



EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATING WITH THE TEENAGE GIRL

Trainer Guide

Continuing Education

Materials List

Standard Classroom Set Up:

Class roster/sign-in sheets

Name tents

White board markers

Flip chart set ups for small group work (easel, pad, markers)

Participant manuals

PowerPoint projector

Computer station with internet access, speakers

YouTube Video from Cingular entitled *Mother Love*

Freaky Friday DVD

Handouts

Handout 1, Text Talk

PowerPoint Slides (Optional-**Only** give if a participant requests a copy)

Competencies Addressed

103-1

103-2

103-4

202-1

TRAINER GUIDE

SECTION 1: Introduction

Time: 5 Minutes (9:00-9:05)

Objectives: Participants will

- Become familiar with the trainer and the training group members.
- Discuss the importance of the training and take the Text Talk quiz.
- Review the agenda and objectives.

Materials:

- Sign-In Sheets
- Participant Manuals
- Name Tents – consider coding name tents with stickers or some other visual cue for quick division into small groups
- PowerPoint Presentation (Trainer Resource)
- Handout 1, Text Talk
- Text Talk Answers (Trainer Resource)
- Trainer Evaluations (To be passed out at the beginning of class)

A. Introductions and Housekeeping (5 minutes)

Trainer Note: As participants are entering the room, the trainer should pass out **Handout 1, Text Talk**, and ask them to begin filling it out while they are waiting before training begins.

The trainer should quickly cover the following items:

1. The trainer should welcome everyone to the training and take a minute to introduce himself/herself and the title of the training to the group at this time, which should be on **Slide 1**.
2. The trainer should take a moment and explain the importance of learning to communicate with teenage girls.
 - First, any workshop with tips on dealing with teenagers is highly requested.

- Second, teenage girls are unique. Unlike teenage boys, they have highly developed verbal skills which make them especially challenging to work with. The goal for this training is that each participant will learn 2-3 things that will help them communicate more effectively with teenage girls, either in the workplace or at home.
3. Survey the audience at this time with the following polls:
 - Raise your hand if you are a professional working with teenager girls;
 - Raise your hand if you are a parent of teenager girls;
 - Raise your hand if it hasn't been that long ago since you were a teenage girl;
 - Raise your hand if you feel pretty good about your communication skills with teenage girls;
 - Raise your hand if you believe that teenage girls have lots of strengths and you enjoy working with them;
 - Raise your hand if you are glad you never had to be a teenage girl! (This one is for the men in the group!)
 4. Go over housekeeping issues by explaining that training will be three hours long and three credit hours will be given upon completion of the training. Also remind participants that there will be breaks given every hour, location of restrooms, emergency exits, silence cell phones, and to sign the sign-in sheet.

B. Text Talk Activity

Ask participants to take part in the Text Talk activity below.

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to review the language of texting and introduce and encourage participants to alternative ways of communicating with teenagers in general.

Materials

Participants will need **Handout 1, Text Talk**, and a pen or pencil. The trainer will need the answers for Handout 1 from the Trainer Resource.

Methodology

1. Ask participants to individually quickly finish filling out Handout 1 if they have not already done so.

2. The trainer should go over the answers to the answers to the handout, which can be found in the Trainer Resource.

Process

During the discussion of the answers, the trainer should remind participants that it's all about changing the communication with teenagers, so if texting works, continue to do it. Participants can get a guide to the text language by visiting Webopedia.

C. Agenda and Objectives

Ask participants to turn to **page 1** in their **participant manuals** to review the agenda and objectives, which can also be found on **Slides 2 and 3.**

SECTION II: Opening Slide Show

Time: 60 Minutes (9:05-10:05)

Objectives: Participants will

- Discuss the challenges of communicating with a teenage girl.
- Understand what developmental issues teen girls are dealing with today.
- Discuss some common behaviors from teenage girls.

Materials:

- Participant Manuals
- YouTube Cingular and Mother Love Video
(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9GQBABkFI34>)
- *Freaky Friday* DVD (See Administrative Assistant)

A. Challenges to Communicating with the Teenage Girl

Begin this portion of training by showing **Slide 4, Challenges to Communication.** This Zits cartoon clearly illustrates the “disconnect” between adults and teenagers when it comes to communicating with one another.

B. Challenges-A Small Group Activity

Ask participants to take part in the following small group activity.

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is for participants to think about challenges and solutions when communicating with teenage girls.

Materials

Participants will need a pen or pencil and some paper. The trainer will need a marker and a flipchart or whiteboard.

Methodology

1. Divide the class into small groups of 3-6 people.
2. Each group should select one person in the group be the recorder and another person prepared to be the spokesperson.
3. Proceed to the **Slide 5 entitled "Challenges-Small Groups."** Ask the groups to answer the two questions on this slide: **What are the challenges to working with teenage girls? Is it possible to effectively communicate with teen girls? If so, how is this done?**
4. Allow 10 minutes for the groups to generate their responses to the questions.

Processing

The trainer should take another 5-10 minutes to process as a large group. The trainer should record the answers on a flipchart or whiteboard.

C. YouTube Mother Love Video

Proceed to **Slide 6, Changing the Communication**, and ask participants to watch a brief video of a mother and daughter communicating for this next activity.

Trainer Note: Prior to this portion of training, the trainer may want to "test" the link to the video to make sure it is working properly.

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to explore communication roles between a parent (or any adult) and a teenage girl.

Materials

Participants will not need any materials for this activity.

Methodology

1. The trainer should go to the following YouTube website to play the Cingular Mother Love video:: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9GQBABkFI34>
Note: The video is about 29 seconds long.

2. After the clip, ask the participants to share their reactions to the video.

Processing

As participants share their reactions to the video, they may share answers such as “It’s about changing the communication,” “Did you notice that the roles are switched between mother and daughter?” Ask the group this question: **“Are there any messages from this video that apply to our work with teenage girls?”** Answers will vary.

