

Parenting Matters

Quarterly Newsletter

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For Colorado Parents

Breaking up is Hard to Do ~ Remember?

By Kendeyl Johansen

Dredge up your first romantic disappointment. Remember the pain and unhappiness of breaking up - the uncertainty?

Teenage girls often cope with break-ups by talking on the phone with their friends or diving into the Internet for marathon chat sessions. "They review all the hurts and pains, which is soothing," says Gilda Carle, Ph. D., 'Love Doctor' for *Teen Magazine*. Margaret Loudon of New Jersey, mom to a 16-year-old says, "My daughter went off to camp right after her break-up. She basically threw herself into the activities there. She really reconnected with good girlfriends who have been her mainstay during the whole process. She said that being with all girls was the best thing that could have happened at that particular time."

Boys react to broken relationships differently. "Boys often become angry since that, unfortunately, is the only emotional option that society sanctions for boys," Carle says. Some boys hide their pain. Kerch McConlogue of Maryland learned about her 16-year-old son's break-up by accident. "We knew it was over because when we talked to him about the expensive long-distance phone bills he said, 'That won't be a problem anymore.'" McConlogue didn't pry into the details of her son's romance because he was very private about it. But she let him discuss it when he wanted to. "Respect



your teen," she says. "When a relationship breaks up it takes time to get over it, and the only way to get through that is to get through it."

Sometimes teenagers get into trouble while trying to feel accepted again or win back a loved one. The National Mental Health Awareness Campaign warns parents to pay attention to teens feeling extremely sad, hopeless or worthless. Carle advises intervening if a teen seems upset for a long period of time and can't shake obvious depression. Keep reaching out to troubled teenagers. "At first teens will reject a parent's attempts at intervention. Don't be afraid to insist," she says. Parents should set boundaries that teens must abide by and it's OK for teens to react negatively to the boundaries. "Tough love is actually interpreted by the teen mind as love," Carle says. "In contrast, giving your teen freedom is interpreted as parental disinterest." She warns that sometimes what teenagers say they want - or don't want - is not truly what they want.

Other red flags signaling a problem with coping are signs of drug abuse, continuous sleeping and disinterest in

things the teen used to love.

Heartbroken teens sometimes lash out when parents try to help. Carle reminds upset teens that parents are on their side and have their health and happiness at heart. When teens tell Carle that their parents are driving them crazy, she has them imagine their parents not caring at all. "Growing up involves making choices," she says. "They can either choose to allow their parents to be their ally - or guardian angel - or their tormentor. Their choice. In reality, who wouldn't want a guardian angel from time to time?"

Teen break-ups can cause heart-wrenching pain but eventually teenagers should be ready to date again. How can you steer your child toward a healthy relationship? "Teens are likely to meet others like themselves through activities and club meetings," Loudon says. Her daughter's former boyfriend was very active at their YMCA and got her daughter involved in the Leader's Club and the Teen Leader Camp. "I think that a teen with strong self-esteem is going to attract decent friends all around," she says. Carle tells young girls, "We attract not who we want but who we are. The secret to attracting good guys is to become your own independent person who feels good about who she is and what she's about."

Source: iParenting.com

Original article not represented in full and was shortened to fit publication.

Helping Young Children Sleep Better:

Bad Dreams

When you are awakened by your screaming child, very likely it is from a bad dream. Go to him very quickly. Most likely one glimpse of you and a pat on the back will put your youngster back to sleep. If you wait, he will become more frightened and it will take longer to soothe him down to sleep.

Preventing nightmares is more difficult. Try to remove your child's stress by being tolerant and loving, and by talking about the situation. Preschoolers may have very rigid and lengthy routines before bed such as getting a drink of water, kissing all members of the family and the family pets, listening to a story and a song, and taking a security object such as a stuffed animal to bed. These routines seem to help children develop enough confidence to separate from the family and stay alone in a darkened room.

Sometimes your child is afraid of something before she even falls asleep. For example, she may think there is a monster in her room. An investigation



of her room to show her there are no monsters does little good. Your child needs to gain control over her fears.

You can help her do this by showing her that you accept the fear, but that you aren't afraid of the monster. Perhaps you could say, "Let's tell that monster we won't allow him in the house. I'll walk him outside and lock the door behind him. Do you want to come with me?" This should calm her fear and will probably be fun.

At some time, most children have recurrent episodes of fearfulness that disrupt their sleep. Fears are often at the root of the most common sleep problems such as resistance at bedtime, trouble falling asleep and nightmares.

Here are some fears of children at different developmental stages that might trigger a nightmare:

Infancy: loud noises, falling, separation from parents

Preschool: animals, the dark, separation, imaginary monsters, going to school

School age: family fights or other family concerns, punishment, rejection by schoolmates, war, crime

Yet, sleep disruption due to fears is generally a temporary stage in a child's development.

