficult for teens. Not only should teens bear in mind the physical limits of what they can do to help a parent, but the emotional limits as well.

**Task 2: Direct students to understand which criteria are required to be a carer for another person ( Internet/ leaflet...).**  
**Look at the Redbridge web site.**

## Topic 4: Coping as a Teenage Parent



Coping as a teen parent can be difficult. The demands of a child combined with sorting out your own future can affect even the most energetic, enthusiastic parent. However, there is help out there for teen parents and keeping everything in perspective can help keep you from feeling entirely overwhelmed. Coming to terms with your situation, finding out about assistance, understanding your rights about education and employment and finding support from others can all help you cope as a teen parent.

## **Task 1: Ask the student to define the term “ Teen parent” and to tell you what do they know about it**

## **Task 2: Discuss with the students the followings:**

### ***Come to Terms with Your Situation***

Many teen parents are surprised by their pregnancies, but just because you did not plan to have a child at this time does not mean that you are a bad person or that you will be a bad parent. It does, however, mean that you need to be prepared for changes in your life. Simply put, your life is no longer your own. You are now a parent, which means that you have to start thinking about the needs and desires of others in addition to your own. All of your decisions will now need to be made with the best interests of someone else in your mind. By coming to terms with your situation you'll be best prepared to begin thinking about your future.

### ***Find Out About Assistance***

All parents who are bringing up children are entitled to Child Benefit, but lone parents may also be entitled to further assistance. As most teen parents are unmarried, this means that most teen parents should investigate

whether or not they are entitled to extra assistance. To begin with, the parent who is not bringing up the child is legally responsible for providing financial support for the child. The Child Support Agency (CSA) is responsible for determining how much financial support is due to the child and then collecting this amount from the parent.

Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support and a Job Grant may also be benefits for which you qualify. For further information on assistance, visit your local Citizens Advice Bureau ([www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)).

### *Understand Your Rights*

Understanding your rights about education and employment will help you plan and prepare for your future. In short, you can not be excluded from school or prohibited from working because you are a teen parent. Contact your local authority for more information on your education as a teen parent. If you feel that you are being discriminated against in employment due to your status as a teen parent, contact a Citizens Advice Bureau or Community Legal Advice ([www.clsdirect.org.uk](http://www.clsdirect.org.uk)) in order to find out more about your situation.

## *Find Support*

Many teen parents feel that they are unsupported as they attempt to cope with caring for a child and the other demands of their lives, and most find great support from belonging to a group of other lone parents in a similar situation. If you think that you might like to meet with other people who understand what you are going through, contact your local authority to ask if such groups exist and keep your eyes open to community notice-boards and newspapers that might carry ads for such groups. Logging on to see if there are any websites devoted to teen or lone parent groups in your area is also a smart idea. If nothing else there are many sites devoted to teen parents regardless of their locations and you might find support and inspiration from them. Good luck!

## Topic 5: Coping With Sibling Conflicts

Task 1: Ask the student to define the term “Sibling Conflicts”. Have they experienced it? Personal experience(s) they may want to share.



Conflicts with your siblings are unavoidable. Close quarters, clashing personalities and competing interests mean that not only will sibling conflicts occur, but they will probably occur fairly consistently. If you find that you spend a great amount of your time at home bickering with your sisters, bothering your brothers or fighting with them both, then it's time you learn how to cope with sibling conflict.

## **Task 2: Discuss with the students the followings:**

### ***Find the Root Cause***

Sibling conflicts always have a root cause. That is not to say that all of the causes are justifiable, but it's important to know why a conflict has occurred. Often when teenagers fight it can be for petty reasons, but there is also the chance that something deeper is occurring under the surface. If it seems like your siblings are always picking a fight with you, investigate if:

- They are bored.
- They are hungry or tired, both of which will make them irritable.
- They feel competitive with you.
- They are feeling lonely or in need of attention.
- They are still too young to be mature and logical.
- They are having a hard time at school, with their friends or in a relationship.
- They still bear a grudge from a past argument.
- They don't understand your habits or preferences.
- They have suffered through a recent traumatic event.

### ***Avoid Future Conflicts***

Frequent fighting can sap your energy and put you in a bad mood. To avoid future conflicts with your siblings:

- Be the bigger person. Sidestep remarks or actions that are meant to open a fight.
- Ignore patronising or teasing behaviour.
- Find a hobby that you can carry out alone and away from the risk of fighting.
- Get out of the house if you feel an argument coming on.
- Offer to involve your siblings in your plans, if they can behave appropriately.
- Open an honest discussion with your siblings. See if anything is bothering them.
- Enlist the aid of your parents or another trusted adult if you are worried.