D. Back in the Days

The following activity will allow participants to take a walk down memory lane.

Purpose

The purpose of this exercise is to have participants remember what it was like to be a teenager and to hopefully generate more empathy towards teenagers after the experience.

Materials

Participants will need a pen or pencil and some paper to write on for this activity.

Methodology

1. Proceed to **Slide 7** for this activity. Have the participants reflect back to when they were 13 years old (probably 8th grade) by thinking about the questions on the slide: **What did you look like? What kinds of clothes did you wear?**

Who were your friends? What did you enjoy doing? Participants may want to close their eyes for a minute and remember what their school looked like, smelled like, felt like, etc.

2. After that, have them write down one developmental issue that they were dealing with at that time. For example, because I wore an expander in 8th grade, I had almost a one-inch gap between my two front teeth. This physical fact must have played a major role on my self-image at the time because I didn't smile much!
3. After giving everyone a few minutes to write down their thoughts, ask a few people to share their ideas. Trainer may want to list these on the board before proceeding to the next question on this slide which is **"How did you want adults to communicate with you when you were this age?"**

Processing

Some responses to last question may include, "I did not want adults to communicate with me at all!" or "I just wanted an adult to listen to me, to respect me, and to not give me any advice." This entire activity should take about 10-15 minutes.

E. *Freaky Friday* Video

Trainer Set-Up Note: The trainer should see the Administrative Assistant for a copy of the *Freaky Friday* DVD and be sure the DVD is at the appropriate scene prior to training.

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to show developmental issues that teens deal with and how that affects the way they communicate during the adolescent years.

Materials

Participants will not need any materials for this particular activity.

Methodology

1. The trainer should show the first part of scene one, as the mother is driving her teenage girl and young son to school (1:50). Play the clip until after the teenage boy, Jake, walks by the girls at the school (3:44). The clip lasts about 2 minutes.

2. The trainer should proceed to **Slide 8** which asks this question: **“What developmental issues do you see in this video clip?”**

Processing

During the discussion to the question on Slide 8, the trainer might get responses such as issues related to clothes, body piercings, driving permits, friends, sibling rivalry, etc. Ask this next question: **“Have things changed much since you were a teenager?”**

Explain your answer. Explain to the group that the next part of the training will review developmental milestones for teenagers, because these milestones greatly influence how teens communicate with adults.

F. Developmental Issues

The next slide, **Slide 9**, lists Developmental Issues. Ask participants to turn to **page 2** in their participant manuals, **Developmental Milestones of Adolescence**. The four primary milestones for teenagers are as follows: One, going through puberty (and dealing with all the changes that occur to the body while doing so). Two, being able to think abstractly, which allows the teens to step outside themselves and take others' perspectives. This also explains why teens are very vulnerable to embarrassment at this age. Three, peers become the focal point for social relationships, with cliques and friendships influencing most of their behavior. Four, identity is a critical milestone in the emotional domain, and teens seem to be “trying on new identities each day.” The fascination with sexual identity will be explored in greater detail in the next two slides.

Slides 10 and 11, Fascination with Sexual Identity, emphasize the following very critical point about sexual identity: while teens have fully functioning sexual bodies, the decision-making capacity of their brains is not fully developed until the mid-twenties. When it comes to sex, this is a very dangerous combination. For boys, surges of testosterone plus rapid development of the hypothalamus (the part of the brain responsible for controlling body temperature, thirst, hunger, anger and hormones) make them unable to focus on much of anything but sex! While girls have surges of oxytocin* which causes them to pursue emotionally committed relationships with males (often blindly), boys pursue the physical relationships at the risk of everything else. To make matters worse, both gender tendencies are reinforced by dopamine (the neurotransmitter responsible for mood and feelings of pleasure) which flows freely when desires are fulfilled.

Result: Male Brain+Female Brain=Recipe for Disaster

**Note: Oxytocin is a hormone which promotes bonding and is triggered by intimacy. Excessive oxytocin in females can also lead to increased aggression and anxiety.*

Slide 12, the Adolescent Mandate slide, addresses the primary developmental issue for teens, independence, which is the process of turning away from childhood as well as turning away from parents. Any adult working with teens should remember that every encounter/action with teens should be approached with the goal of teaching independent living skills.

Ask participants to turn to the top of page 3 in their participant manuals, What Adolescents Do and Why. As Slide 13 explains, three (3) developmental issues which include: separating from parents, not listening to what parents say, and lying. Point out to the audience that the reason girls are more negative towards their mothers is because the bond between mother-daughter is usually stronger, therefore it takes more negativity on the part of the daughter to break that bond. Ask the group this question: **“How many of you lied (or didn’t tell all of the truth) or snuck around when you were teenagers?”** Remind the group to expect lying and sneaking around from teenagers because this behavior is a normal part of their development. Lying at this age is not necessarily a good predictor of the future. As adults work with teenagers, they should not ignore the lying, but should seek to find the underlying cause(s) of the lying instead.

BREAK

SECTION III: The Teenage Brain

Time: 60 Minutes (10:15-11:15)

Objectives: Participants will

- Become familiar with the basics of the teenage brain and how the brain affects behavior.
- Understand what role emotions and words play in a teen girl's brain.
- Discuss ways for communicating with the teen girl.

Materials:

- Participant Manuals
- *Freaky Friday* DVD (See Administrative Assistant)

A. Communicating with the Teenage Brain

After returning from a brief break, proceed to **Slide 14, Teenage Brain**, and ask the group this question: **“What do we need to know about the teenage brain that will help us better communicate with teenage girls?”** This question assumes that the group attended the workshop on the teenage brain as a prerequisite to this workshop. If this workshop is run as a free standing one, spend more time on the next slide (**Slide 15**) entitled **“The Teenage Brain.”**

The information on **Slide 15** can also be found at the bottom of **page 3** in the participant manual. This slide briefly covers some key points about the teenage brain and why teens act the way they do. First, their brains are not fully developed until about the age of 25, according to Dr. Jay Giedd, who works for the National Institute of Mental Health. He is a neuroscientist who, with the use of functional MRIs, has pioneered much of the research on the teenage brain. Second, a teen often shows poor judgment because her pre-frontal cortex, the part of the brain responsible for logical and rational decision-making, is “asleep at the wheel.” Instead, teen decisions are primarily made in the amygdala, which is the emotional center of the brain. This is one of the reasons why teens are so emotional. Third, teenagers are more aggressive and irritable due to surges of testosterone in their system, and they more impulsive due to lower levels of serotonin.

