

Leanda Cawdry

is a registered psychologist specialising in

Adults and Adolescents

*Intense Emotion • Chronic Pain • Social Anxiety • Trauma
Sleep • Weight & Eating Disorders*

Children

*Emotion Regulation • Anxiety • School Refusal • Bullying
Social Skills • Family Separation*

*Cognitive behaviour therapy • Acceptance and commitment therapy • DBT • Mindfulness • Interpersonal therapy • Systems therapy
Assessment of learning difficulties, giftedness, ADHD and other behavioural disorders also available*

Parenting resilient teens!

Parenting teens can be very rewarding and also very challenging, especially when there are concerns about their emotional or physical well-being. I am often asked by worried parents “What can I do to help?”. Strategic parenting skills can reduce the risk of anxiety and depression, and provide a supportive environment to reduce the severity of the symptoms.

Here are my top tips:

Teenage development	What you can do to help
Your teen is learning how to have lasting and more mature relationships	Model a healthy relationship with your teen. Be warm and affectionate, make time to talk to them, listen to them talk about what’s interesting to them. Do things with your teen that you both enjoy.
Your teen is learning how to become a responsible, functioning adult	Slowly reduce reliance on you by allowing more age appropriate independence. Be in the background, ready to provide support when needed. Reward trustworthy behaviour by allowing more autonomy.
Your teen is learning how to manage emotions. Sometimes getting it right and sometimes getting it wrong. Teenage brains are still developing and they will continue to get better at regulating emotion, planning, and organising themselves into their 20’s	Be a warm and supportive practice ground for your teen’s efforts at regulating emotions. Provide opportunities for your teen to talk about their emotions, and be accepting about what they are. Model calm behaviour even when your teen is angry, anxious, or sad. Put in place fair consequences for rudeness or unacceptable behaviours but also show your teen that it is okay to get it wrong by resuming your loving relationship once the consequences have been given. If you are concerned about your teen or they are harming themselves, suggest getting some professional help in a positive and supportive way.
Your teen is learning to set boundaries and experimenting with assertiveness	Setting boundaries is anxiety provoking and challenging, even for adults, being able to appropriately set boundaries will give your child confidence as they negotiate more independent living. Allow your teen to practice being assertive with you. This may involve allowing your teen to say “no” to you, provided it is done respectfully and is reasonable. Your job is to create opportunities for boundary setting and then respect those boundaries so that your teen can experience some success. Guide appropriate respectful tone by initially suggesting a respectful way to assert needs, then reward the use of a respectful tone by allowing the boundary to stand or acknowledging that the request was respectfully delivered. Model respectful interactions between you and your partner or ex-partner, this shows your teen what to do and reduces conflict and stress in the home.

There are some excellent and more detailed resources available on the Beyond Blue website
<http://www.beyondblue.org.au/resources/family-and-friends/parents-and-guardians>.

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