### *Resolving Sibling Conflicts*

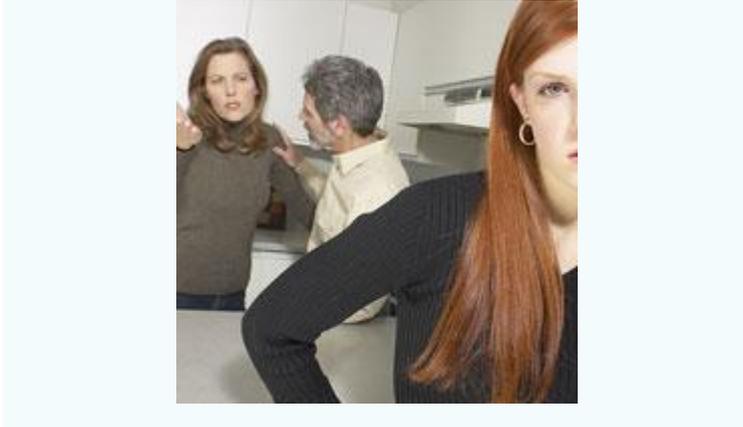
Even despite your best efforts, conflicts with you siblings will still occur so when they do, resolve your arguments in a timely manner and let everyone move on with their lives.

Remember to:

- Learn to compromise. No one likes to feel like the loser.
- Let it end. Don't tease or taunt when an argument is meant to be finished.
- Remain calm. Nothing productive will be achieved by yelling or slamming doors.
- Remove yourself before an argument can become violent.

- Know what you want. If you don't want to achieve something, then why are you fighting?
- Ask someone outside of the conflict to mediate. Agree to follow their decision.
- Not bear a grudge. Nothing will ever be solved if you must revisit a past argument all the time.
- Dealing with your siblings can be frustrating and tiring, but it must be done if you want any sort of peace when you are at home. Think about them like roommates, and realise that resolving arguments with your siblings will be good practice for the future. Most fights can be sorted by remaining calm and rational, but if they can't, consider investing a good set of earphones to block everything else out!

## Topic 6: Coping With Strict Parents



### Task 1: Ask the student to define the term “Strict parents”. What do “Strict parents” do?

Sometimes parents set rules because they fear for their children’s safety. Sometimes parents set rules because they don’t think that their children can do it for themselves. Sometimes parents set rules to stay in control or to bring about a desired outcome or simply because they can. Regardless of why parents set rules teens must learn to live within these guidelines. But what happens if parents are overly strict? Then teens must learn to cope.

## **Task 2: Discuss with the students the followings and share their thoughts:**

### ***Meet in the Middle***

Often teens don't recognise that they have strict parents until they brush up against a rule that they don't like. If this is the case for you, don't bother yelling and screaming about the unfairness of it all because chances are you're parents will ignore you until you yell yourself hoarse. Instead, meet your parents in the middle. Ask them to sit down with you to discuss:

- Every rule under which you operate.
- The rules that you understand and respect.
- The rules that you feel are unfair.
- The reasons why you feel that these rules are unfair.
- The reasons why your parents feel that the disputed rules are necessary.
- Possible compromises regarding rules that could be relaxed.

### ***Show that You are Serious***

If your past behaviour leaves your parents rolling their eyes at your level of responsibility, offer to show that you are serious about the compromises that you have suggested. Don't just give them empty promises, but rather let your parents see your intentions in your actions. Consider:

- Drawing up a contract that you are willing to sign regarding the compromise rules.
- Suggesting appropriate punishments in the event that a compromise rule is broken.
- Offering to take on extra responsibilities at home in order to compromise on some of the household rules – or better yet, just start taking them on.
- Detailing, in writing, exactly why you should be rewarded with compromise rules and what you will learn from the changes.

### *Stay Calm and Collected*

In order to succeed in coping with strict parents you'll need to not only show that you are serious about changes in their rules, but that you can be a serious teen as well. Stay calm and collected at all times when discussing your parents' rules, and avoid:

- Raising your voice.
- Interrupting others.
- Whining.
- Running away.
- Throwing/kicking/hitting things.
- Slamming doors.

### *Ask for Help*

If, despite your best efforts, your parents refuse to budge regarding the rules of their regime then you may need to ask for help from other adults. Remember, you'll need to

be totally committed and truly believe that your parents' rules are outrageous or you'll run the risk of looking immature and/or insincere. If you remain committed to change, then enlist the aid of:

- A relative or family friend.
- A teacher or guidance counsellor.
- A member of the clergy close to your family.
- A private or family therapist.
- A trained mediator.