Fourth, surges of estrogen in girls multiply their neuro-linguistic pathways, making them very adept at verbalizing. This can be a strength, as well as a weakness because as we all know, girls can be very mean with their words!

Read the next slide, **Slide 16**, and then ask for the group's reaction to the quote. This quote, by Amy Lynch, does a good job of explaining why words are so important to girls.

B. Mixed Signals

The next slide, **Slide 17**, illustrates how teens cannot read facial signals like adults.

Adults will see reactions from teens that are often baffling, confusing, and inappropriate.

Ask the participants to give you examples of this from their work with teens. Then, ask the group this question: **“What emotion do you see in this face?”** When surveyed, most adults said “fear.” Most teens said shock, sadness or confusion. The graphic on the next slide, Slide 18, helps explain why this happens.

Show the group **Slide 18, Identifying Emotions**. Explain to the audience that the area highlighted in the teen brain is the mid-brain, where the amygdala is located. This part of the brain is used by teens to read facial signals. In the adult brain, the area used to interpret facial signals is located in the frontal cortex. The learning point is this: Expect teens to misread facial signals! Simple awareness of this fact can prevent miscommunication with teenagers.

Ask participants to turn to **page 3** in their **participant manuals** while proceeding to **Slide 19, Mixed Messages**. This slide breaks divides communication into 3 components: words (7%), tone (38%) and body language (55%). Notice that body language or nonverbal cues comprise more than half of all communication. Since teenagers often misread facial signals, this statistic has huge implications for communicating with teenagers. Pay close attention to both your tone and your body language. Also, anticipate that teenagers will misinterpret what you have to say. Read the example at the bottom of this slide to illustrate how your words may say one thing but your tone and body language may evoke a totally different message!

The next slide, **Recipe for Disaster, Slide 20**, summarizes all of the behaviors caused by the teenage brain, which truly can be a recipe for disaster. To review, lower levels of serotonin make the teen more impulsive, higher levels of testosterone make teens more

aggressive and irritable, and they are often confused because their brains are sprouting and pruning simultaneously. They have emotional extremes due to an overactive amygdala, risky behavior because of higher levels of dopamine, girls may say hurtful words because of estrogen surges, and teens who are sleep-deprived are more aggressive, irritable, and have difficulty learning. Tell the group that you will now look at strategies for talking to the teenage brain.

C. Talking to Her Teenage Brain

Ask participants to turn to **page 4** in their **participant manuals** for slides 21-24. Proceed to **Slide 21, Talking to Her Teenage Brain**. A key strategy for working with teenage girls is to not get into arguments with them. They are quick to fight and quick with their words so you do not even want to go there! If you are the teen's parent, use this line from *Love and Logic* if you want to shut down an argument quickly: "I love you too much to argue." If you are in a professional setting and the use of love is not appropriate, use this line instead: "I care for you too much to argue." Counting to 10, taking a time-out, or hitting the "PAUSE" button are great techniques to use instead of arguing. Be sure to set a time limit to return to the discussion at hand, only after both parties have cooled down. The other bullet points on this slide are self-explanatory.

Slide 22, Talking to Her Teenage Brain, discusses how doing something active while talking to teenagers is a great way to get them to open up. This strategy works especially well with boys. Because the teenage brain reacts to things instead of thoughtfully thinking about things, it is important to clearly discuss choices and consequences with teenagers. Be sure that the teen understands that with every choice, there is at least one positive and one negative consequence. It is dangerous to give them advice, so instead, give them options. Then, you can be the empathic third party when they make a decision that has negative consequences. For example: "I am sorry that you made the decision not to put gas in my car after you borrowed it. It will be hard not to have a car to use this weekend because of your decision." **Note:** John Rosemond's book, *Teen Proofing*, has some great ideas about the use of effective consequences with teenagers. **Note:** This book is referenced on the last page of the participant manual, page 9. The third bullet point on this slide talks about providing pleasant surprises as consequences for good behavior. Finally, the last bullet point on this slide discusses choices and consequences. **Before moving on, ask the**

participants to briefly brainstorm some consequences for good behavior, eg., buy her a bottle of wild nail polish or take her on an unexpected trip to Starbucks.

Slide 23, *Experiencing Consequences*, is a Zits cartoon that demonstrates the struggle parents deal with when trying to understand and communicate with a teenager.

The next slide, *Slide 24, Talking to Her Teenage Brain*, makes the suggestion that adults should not talk to teenagers about anything important before noon. **Ask the group why this might be a good idea.** Other suggestions for talking to the teenage brain include: expecting that she may misinterpret your facial signals, pointing out strengths of the teen as a method of engagement, and remembering to talk to the whole brain (including both the emotional and logical parts).

Slide 25, *Changing Your Communication*, is the next slide. This Zits cartoon suggests that adults consider changing their method of communicating. Instead of nagging, why not send a text message or write a note? Writing notes work quite well with my teenage daughter! *Slide 26* has a text message that might be sent to a teen from a parent.

D. Freaky Friday Video

Trainer Set-Up Note: The trainer should see the Administrative Assistant for a copy of the *Freaky Friday* DVD (if it has not already been obtained from the first clip) and be sure the DVD is at the appropriate scene prior to training. This second clip is about two minutes long.

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to help participants understand effective ways to communicate with a teenage girl.

Materials

Participants will not need any materials for this particular activity.