Keep in mind that your main responsibility as a parent is to help your child learn how to sleep by himself or herself. Following the suggestions given above will help both you and your child.

Source: University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension

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Truth behind Teen Parenting

By Robin Hewell

Becoming a parent requires a lot of adjustments including physical, emotional, financial and general lifestyle changes. The new child will also come bearing his own set of needs. All of these challenges cannot compare to the priceless benefits of having a child and growing into a family. However, the challenges of being a parent may be greater when the parent is a teenager.

Relationships

- Teen parents should take time in considering the outcome of their personal relationships before they start a family. Marriage should require thought and time. It is an investment that should not be rushed.

Residence

- More people equals more space. In this day and age, housing costs are on the rise and may be expensive, especially for teens that have lower incomes. With this in mind teens may find it hard to find proper housing.

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Skills for Parenting

- Teenagers will be in the process of growing themselves. Therefore at a time when they are just learning about themselves, they will have to start learning about how to become parents and care for another life; the life of their baby.

The Way People React

- When a teen's friends, family and loved ones learn about their pregnancy, they will present a wide range of emotions. They may react with anger, sadness, joy, or confusion. Whatever the reaction, a teen parent should put forth extra effort in communicating with them in order to gain understanding and support

through this transitional time.



Finances

- Most teens are in the process of learning the skills of money management. Budgeting and managing money will become a necessity in a teen parent's lifestyle, and may be difficult due to their low income and funds.

Education/Employment

- Some teens may decide to stay in school, some may enter the workforce and some may attempt both responsibilities. Whatever the decision, the parent needs to think about the care and health of the baby and make a choice that will work with their situation.

Adapted from: Channing L. Bete Co. Inc.: Teen Parenthood



by Rich Batten

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Encouraging the heart of your child

Earlier this month, my 8th grade son and I joined 24 other dads/mentors and their sons on a retreat in the mountains. The first night the sons were sent out to their tents in the dark as their fathers encircled a bonfire. One at a time each son was called out by name to join his father to walk the circle of men. Eye to eye with a hand on his shoulder each man called my son by name and encouraged him on

his journey to manhood.

Although seldom verbally expressed, most people long for a blessing or personal affirmation of who they are and who they are becoming. It is never too late to look intently into another's eyes and with a hand on their shoulder give them a blessing - especially if that someone is your child.

Everyone does better when they receive words of encouragement. James Kouzes and Barry Posner in their business management book, *Encouraging the Heart: A Leader's Guide to Rewarding and Recognizing Others*, identify **7 essentials for effective encouragement** that may prove helpful as you seek to encourage your child in the completion of a task or activity:



- 1. Set clear standards.** Be certain your child knows what is expected.
- 2. Expect the best.** Communicate that you believe in your child and that he can do what is expected.
- 3. Pay attention.** Catch your child doing things well.
- 4. Personalize recognition.** Let your child know specifically what you appreciate and why.
- 5. Tell the story.** Don't be afraid to brag about what your child does right.
- 6. Celebrate together.** As a family, intentionally celebrate when one member accomplishes something significant.
- 7. Set the example.** It's essential that you, as dad, practice what you preach.

Stressed students turning to Adderall

by Brett Warner

As recently as a few years ago, students drank exorbitant amounts of coffee and soft drinks to stay up late studying or writing a paper. Today, students say they are saving their pocket change and shelling out bigger bucks for Adderall, the latest rage among high school and college students.

Adderall is a dextroamphetamine used to treat Attention Deficit Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder, neurologically based developmental disorders characterized by unusually short attention spans, said Christen Menzel, coordinator in the Center for Alcohol & Drug Abuse Prevention at the SMU Memorial Health Center.

“People are not giving it due

credit,” Menzel said. “What scares me about Adderall is if [the students are] increasing their frequency [of usage], they’re increasing their tolerance, and they’re not even aware of it.”

Many students say they use Adderall when they have tests in order to enhance their ability to study more intensely.

Menzel said doctors prescribe Adderall to people who have chemical imbalances in their brains in order to help them function at normal levels.

“[When people without a prescription take Adderall] they are experiencing the same kinds of problems that someone would if they were using speed,” she said.

As an amphetamine, Adderall is in the same family of stimulants as Ritalin and street drugs such as crystal meth

or methamphetamine. Although the drug is not chemically addictive, students who frequently take Adderall can develop a dependence on it. It can cause side effects such as nervousness, nausea, dizziness, headaches, increased heart rate and blood pressure, digestive problems, insomnia, loss of appetite and depression upon withdrawal, according to the Memorial Health Center.

“The primary hidden danger of abusing Adderall, or any stimulant, is it’s high potential for addiction,” Menzel said. “I think this is something that is overlooked and underestimated by many individuals.”

Source: Southern Methodist University: www.smudailycampus.com

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Putting Knowledge to Work



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