Most parents make rules in the best interest of their children, but sometimes they go a little overboard. If you are coping with strict parents, do your best to speak with them seriously about their rules and the effect that they are having on your life. Show your parents that you are committed to compromising and you might be pleased with the results. But if things don't go your way and you truly believe that your strict parents are affecting your life, then consider asking for help from another trusted adult. Whatever you do, be ready to commit fully to any compromises that your parents offer and don't ever make them regret their decision. Remember, regaining lost trust will be harder than it was to bring about a compromise in the first place.

## Topic 7: Dealing With Divorce and Separation



### Task 1: Ask the student to define the term “Divorce and Separation”. Can they distinguish them. Ask them to list reasons of possible “ Divorce” or “ Separation”

Some teens see it coming - the bitter fighting, the name calling, and the door slamming - but others are totally surprised when they learn that their parents are separating or divorcing. Though this may be the best thing for your parents' relationship, it can be hard to imagine that being torn apart is best for your family. When it comes to dealing with divorce and separation, remember that your family is not ending, it is just changing. This may seem like the same thing at first, but in the long run you will come to

accept your parents' decision and hopefully realise that it was for the best.

## **Task 2: Discuss with the students the followings and share their thoughts:**

### *Give Yourself Time to Grieve*

Divorce and separation can seem an awful lot like the death of your family, and in a way it is - the death of your family as you know it, anyway. This is a major event, so don't try to gloss over it or ignore it. Give yourself time to grieve by:

- Crying in the bedroom, screaming in the shower or throwing plastic in the garage.
- Being angry at your parents, happy families and the world in general.
- Being happy or relieved that home is no longer a battleground.
- Talking it all out with your friends.
- Writing a poem, recording a song or painting a picture of your feelings.
- Working through your anger on the pitch, track or in the pool.
- Splurging on a little something to make yourself feel better, even if only for a little while.

## *Pick Yourself Up and Carry On*

It's good to grieve, but not forever. Before you sink into a deep depression, get yourself thrown out of school or irreparably damage your future, remember to pick yourself up and carry on with your life. A lot of teens find it is helpful to:

- Talk with their parents as adults and ask any questions they still have.
- Engage in a new hobby or activity as a kind of new beginning.
- Decorate a room, or even a corner, in their parent's new homes.
- Contribute to whatever visitation schedule is worked out.
- Ask both parents to continue visiting their schools, sports matches, plays, etc.
- Agree to ground rules promoting respect and discussion.
- Tell both parents that they will not act as spies or messengers for them.
- Let parents know when they will feel comfortable meeting new partners.

Though it may not seem like it at first, there is a good chance that your parents' divorce or separation will bring calm and peace to your family. Rather than suffering through an intolerable situation, your parents have decided to take steps to change it. Deciding to divorce or separate

is not an action that any parent would take lightly, and there is no reason to think that yours would have either.

Even if you don't understand it, trust that your parents' decision was made with you in mind. You don't have to enjoy it, but you do have to respect it and survive it. Good luck.



## **Topic 8: Dealing With Someone You Love Being ill**



### **Task 1: Ask the student if they have ever experienced a similar situation. Group discussion.**

Dealing with someone you love being ill would be hard for anyone. The pain of seeing a loved one suffering does not lessen as you get older nor does it fade the more you experience it. Unfortunately, dealing with someone you love being ill is one of the most emotionally painful experiences you will ever encounter, especially as a teen. With a few of the right coping skills though you might just be able to deal with it and find extra reserves within yourself to support your loved ones – an important ingredient for a full recovery in and of itself.

## **Task 2: Discuss with the students the followings and share their thoughts:**

### ***Be Honest About the Illness***

Denying that a loved one is ill will not help anyone. Instead, use your energy to face the illness head on and be honest about the situation. Discuss the details with your loved ones, and make sure that everyone is on the same page regarding:

- The name of the illness.
- The symptoms of the illness.
- Treatment options.
- Predictions for the future.
- How many details the family will be sharing with others.

### ***Get Down To The Details Of The Illness***

Once you understand the big picture regarding someone you love being ill, show them your support by getting involved with daily care and getting down to the details. By becoming proficient in a loved one's illness not only are you shouldering some of their burden but you are proactively fighting the illness as well which can be incredibly motivating for all involved. Find out information such as:

- GP/hospital/hospice/chemist appointments and schedules.
- Preferred doctors/nurses/orderlies.
- Medication types.
- Medication dosages and means of administration (drip/tablets/injections, etc.).
- Side effects of medication.
- Recommended complementary or alternative therapies.
- Advise about appropriate special treats for the patient.