Methodology

1. The trainer should go to Scene 3 and rewind the DVD to the place where mom is confronting her teenage daughter in the dining room (16:00). The trainer should set the context of the scene for the participants. In this scene, the daughter has

stormed downstairs because she has just discovered that her bedroom door has been removed. According to mom, it's because the girl received 2 detentions that day at school. Play the DVD until you get to the place where Mark Harmon says "Who's up for Chinese?" (17:40)

2. The trainer should proceed to **Slide 27** which asks this question: **"In this scenario, how could mom do a better job of communicating with her daughter?"**

Processing

During the discussion to the question on Slide 27, prompt the group to remember what has already been covered in regards to the teenage brain and what has been listed by the group as effective communication techniques. Note: Mom is in "attack mode" in this scene, which can only trigger a strong emotional response from the teenage girl's amygdala. Mom could say "I love you too much to argue" to shut down the communication until a time when both mother and daughter are calm and in control. Mom could change her confrontational posture and move from behind the long table. Mom could also use some active listening skills and empathic responses to prevent the situation from escalating. Tell the participants that the skills of active listening and empathic responding will be covered in more detail after the break.

BREAK

SECTION V: Listening and Responding to the Teenage Girl

Time: 60 Minutes (11:25-11:55)

Objectives: Participants will

- Understand how to listen to and respond to a teenage girl.
- Learn communication tips when dealing with teen girls.

Materials:

- Participant Manuals

A. Listening

After returning from a brief stretch break, begin by starting with **Slide 28, Listening to Her Feelings**. Remind the group that before the break, they watched a clip from *Freaky Friday* illustrating what NOT to do when communicating with a teenager. The next several slides will address skills that you WOULD want to use when communicating with a teenager. These skills include active listening, empathic responses, and “I” messages. Active listening is listening to the feelings as well as the words in order to understand the total message. For example, “You feel sad because your mom didn’t show up for her visit with you today. Would you like to talk more about this?” Note: The goal in active listening is to accurately identify the feeling(s) and to then allow the person to talk more about those feelings. Do not try to give advice or try to fix the problem at this time. Just listen! Tell the group that they will now get a chance to practice this very important skill.

Proceed to **Slide 29**. Using the example in the slide, quickly have the group brainstorm some responses that would completely TURN OFF teenagers. For example, what you WANT to say is this: “You ARE going to college. End of discussion.” What you might want to say instead is this: “It sounds like you might be worried about going to college. Can you tell me more about this?” The goal in this exercise is to accurately identify the feelings behind the statement and to allow the teenager to talk more about those feelings.

Have participants turn to **page 5** in their **participant manuals** as you bring up **Slide 30**.

Ask participants to take part in the following activity.

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to help participants practice giving empathic responses.

Materials

Materials needed for this activity are page 5 of the participant manual and a pen or pencil.

Methodology

1. Divide the group into small groups of about three people, depending on the size of the class.
2. On the top part page 5 in the participant manual, there are several statements made by teens. In this exercise, small groups will brainstorm two kinds of responses for each statement: One, a response that will completely turn off the teenager and two, a response that involves identifying a feeling and using that feeling in an appropriate empathic response.
3. Give small groups 5-10 minutes to do this exercise.

Processing

During the discussion of answers, show the next two slides (Slides 31 and 32) to facilitate discussion of this activity and to allow some participants to share their responses to the statements.

Show Slide 33 to summarize what has just been discussed and practiced in regards to listening for feelings. This information can also be found at the bottom of page 5 in the participant manual. Remind participants that the key to this skill is to not give advice or try to “fix” the problem. Just listen!

Slide 34 has a quote that reminds us to look for the potential in teenage girls and to not just focus on their problems. This strength-based perspective is critical in working with teenagers.

Proceed to Slide 35 to discuss “I” messages. This information can also be found on page 6 in the participant manual. The use of “I” messages works well with both boys and girls.

When using an “I” message, it is important to state the behavior, to state how you feel when the teen is doing this behavior, and to request what behavior you would like to see instead. For example: “I have a problem when you come home after your curfew time. I worry when you are out late because you might have had an accident or something. I wish you would call me if you are running late.” The reason these “I” messages are effective is because beginning statements with “I” instead of “You” prevents defensiveness and it also enables the teenager to see your perspective on the situation. Before you go to the next slide, be sure to point out the “Turning the Talk Around” tips on the same page. This information comes from a very helpful book by Amy Lynch entitled *How Can You Say That? What to Say to Your Daughter When One of You Just Said Something Awful*.

Slide 36 contains a list of communication tips. This slide contains information from **pages 7-8** in the **participant manual**. Briefly review these points. They are described in more detail in the participant manual. Ask participants this question: **Are there other tips for communicating with teenagers that haven’t been discussed yet?** If there are more ideas, list them on the flipchart where you already have some suggestions from the opening activity. If there are no more suggestions, move on to the next slide, **Slide 37**, the **Conclusion**.

SECTION V: Conclusion

Time: 60 Minutes (11:55-Noon)

Objectives: Participants will

- Reflect on learning points from the training.
- Complete trainer evaluations.
- Pass out participant certificates

Materials:

- Participant Manuals
- Beach Ball
- Trainer Evaluations (Should have been passed out at the beginning)
- Participant Certificates (See Administrative Assistant)

A. Beach Ball Activity

Ask participants to take part in the following final activity.

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to summarize the day's content and help participants reflect on what they have learned.

Materials

Participants will need their notes from the day.

Methodology

1. Give participants a minute or two to review their notes from this workshop. As **Slide 37** states, **tell them to come up with one learning point to share with the group at large.**
2. Organize the group into a circle (make sure there are no open drinks around) and throw the beach ball to the first person who would like to share her learning point. That person will then throw the ball to the next person who would like to share. This exercise will continue until everyone has a chance to share their learning points.

Purpose

This is a great way to review the material and an excellent way for the trainer to assess what the participants learned from the workshop.