### *Understand the Emotional Pain Of The Illness*

In addition to the physical pain associated with an illness, anyone who is ill will need emotional support as well. Be there with support for your loved ones who are ill when they need a good fight, cry, laugh or break. Help them sort through their feelings by:

- Reassuring them that they had nothing to do with bringing on the illness.
- Asking a professional such as a GP to reaffirm that the illness is not the result of anything they did, thought or said.
- Watching their behaviour. Avert outbursts or crying jags before they begin.
- Acknowledging your own emotions. Commiserate about your shared frustrations so that they know that they are not alone.

### ***Find Further Support***

Finding others who have fought the same illness, or any illness, may be important when dealing with loved ones who are ill. A major sticking point for some patients is that they despise well wishers who think that they know what they are going through but have never actually fought the disease or condition. Show your loved ones that you understand this by researching resources that will provide them with further support, such as:

- Support Groups
- Church groups.
- School counsellors.
- Private therapists.

### ***Take Care of Yourself and Try to Have Fun***

Often in taking care of others you will find that you forget to take care of yourself as well. Tiring yourself out will help no one, so be sure to eat well and rest up when you can.

When you feel that you need a break, don't be afraid to take one and remember, you are still a teen- you need to have the time to behave like a teenager and have fun.

Many professional carers recommend leisure activities to recharge flagging energy levels, so consider:

- Taking a bath.
- Indulging in a short nap.
- Going to the gym or taking a walk.
- Watching a film.

- Reading a book.
- Listening to favourite music.
- Playing a favourite computer or video game.

### *Ask For Help*

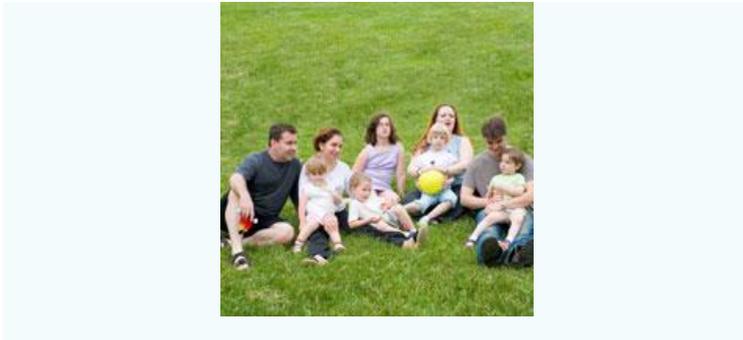
Though the above are practical suggestions for helping to cope with a loved one being ill, they are by no means ALL suggestions that a teen must take on board. Remember, you are not responsible for a loved one's life, and while you can help to make them feel better during their illness, it is not your responsibility to solely care for them or cure them. Pick and choose how and when you can help, and ask for help with the rest. Adults such as relatives, family friends, teachers, coaches and members of the clergy are all great sources of support who are usually more than willing to step in and help you sort out your role.

The cold, hard truth is that dealing with someone you love being ill will never be enjoyable. No one wishes pain on those they love, but there is much you can do to relieve the pain your loved ones may be experiencing. Being honest about the situation and becoming familiar with the details are great ways to tackle any illness head on.

Understanding your loved one's emotional anxieties and finding support groups will also provide extra comfort. Finally, looking after your own health and well being will ensure that you can remain a rock of support throughout the ordeal. Anyone would be glad to have such support on their side!



## Topic 9: Dealing With Step Families



**Task 1: Ask the student to define the meaning of “ Step families”. Discuss with them the advantages and the inconvenient of being part of a step family.**

Stepfamilies are a fact of life in our society, but that doesn't mean that everyone likes them. In fact, most teens are uncomfortable in their first few weeks, months and even years of living as part of a stepfamily. And it's no wonder - suddenly you have to live with new people, adjust to new routines, get used to new tastes and opinions, and all the while try to remain true to yourself and your birth family as well. If you are having a hard time dealing with a

stepfamily, these tips just might help you settle in and settle down.

## **Task 2: Discuss with the students the followings and share their thoughts:**

### ***Know Your Terms - Literally***

Stepfamilies come about when a parent loses a partner through death or divorce and decides to remarry (or move in with) a new partner and even his/her children. Consider that if your mum marries a new man, he will be your stepfather and his children will be your stepsiblings. If you dad then remarries a new woman, she will become your stepmother and her children also your stepsiblings. Can you see how stepfamilies sometimes become large and complicated?

### ***Know Your Terms - Figuratively***

It is an understandable worry that as your family gets larger and more complicated it will lose some of what made it unique. Even more understandable is the worry that somewhere in this large, complicated stepfamily YOU will get lost in the shuffle. To make sure this doesn't happen, sit down and think about what defines you and your family. You'll be surprised by how easily these traits can accommodate new members, if you want them to.

## ***Treat Your Friends like Family, And Your Family like Friends***

You might argue that your stepfamily is neither made up of friends nor family, but given time they will start to feel like both. The point here is that before you can become comfortable with your stepfamily, you need to give them a chance, and to treat them with respect during this time. One way to help calm your nerves is to remember that your mum or dad has found a new partner that (s)he likes enough to let into your lives. Would (s)he do this if (s)he honestly thought it would hurt you?

## ***Leave the Adult Stuff to the Adults***

Sometimes the hardest part of dealing with stepfamilies is learning the new rules and positions in your household. How will the money be spent? Who will discipline the kids? Who is going to cook and clean? These are all issues best left up to the adults of the house. If you are uncomfortable broaching these topics with your stepfamily, then stick with your own parent for the time being. Take your lead from how your mum or dad acts, and talk to them about any problems you foresee. As you live together with your stepfamily, you'll probably become more comfortable with them naturally anyway.

## ***Move at Your Own Pace***

It may be that your younger sister takes a shine to your new stepfamily right away, but that doesn't mean that you will, or even that you should. Move at your own pace when

it comes to dealing with stepfamilies so that you don't have to jump outside of all of your comfort zones all at once. Even if you move at a snail's pace towards adjusting to your stepfamily that's fine, as long as you are giving it a chance and accepting changes as you go along.

Dealing with stepfamilies can be a frustrating, tiring and worrisome business. Give yourself permission to have doubts, but also ask yourself to accept that changes are inevitable and it will take a while before you feel comfortable again. Don't be afraid to admit your fears, but make sure that you celebrate your milestones and successes as well.

## Topic 10: Fostering and Adopting - Teenagers



**Task 1: Ask the student to define the following terms “Fostering” and “Adopting”. Discuss with them the advantages and the inconvenient of “Adopting” and “Fostering”.**

Fostering and adopting teenagers is not necessarily an easy task, but it can literally save the life of a teenager who has no one else to which they can turn. Fostering, or taking teens in temporarily, allows them to have a safe haven after traumatic or troubling circumstances. Adopting, or making a teen a legal member of your family, gives teens a second chance at the kind of life that they deserve.

Families who feel that they have enough love to give should consider investigating more about fostering or adopting teenagers.

## **Task 2: Discuss with the students the followings and share their thoughts:**

### ***Fostering Teenagers in the United Kingdom***

When a teenager is fostered it means that the Local Authority is legally responsible for the teen, but families or individuals are needed to carry out the day to day tasks of caring for him or her. How long a teen remains fostered will depend upon his or her specific case. For example, teens with certain disabilities may remain in the care of the Local Authority for the rest of their lives while other teens may only stay in the care of the Local Authority until they reach a legal age limit and still others may return to their own family if circumstances permit. Foster parents who undertake responsibilities for teens are paid for their efforts, usually a weekly fostering fee plus maintenance per child. Each teen that is fostered generally has a care plan that provides more information on the types of decisions made regarding his or her best interested. People interested in becoming foster parents should contact their Local Authority to find out more about fostering in their area.

## *Adopting Teenagers in the United Kingdom*

Younger teens in the United Kingdom who can not live with their birth families are fostered by the Local Authority, meaning that the government has legal responsibility for them and they live with temporary foster parents.

Individuals who want to make these teens a legal and permanent part of their families will need to be approved first by an adoption agency and then by the Local Authority. This also holds true for individuals who wish to adopt teen relatives, teens from other areas of the country and teens from other countries. When teens are adopted, an Adoption Order is issued. This means that the birth parents have no further legal rights or responsibilities regarding the teen and the adoptive parents assume them instead. Once an Adoption Order is issued it can not be revoked. However, teens may desire to keep in touch with their birth families in the manner of an “open adoption”.

This is something that each family will need to work out for themselves.

Fostering and adopting are both means by which teens are given new, safe, supportive homes. While fostering tends to be a more temporary measure, adopting is permanent. However, both are important in order to remove teens from unhealthy environments and allow them to move towards a brighter future. Individuals who would like more information on becoming a foster parent or an adoptive parent should contact the Local Authorities in their area to find out about these processes.

## **Topic 11: How to Deal with Pressure From Parents**



### **Task 1: Ask students why would parents put pressure on them? What type of reactions can follow? (anxiety, anger, eating disorder...)**

Most parents just want what is best for their children, but when their ideas of what is best for you don't quite match your own, frustration and anger can run rampant. To try to help you see things their way, parents may resort to pressuring you without even realising it. If you feel that one, or both, of your parents is pressuring you to act or

think a certain way, use this handy how-to guide to dealing with parent pressure.