B. Sources and Resources

The final slide, **Slide 38**, lists some really good books on parenting. A more detailed list is on **page 9** of the **participant manual**.

C. Evaluations and Questions

Make sure participants have handed in a training evaluation and picked up their training certificate prior to departure. See the Administrative Assistant to get the certificates.

Thank the participants for attending the workshop.

ANSWERS TEXT TALK



- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| __D__1. 420 | a. who died and left you in charge? |
| __G__2. LMIRL | b. rolling on the floor laughing |
| __E__3. CD9 | c. naked in front of the computer |
| __F__4. XLNT | d. let's get high |
| __I__5. KPC | e. code 9: parents are around |
| __H__6. YGTBKM | f. excellent |
| __J__7. G2CU | g. let's meet in real life |
| __B__8. ROFL | h. you've got to be kidding me! |
| __A__9. WDALYIC | i. keeping parents clueless |
| __C__10.NIFOC | j. good to see you |
| | k. what are you doing? |
| | l. love you like a sis |

EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATING WITH THE TEENAGE GIRL

Participant Manual

Continuing Education

3 Hours

EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATING WITH THE TEENAGE GIRL

Agenda

- I. Introduction/Housekeeping**
- II. Opening Activity**
- III. Challenges**
- IV. Developmental Issues/Brain Studies**
- V. Communication Tips/Practice**
- VI. Conclusion**

OBJECTIVES:

- Discuss challenges to communicating with adolescent girls.
- Review developmental milestones of adolescence, including current research on the teenage brain.
- Practice the skills of active listening and empathic responding.
- Review tips for communicating with adolescent girls.

DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES OF ADOLESCENCE

I. PHYSICAL

- A. Adapting to Puberty → Emerging Sexuality

II. COGNITIVE

- A. Can Think Hypothetically / Can Think Abstractly
- B. Can Take On Multiple Perspectives

III. SOCIAL

- A. Social Relationships Center on the Peer Group – Friends are Everything!
 - 1. Fitting In – Girls
 - a. Insecure About Maintaining Friendships
 - b. Create Strong Attachments
 - c. Unparalleled Nastiness
 - d. Cliques for Self-Worth
 - e. Obsession with Personal Appearance
 - 2. Fitting In – Boys
 - a. Easier Than Girls – As Long as Not Odd
 - b. Most Important – Fun to be With
 - c. Competitive Positioning
- B. Experiments with Social Roles

IV. EMOTIONAL

- A. Self-Esteem Affected by the Acceptance of Peers
- B. Identity → Independence & Fascination with Sexual Identity
 - 1. Bad Combination-A fully functioning sexual body and an underdeveloped decision-making center in the brain are a dangerous combination!
 - 2. Double-Whammy for Boys- Rapid development of the *hypothalamus* coincides with a surge of testosterone, which can prompt sexual ideation to the exclusion of almost anything else.
 - 3. Girls have surges of oxytocin which promote the need to bond and to focus on relationships.
 - 4. Boys pursue physical fulfillment at the risk of all else, while girls pursue emotionally committed relationships, often blindly.
 - 5. Both gender tendencies are reinforced by dopamine, which flows freely when desires are fulfilled.

Male Brain + Female Brain = DISASTER

WHAT ADOLESCENTS DO & WHY

Two Main Forces: Onset of sexuality & a mandate to turn **away** from childhood by turning away from parents.

Adolescent Mandate:

BOYS HIDE – physically separate; sexuality forces them to become very private; cannot battle verbally so they avoid conflict; absent even when present!

GIRLS BATTLE – unlike boys, do not withdraw but fight; can battle verbally very well; lots of conflict; stay involved because sexuality does not force them away; bond with mother usually stronger therefore breaking that bond requires greater negativism.

PARENTS – are taken for granted; seen as “jerks” and a source of embarrassment; other adults have more credibility.

LYING- expect teens to lie and sneak around; avoid focusing on just the lying (look at the underlying issue); teen lying is not a reliable indicator of the future, but a factor in teenage development.

TRUST-is a big issue and a source of conflict. “I do not trust the situation for your peer group.”

REVISITING THE TEENAGE BRAIN

- The brain is not fully developed until about the age of 25.
- There is uneven development in the teenage brain. It sprouts and prunes simultaneously. Excessive connections from sprouting causes confusion and emotional extremes. Pruning causes rigid responses to situations.
- Teens show poor judgment because the pre-frontal cortex is asleep at the wheel. The pre-frontal cortex acts like the CEO of the brain. It is in charge of executive functions such as planning, judgment, and logical thinking. Teens do not appreciate consequences or weigh information like adults.
- Teen decisions are made in the emotional centers of their brains (amygdala).
- Surges of testosterone cause **both** sexes to be more aggressive and irritable.
- Linguistic pathways in a teenage girl’s brain multiply, due to surges of estrogen. This increases her verbal skills but also her ability to use “biting words.”
- Teens can not read facial signals like adults, even though they are very social beings. Expect reactions that are often confusing, baffling, and inappropriate.