## **Task 2: Ask them to find strategies to deal with pressure from parents. Discuss with the students the followings and share their thoughts:**

### ***Remain Calm***

Even if it is the tenth time this hour that your mother has told you to stop slouching/watch your mouth/put away your laundry, remain calm. Getting into a screaming match may help you blow off some steam, but if you want your parents to listen to what you have to say, make sure that you say it in a reasonable tone. Remaining calm and speaking seriously will convey to your parents that you:

- Have given your topic serious thought.
- Can speak about your topic in a reasonable manner.
- Are mature enough to have a discussion, not an argument.
- Will be willing to listen to their opinions during this discussion.

### ***Know Your Argument***

Of course by the time your parents realise that you are willing to have a discussion with them, you really must be

ready to have this discussion. Make sure that you know your argument and can present it in a convincing manner. It doesn't matter if you are trying to make them understand your desire to dye your hair, defer university or sell your younger brother; the aspects of a convincing argument remain the same:

- Know your own mind and be clear about your main points - remind them that you only want to experiment with dying your hair blonde, not pink or purple, and that you are perfectly willing to use only semi-permanent dye.
- Research evidence or, even better, statistics - if you can tell your parents that you understand their desire for you to go to university, but you would prefer to be one of the 88% (or whatever you discover it really is) that defer to take a gap year, they will be more likely to listen to you as you explain why.
- Present an alternative plan - explain your reasons for wanting to sell your younger brother, but if your parents don't seem convinced offer an alternative such as sending him to boarding school to show that you understand their hesitations.

### *Enlist the Aid of an Expert*

It's highly unlikely that you will be able to bring in Sir Alex Ferguson to explain to your father why he must give up his dreams of you one day playing for Manchester United, but

it is feasible that you can find another kind of expert - an expert on your father. Think of family and friends who are used to the way your parents' minds work and may have seen them put pressure on you. Options include:

- Your aunts and uncles (your parents' brothers and sisters).
- Your grandparents (your parents' own mother and father).
- Family friends (look for someone who has known your parents for decades).
- Your older siblings (they've probably endured similar pressure and have survived).
- A favourite teacher or coach (if they know you have a talent, they will help you fight for it and if they know that you don't have a talent, they may be able to explain this to your parents).
- School counsellor (they are wicked at getting parents to see the big picture).

### *Be Willing to Compromise*

Life's not fair; no doubt you know that already, so expecting to get your way all of the time is unrealistic. When your parents pressure you, they do so because they are passionate about the subject and it is unlikely that they will back off completely. Show your parents that you understand at least some of their passion by being willing to compromise. Try to find a middle ground - you'll study French for an hour every night but not with the silly tutor

they found, you'll consider babysitting your cousins regularly if they'll consider subsidising your mobile phone bills - and hopefully you'll find something you can agree upon.

Parent pressure can make your home life a living hell, but following these handy hints should help lessen the pressure and let you all meet in the middle. If, however, your parents are pressuring you to the point that you feel endangered either physically or mentally, contact a trusted adult such as a family friend, teacher, doctor or policeman immediately.

Otherwise, hold tight because this too shall pass!

## **Topic 12: Living With Older Parents**



### **Task 1: Discuss with the students the advantages and the inconvenients of living with older parents.**

Few generations ago the odds would have been good that you and your best friends had parents roughly the same age, but those days are over. Today, parents' ages span several decades meaning that many more children and teenagers are living with parents who were aged 40 or over when they were born. Living with older parents brings it own unique blessings and obstacles, but when you get down to the things that really matter - love and support - your parents ages don't matter anyway.

## ***Benefits of Living with Older Parents***

While all parents are different, there can be some generalisations made across the disparate group now referred to as "older parents." When parents aged 40 or over decide to have children, they often do so:

- With greater life experience to pass on to their offspring.
- With a maturity that will help the family understand what is important.
- Because they want to start a loving family.
- Confident in a career, making their home lives more secure.
- With a support system in place.
- Having watched others parent for decades.

## ***Obstacles of Living with Older Parents***

There are some obstacles unique to families headed by older parents, though it must be remembered that all families face obstacles so it is not down to a parent's age that complications may occur. Some of the specific challenges faced by older parents and their children include:

- Parents who have less energy than they may have had when they were younger.
- Parents who are not as in touch with pop culture as younger parents.