7% WORDS + 38% TONE + 55% BODY LANGUAGE = COMMUNICATION

TIPS FOR TALKING TO HER TEENAGE BRAIN

1. The number one rule for communicating with teenagers is **DO NOT ARGUE WITH THEM**. Use a statement such as “I love you too much to argue,” and let her know that you will talk once she is calm. The key is to wait until her adrenaline and cortisol levels (and yours) have decreased before discussing problems. Teach her the art of counting to ten before acting or speaking.
2. When discussing difficult issues, avoid starting with “You” and avoid asking questions that begin with “Why.”
3. Remember that her teen brain produces excessive connections and this can produce overreactions. Appreciate the confusion she is up against. This means that it is important to clarify things for her. “It sounds like what you are saying is that you are scared.” She will do things out of fear that don’t end up well, and she will try to protect herself by lying. Look for her motivation (feelings) behind the behaviors and respond accordingly. When you understand how truly bad she feels and how emotionally out-of-control she can be, responding with softness and empathy is very productive.
4. Her enlarged amygdala perceives many things as a threat. Talk to her with soothing words so that you do not appear to be threatening. “You will get through this,” “You’re safe,” “I am not trying to hurt you,” “I love you.” Allow her to engage in gross motor activities while discussing emotional issues.
5. There is a gap between intelligence and judgment during adolescence. Remember that her frontal lobes (which are in charge of executive functions like judgment and logical reasoning) are not fully developed until about the age of 25. Talk to her about thinking vs. reacting to situations. Hold your teen accountable for her choices without responding in an authoritarian way. Respect her in spite of her decisions and calmly allow her to experience the consequences of her choices. **“I will honor your choice and allow you to earn this consequence.”**
6. Provide pleasant surprises as a consequence for good judgment or performance. Doing this will help provide a healthy dopamine rush for her!
7. Remember that the adolescent’s biological clock changes. Never talk to her about anything important before noon! Make sure that she gets “enough” sleep, which the research defines as at least nine hours of sleep per night!
8. Remember that a teenager often misinterpret facial signals, so expect that her reactions to you may seem confusing and inappropriate. Chose communication strategies that will help you clarify your interactions with her. Pay close attention to your nonverbal messages.
9. Look for strengths in your teenager on a daily basis. Pointing out what she is doing right will help to strengthen your relationship with her.
10. Talk to the whole brain. Have the flexibility to talk to different areas of the brain at the same time. Remember that she thinks using the emotional centers of her brain, so always try to be calm and in control when you speak to her. Use heavy doses of empathy. Clarify things for her by giving choices, instead of preaching to her. By doing this, you speak to her under-developed frontal lobes as well.

WHAT AM I REALLY SAYING?

	Teen Comment	“Complete Turn Off” Response	Listening for Feelings Response
1.	“I hate my English teacher. She doesn’t understand me and is so mean!”		
2.	“I can’t stand anyone at my school anymore. I want to switch schools!”		
3.	“This is the worst day of my life! I wish I were never born!”		
4.	Your example:		

LISTENING TO HER FEELINGS

Teen: Oh no! What’ll I do? I told the Gordon’s I’d baby-sit for them Saturday, and now Lisa called and invited me to her sleepover!

Parent: What you should do is... (Do NOT Try to Give Advice!)

Instead of dismissing your teen’s feelings and giving advice:

- Identify Thoughts and Feelings:**
“It sounds as if you feel pulled in two different directions. You want to go to Lisa’s, but you don’t want to disappoint the Gordon’s.”
- Acknowledge Feelings With a Word or Sound:**
“Uh-huh!”
- Give in Fantasy What You Can’t Give in Reality:**
“Wouldn’t it be great if you could clone yourself?! One of you could baby-sit and the other could go to the sleepover!”
- Accept Feelings As You Redirect Behavior:**
“I hear how much you’d rather go to Lisa’s. The problem is that you gave the Gordon’s your word. They’re counting on you.”

Reference: How to Talk So Teens Will Listen & Listen So Teens Will Talk, A. Faber & E. Mazlish (2005)

“Look for the potential in teenage girls, not the problem”

“I” MESSAGES

I have a problem with_____.
I feel_____ when you_____.
I would like_____.

TURNING THE TALK AROUND

Use the questions below when emotions start to “spike” between you and your adolescent girl; they can help you move the conversation in a more positive direction.

1. Is this something to react to?
2. How can I bring some calmness to what is happening?
3. What can I do or say that will show her that I am listening?
4. What is she feeling? What may I say that will validate her feelings (and won't make things worse)?
5. What can I say that will express my own feelings (and won't make things worse)?

Reference: “How Can You Say That?” What to Say to Your Daughter When One of You Just Said Something Awful. Amy Lynch (2003)

COMMUNICATION TIPS

Here's a summary of tips to improve communication with adolescent girls.

1. Begin statements with "I" rather than "you." Starting with "you" triggers defensiveness. Instead of saying, "You're really rude," say, "I'm angry that you walked out of the room while I was talking with you."
2. Avoid generalizations. As soon as an adolescent hears one, her mind starts to search for the exception to refute you. Instead of saying, "You never clear the table," say, "You forgot to clear the table this evening."
3. Listen without offering advice or judgment. Teenage girls generally won't take their parents' advice because to do so would compromise their independence.
4. To eliminate confusion, be as specific as possible when asking for something. Instead of saying, "Don't forget to take out the garbage," say, "Please take out the garbage before you go to school."
5. Stick to one topic at a time. Avoid this kind of sentence: "I want to talk to you about your report card, and by the way, I don't like the way you treated your brother last night." Instead say, "I would like to talk to you about your report card. When would be a good time to do that?"
6. Ask a question that requires more than one word to answer. Asking open-ended questions will increase the chances of a longer conversation. Say, "Tell me about your day at school;" instead of "Did you have a good day at school?"
7. When there is tension between you and your teenage girl, avoid attacking. Remember these three steps.
 - a. Name your feeling.
 - b. State the reason for your feeling.
 - c. State what you would like.

Here's an example. Don't say, "You're so inconsiderate. You knew I'd be worried when you weren't on time for dinner." Instead say, "I'm angry because you were late for dinner. I'd like you to call to let me know you're going to be late so I don't worry." Back off and don't attack or argue when she is moody. You are just asking for a fight!

8. Listening is more important than talking. Research shows that listening attentively communicates respect. This automatically sets a more positive tone and lowers her defenses.

Active Listening: **Words+Feelings=Total Message**
Empathic Response: **You feel_____because_____.**

When your teenage girl is talking with you:

- a. Establish eye contact but don't stare.
 - b. Don't interrupt. **Concentrate** on what your teen is saying.
 - c. Use short phrases like, "Uh-huh" or "I see." They encourage your teen to keep talking.
 - d. Keep an open posture. Don't cross your arms.
 - e. Ask clarifying questions like, "I don't quite understand what you mean. Could you explain that again?"
 - f. Check to make sure you understand correctly. For example, you might say, "If I'm hearing you correctly, you're angry with me because you feel like I put you down last night."
9. Compliment her when she does something right. In every contact you have with your teenage girl, look for something she is doing right and let her know about it!
10. If your teenager is not willing to talk to you, encourage her to talk to another adult whom you trust.
11. Other Tips for Communicating With Teen Girls:
- a.
 - b.
 - c.



HOT TIP: When dealing with a teenager, shift your style from manager to consultant.

Reference: *Why Do They Act That Way? A Survival Guide to the Adolescent Brain for You and Your Teens.* David Walsh (2004).

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Walsh, David. *Why Do They Act That Way? A Survival Guide to the Adolescent Brain for You and Your Teens*. Simon & Schuster Adult Publishing Group, 2005.

Wolf, Anthony E. *Get Out of My Life, but First Could You Drive Me and Cheryl to the Mall?* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2002.

Helpful Websites:

www.parentingteens.com
www.parentingteens.about.com
www.wholefamily.com
www.talkingwithkids.com
www.scholastic.com/parents

TEXT TALK

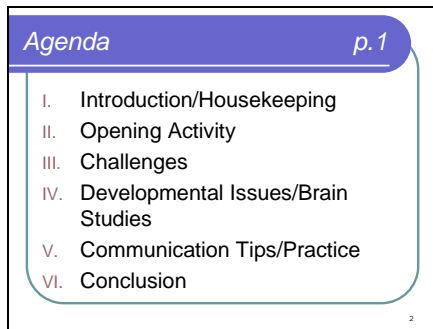


- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| ____ 1. 420 | a. who died and left you in charge? |
| ____ 2. LMIRL | b. rolling on the floor laughing |
| ____ 3. CD9 | c. naked in front of the computer |
| ____ 4. XLNT | d. let's get high |
| ____ 5. KPC | e. code 9: parents are around |
| ____ 6. YGTBKM | f. excellent |
| ____ 7. G2CU | g. let's meet in real life |
| ____ 8. ROFL | h. you've got to be kidding me! |
| ____ 9. WDALYIC | i. keeping parents clueless |
| ____ 10. NIFOC | j. good to see you |
| | k. what are you doing? |
| | l. love you like a sis |

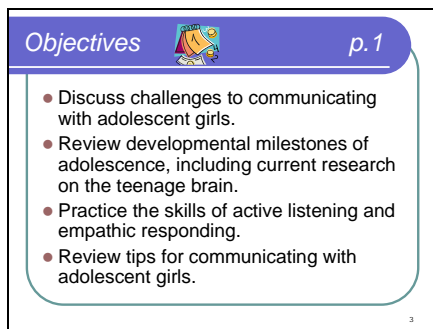
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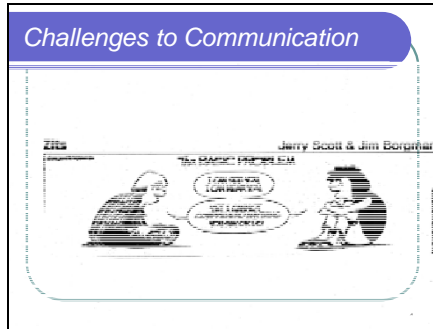
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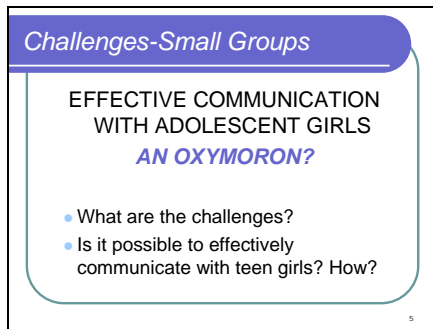
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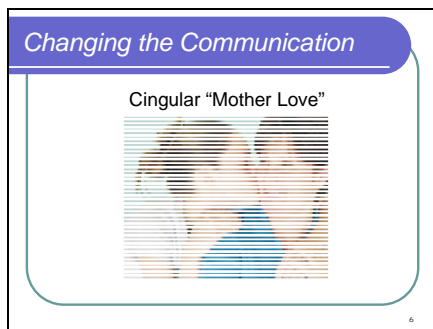
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Slide 5



Slide 6



Slide 7

Back in the Days... 

Reflect back to when you were 13...

- What did you look like?
- What kinds of clothes did you wear?
- Who were your friends?
- What did you enjoy doing?

What is one (1) developmental issue you remember dealing with when you were 13?



How did you want adults to communicate with you when you were this age?

7

Slide 8


DVD Clip-FREAKY FRIDAY

What developmental issues do you see in this clip?

8

Slide 9

Developmental Issues  *p.2*

- Physical: Puberty
- Cognitive: Abstract Thinking
- Social: Peers
- Emotional: Identity (Sexual Identity)

9

Slide 10

Fascination with Sexual Identity

- **Bad combination:** A fully functioning sexual body and an underdeveloped decision-making center in the brain are a dangerous combination for both girls and boys.
- **Double-whammy for boys:** Rapid development of the *hypothalamus* (hormone control center) coincides with a surge of testosterone, which can prompt sexual ideation to the exclusion of almost anything else.

10

Slide 11

Fascination with Sexual Identity

- Girls have surges of oxytocin which promote the need to bond and focus on relationships.
- Boys pursue physical fulfillment at the risk of all else, and girls pursue emotionally committed relationships, often blindly.
- Both gender tendencies are reinforced by dopamine, which flows freely when desires are fulfilled.