- Parents who find it harder to relate to younger parents of children the same age.
- Parents who face retirement and less cash flow while still supporting dependent children.
- Parents who face age-related medical conditions while still supporting dependent children.

## **Task 2: Discuss with the students the following and share their thoughts:**

### *Living with Any Parent*

Regardless of their age, living with any parent requires a good deal of patience. Keeping your home calm and peaceful will benefit the entire family, so:

- Agree to ground rules about behaviour, spending money, healthy habits, etc.
- Discuss your concerns rather than shouting them at your parents.
- Take responsibility for all of your actions and admit when you are wrong.
- Keep your house, especially your room, clean and tidy.
- Look after all of your clothes and possessions and keep them in good working order.

The old saying goes that you are as young as you feel, and this is often very true for older parents. If you are the

teenager of older parents, rejoice in all that you can learn from them and the safe, secure environment they provide you with. If you face particular challenges due to your parents' ages, discuss them calmly and suggest logical compromises or solutions. Good luck

## **Topic 12: Negotiating Greater Independence**



### **Task 1: Ask the students to define the term “ Greater Independence”. Discuss with them their “ Household Rules”.**

Even if you and your parents have sat down and hammered out compromises regarding the house rules once there will come a time in the following weeks, months or even years when it becomes obvious that you need greater independence. Unfortunately, this time will probably not arrive as soon as you want it to. The key to negotiating greater independence from your parents is to

wait until you need it, not just want it, and to prove that you are ready for it. When you are certain of these two things, ask your parents to sit down with you again and revise the house rules. This may seem like a hassle, but only if you all agree to these revisions can you be sure that you have negotiated greater independence with everyone's blessing.

## **Task 1: Discuss with the students the following and share their thoughts:**

### ***Determine that You Need Greater Independence***

It can be hard to know when your desire for greater independence becomes an actual need. It might seem like you need to be at a party on Friday night, but short of your social life taking a hit, your life will probably not be worse off if you miss it. However, if you are starring in the school play and can't attend night time rehearsals because of your curfew then this could have serious repercussions not just to your social life but to your personal aspirations, commitment to the cast and crew as well as university plans or even your CV.

While the first example is clearly an example of a desire for greater independence, the second is much more representative of a need for greater independence. As a general rule of thumb, when you are unable to take part in activities that enhance your personal life, education or career prospects because of household rules then you are

probably at a point where you can argue that you need greater independence.

### ***Prove that You are Ready for Greater Independence***

Of course determining that you need greater independence does not mean that you can simply walk out of the house and ignore the rules that you find inhibiting. Instead, you need to prove to your parents that you can be trusted with greater independence and thus that relaxing the household rules is both safe and in your best interest. The best way to do this is two fold:

- Follow existing household rules. This proves that you are trustworthy as well as respectful of your parents' wishes.
- Design a new set of household rules that addresses the needs for greater independence that you have identified. Show your parents how your solutions will work to fulfil the needs, and how the new rules will continue to keep you safe.

### ***Convene to Revise the Household Rules***

Just as you sat down to discuss the existing household rules, ask your parents to sit down to discuss the possibility of revising these rules due to your need for greater independence. When everyone is calmly assembled, begin your presentation as you would for a school project. If you

take this meeting seriously then the chances of your parents taking you seriously will rise.

You don't have to go so far as to prepare charts or graphs, but do have your main points organised and do try to remain professional during your meeting. Don't scream, yell, whine or cry, and certainly don't run away, slam doors or throw things if it looks like you won't get your way.

If your parents do not decide to grant you greater independence, ask them why they feel this way. Once you know their objections you can begin to overcome them and build a record of acting in a manner that they see as responsible and deserving of greater independence. With this new record under your belt, you'll be able to sit down again in no time to re-negotiate the house rules.

Don't be put off if it seems like this is a slow process – in fact it is one that you will engage in over and over again throughout your teen years so the more you work at it the more persuasive you'll become!

## **Topic 13: Parental Guidance**



### **Task 1: Ask them why parental guidance is important? Discuss the following quotation:**

**"Trust me, it's for the best."**

This is the battle-cry of parents all over the world, and sometimes they are right. Unfortunately, sometimes they are not and it becomes your job to figure out if what is right in their mind is also right in yours.

Parents will always offer guidance because, let's face it, it's their job, and as a teenager it is your job to use this guidance as a factor in your decisions. Sometimes you

may decide to follow their advice, and sometimes you may not, and this is fine. Just remember that as a young adult any decisions you make become your responsibility, so be ready to defend whatever it is you decide.