Male Brain + Female Brain = Disaster

11


Slide 12

Adolescent Mandate: To turn **away** from childhood and to turn **away** from parents

Key=*INDEPENDENCE*

12

Slide 13

Developmental Issues  p.3


- **Mandate: Must Separate from Parents**
Boys say little and want to hear less (HIDE).
Girls say lots and want to *disagree* with everything (BATTLE).
- **"They Don't Listen to Anything I Say!"**
Teens don't seem to hear their parents even when their parents are right. Why?
They no longer hear their parents but a voice in their head they think is their parent (adolescent conscience).
- **Expect Lying and Sneaking Around**
Avoid focusing on just the lying; lying isn't necessarily a reliable indicator of the future.
Sneaking around increases their dopamine levels.
Expect battles over trust issues:
Trust issues are big. "I don't trust the situation for your peer group."

13

Slide 14


Teenage Brain

What do we need to know about the teenage brain that will help us better communicate with teenage girls?



14

Slide 15

The Teenage Brain p.3 

- The brain is not fully developed until about age 25.
- There is uneven brain development. It sprouts and prunes simultaneously.
- Teens show poor judgment because the pre-frontal cortex (PFC) is asleep at the wheel.
- Teens' decisions are made in the emotional centers of their brains (amygdala).
- Decreases in serotonin makes teens more impulsive.
- Surges of testosterone causes **both** sexes to be more aggressive and irritable.
- Surges of estrogen in a teen girl's brain multiplies her linguistic pathways ("biting" words).

WORDS ARE IMPORTANT TO GIRLS!

15

Slide 16

Why do WORDS matter so much to girls?

"Because girls **build relationships** with words. They use words as tools and as weapons-making words the key to a healthy relationship with your teen girl."


Amy Lynch, How Can You Say That? Turning Hurtful Words Into Conversations That Heal, 2003

16

Slide 17

Missed Signals

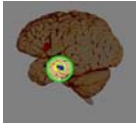

- Teens cannot read facial signals like adults. Expect reactions that are confusing and inappropriate.



17

Slide 18

Identifying Emotions

Teen Brain	Adult Brain
	

18

Slide 19

Mixed Messages p.3

Components to Communication:


Words	7%
Tone	38%
Body Language	55%

Words: "I am not angry at you. You can do whatever you'd like."
Tone and Body: "I am really angry with you and if you don't do what I want, it's going to get even worse!"

19

Slide 20

Recipe for Disaster?



BATTLE MODE:

Impulsive	Emotional Extremes
Aggressive	Risky Behaviors (Sex)
Irritable	Biting Words
Confused	Sleep Deprived

Let's look at some strategies for dealing with these behaviors?

20

Slide 21

Talking to Her Teenage Brain p.4

- Do not argue with her. "I care for you too much to argue."
- Wait until her adrenaline/cortisol levels have decreased before discussing problems. Teach her the art of counting to 10 before acting or speaking.
- When discussing difficult issues, avoid starting with "You" or questions beginning with "Why."
- Respond with softness and empathy. *Look for the feelings behind the behavior.*
- The amygdala perceives many things as a threat so use soothing words like "I will not hurt you," or "You are safe," or "I care for you."

21

Slide 25

Changing Your Communication

25

[illegible]

Slide 26

Text Message


WIU RE: HMW
OR
NO WKD 4 U!

26

[illegible]

Slide 27

DVD Clip-FREAKY FRIDAY




How could the mom in this story do a better job of communicating with her daughter?

27

[illegible]

Slide 28

Listening for Feelings 

Active Listening
Words+Feelings=Total Message
Empathic Responding
You feel _____ because _____.
Would you like to talk more about this?

Don't try to give advice or to solve the problem. Just listen!

28

Slide 29

Example of an Empathic Response

"I don't know if I want to go to college right now."
What you **want** to say is "You are going to college. End of discussion!"

What you **should** say: "It sounds like you might be worried about going to college. Can you tell me more about this?"

29

Slide 30

What Am I Really Saying? p.5

In small groups, brainstorm responses to the 3 statements made by teenagers.

1. "Complete Turn Off"
2. Listening for Feelings Response

If you have time, come up with your own examples for # 4.

30

Slide 31

What Am I Really Saying? p.5

Example #1: "I hate my English teacher. She doesn't understand me and is so mean!"

What you **want** to say: ("Turn Off")

What you should say: "It sounds like you are really *mad* at your English teacher. Can you tell me more about this?"

31

Slide 32

What Am I Really Saying? p.5

"I can't stand anyone at my school anymore. I want to switch schools!"

What you **want** to say:

What you SHOULD say:

"This is the worst day of my life. I wish I were never born!"

What you **want** to say:

What you SHOULD say:

32

Slide 33


Listening To Her Feelings p.5

- DON'T DISMISS HER FEELINGS
- DON'T GIVE ADVICE OR TRY TO "FIX IT"

1. *Identify thoughts and feelings.*
2. *Acknowledge feelings with a word/sound.*
3. *Give in fantasy what you can't give in reality.*
4. *Accept feelings as you redirect behavior.*

33

Slide 34

Quote 

“Look for the potential in teenage girls, not the problems!”

34

Slide 35

“I” Messages *p.6*

Example:

I have a problem with _____.

I feel _____ when you _____.

I would like _____.

“Turning the Talk Around”: Review Tips

35

Slide 36

Communication Tips *pp. 7-8*


- Use “I” statements. State your feelings.
- Avoid generalizations.
- Listen without offering advice.
- Be specific and stick to one topic.
- Ask open-ended questions.
- Avoid attacking. Use “soft start-ups.”
- Listen more than talk. Clarify her feelings.
- Look for her strengths.
- Encourage her to talk with a trusted adult.
- Other suggestions?

36

Slide 37

Conclusion

Review your notes:



What is ONE thing I have learned today that will help me communicate with a teenage girl?

37

Slide 38

Good Books on Parenting p.9

- Teen-Proofing, John Rosemond, 2001
- Get Out of My Life, But First Could You Drive Me and Cheryl to the Mall? Anthony E. Wolf, 2002
- Teen Tips: A Practical Survival Guide for Parents with Kids 11-19, Tom McMahon, 2003
- Parenting Teens With Love and Logic, Foster Cline and Jim Fay, 2006

38