## **Task 1: Discuss the followings:**

### *Listen to Life Experience*

Simply by virtue of being older your parents have a lot more life experience than you. Many times they will not have experienced the exact same situation as you are facing, but they have already learned similar lessons that they will try to pass on to you. Remember that they do this because they love you, and often because they want to spare you the pain that they had to suffer. Common themes that all parents will have experience with include:

- Morality
- Love
- Friendship
- Romantic relationships
- Family relationships
- Education
- Work ethics
- Achievement
- Success
- Losing/loss
- Death

- Grief
- Guilt
- Frustration/anxiety/stress

### ***Follow Your Heart***

Though they may have more life experience, there will always be situations in which you parents' guidance is just missing the mark. Maybe they don't realise your own hopes and dreams, maybe they are looking at a situation through their own biases, or maybe they are just worried that by taking a risk you will get hurt. Regardless of the reasons, there will be times that you need to follow your own heart, such as when:

- Picking exam subjects.
- Choosing a college or university.
- Selecting a career path.
- Falling in love.
- Starting, and ending, friendships.

### ***Make Your Own Decisions***

When you are clear in your own mind about your goals, making a decision becomes easier. However, only a fool would totally ignore their parents' guidance. Remember that while the decision is ultimately yours, it is best to:

- Show your parents respect and listen to their advice.

- Look at every angle of your decision, including emotional, medical, financial and any implications for the future.
- Have a discussion with your parents, showing them that you have thought through all of the angles.
- Create a plan. If you are not going to take your parents' advice, they will often respond better if they know you have a plan of your own.

Making important decisions can be scary for a teenager, and most parents try to make it easier by offering guidance. Unfortunately when their guidance becomes insistent and/or widely misses the mark, it can just add to a teen's frustrations. If you have a big decision to make, listen to any parental guidance that is offered and think through all of your options seriously, but remember that in the end you are the one who will need to live with the consequences, so be confident in your decision. Good luck!

## **Topic 14: Surviving Embarrassing Parents**



### **Task 1: Ask them to describe embarrassing parents. What do they normally do? Ask them to list examples.**

Bless them, they probably think they look hip and groovy and who wants to tell them any different? Unfortunately tolerating your parents' embarrassing ways at home is a little different than being forced to survive them in public. If you fear going out with your parents due to their jokes/pronouncements/clothing/dancing/eating or any other mortifying habit, read on for a few tips on surviving embarrassing parents.

## **Task 2: Discuss the followings:**

### ***Pick Your Battles***

Undoubtedly there are a number of embarrassing things about your parents, but tackling them all at once will get you nowhere. Instead, prioritise which habit you'd wish your parents would stop immediately and make that the centre of your attention. For a little while keep track of when this habit happens so that you have "evidence" to draw on later, such as:

- Too much wine, danced on table at Susie's birthday party.
- Called me "honey bunch" in front of friends at cinema on Friday night.
- Wore Bananarama t-shirt to gym with me on Sunday.
- Pronounced best friend's lunch rubbish and made him eat tofu instead.

### ***Talk It Out***

Once you have a short diary of the behaviours that embarrass you the most, talk to your parents about them. Chances are that they will have no idea about how you are feeling, and their explanations might surprise you. Remember that a discussion will get you much farther than shouting at them, so:

- Speak calmly and clearly, expressing your concerns.
- Listen to their explanations.
- Understand that they will probably not be willing to change underlying principles or convictions, no matter how embarrassing.
- Be willing to discuss why you feel embarrassed.
- Explain that you would just like the behaviour to stop, or the behaviour to stop at certain times.
- Remind them that you love them, but you really can't take any more of their "fun"!

### *Rise Above It*

Sometimes, no matter how earnestly you plead your case or how much your parents want to please you, their embarrassing behaviours will continue. There are some Mums you just can't stop from wiping smudges away with their own spit, and some Dads you just can't get out of socks and sandals. There is hope though, as many teens find that:

- Not answering their parents when they are embarrassing helps to calm them down.
- Just agreeing with adamant parents will help them change topics more quickly.
- Shopping with their parents will steer them away from the worst of the clothes.
- Encouraging parents to donate embarrassing items helps clear them out of the house.

- Avoiding situations that you know will lead to your own embarrassment is for the best.
- Telling their friends about their parents' embarrassing ways prepares everyone for the eventual embarrassment.

The sad truth is that even the coolest parents on your block have some hidden habits that embarrass their children. Even sadder is that undoubtedly there are habits of your own that embarrass your parents. Remember that no one is perfect, so if your parents' flaws are only embarrassing you really should be thanking your lucky stars that no one has ever literally died of embarrassment. If it seems like you may be the first, talk with your parents about their behaviours and try to hammer out a compromise that you can all live with. Good luck!