

Parenting Young Teenagers: What's Typical / What's Not

Created by: Family Development
Child & Youth Mental Health

Lenore Rosen
Pablee Wong
Ruth Hess-Dolgin



Typical Emotions & Behaviours For Teens 13 – 15	What You Can Do
<p>Moody occasionally, sensitive</p> <p>Desires privacy, wanting to be more independent</p> <p>Values friendships</p> <p>Focuses on how s/he looks & feels</p> <p>Some may have poor hygiene or grooming habits</p> <p>Concerned about physical growth / changes</p> <p>Needs more sleep</p> <p>Has questions about identity, sexual orientation, cultural & gender</p> <p>Wants to be in the right crowd, to be popular</p> <p><i>* Adapted from Boston Health Commission & www.talklisten.org</i></p>	<p>Respect privacy but stay informed</p> <p>Get to know their friends and where they hang out</p> <p>Talk about & listen to their future goals & dreams</p> <p>Set limits & be flexible to negotiate</p> <p>Spend quality time alone with your teen</p> <p>Involve your teen in family functions even though s/he may not be interested</p> <p>Try not to lecture, criticize, disrespect or spy on them</p>

Concerning Emotions & Behaviours For Teens 13 – 15	What You Can Do
<p>Sudden change of behaviours</p> <p>Isolating self, becoming a loner</p> <p>Frequent sadness, crying or temper tantrums</p> <p>Change of sleeping / eating habit, sudden weight gain / loss</p> <p>Too tired or having too much energy</p> <p>Repetitive behaviours (e.g. hand washing, repeating tasks)</p> <p>Starts smoking, abusing drugs, alcohol or sex</p> <p>Shoplifting, stealing, lying, destroying property of others</p> <p>Aggressive towards or hurts animals</p> <p>Spends many hours on the computer avoiding others or avoiding homework, etc. Uses the internet to bully others or visit inappropriate sites</p> <p><i>* Adapted from Boston Health Commission & www.talklisten.org</i></p>	<p>Consider the frequency, intensity & duration of the concerning behaviours before taking any action</p> <p>Consult a school counsellor, mental health professional or spiritual leader</p> <p>Talk to your teen and “listen”</p> <p>Maintain your relationship with your teen</p> <p>Make yourself available</p> <p>Hold teen accountable for illegal or immoral activities</p>

You Must Do Something If...	What You Should Do
<p>Talks about death, dying, hurting self or suicide</p> <p>Gives away meaningful personal belongings</p> <p>Writes letters to say goodbye</p> <p>Bullies others (e.g. physical, social exclusion, making threats, intimidation, extortion)</p> <p>Cuts or hurts self</p> <p>Hears voices or sees things that aren't there</p> <p>Acts violent towards people, animals or property</p> <p><i>Adapted from Boston Health Commission & www.talklisten.org</i></p>	<p>Seek professional help immediately</p> <p>Call 911 or take your teen to hospital if it is a life-threatening situation</p>

Challenges & Transitions For Teens Ages 13 - 15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Childhood to adolescence - Elementary school to high school - New school environment (e.g. structure, systems, friendships, teachers, school subjects) - More freedom & choices - Influence of peers - Bodily / hormonal / physical changes for both females & males - Developmentally learning to become independent

Notes:

Gender Differences

Girls:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Might become interested in romantic opportunities - May lose interest in athletic activities due to social pressure to engage in other “cooler activities” - Interpersonal and emotional connection to friends are highlighted & peer approval can become more important than family approval. - Emotionally more erratic - Often become more involved in gossiping - Like to hang out in larger groups
Boys:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Might become interested in romantic opportunities - Begin more risk-taking behaviours - Like to hang out in larger groups - May become non-communicative or withdrawn from adults
Queer & Transgendered:	<p>This may be a time when your youth declares their sexual orientation or begins to explore it. This is a normal stage of development. These youth are more vulnerable to risky behaviour (e.g. suicide, substance abuse, etc.) because of discrimination, stigmatization, withdrawal of family and/or social support. Parental support and acceptance are very important!</p>

Tips / Reminders On How To Communicate With Your Teen

- Be open-minded & try to listen to them first before judging / critiquing / setting limits
- Be curious and be concerned
- Always ask about how s/he is doing at school and with friends
- Ask open-ended questions (e.g. “how’s your schoolwork?” rather than “have you finished your homework?”)
- Stay calm when your teen is moody, frustrated or angry. Your reactions could make matters worse
- Choose your battles and learn to let go of small battles that are not worth fighting
- Be firm with limits that you think are very important (e.g. drugs) and learn to negotiate with teen on other issues (e.g. curfew)
- Support your youth’s dreams and passions. Talk about their dreams even if you don’t think they will happen
- Encourage teen to try new things

Consider the following options when you have questions

Consult your Family Doctor, talk to the School Counsellor or contact Employee Assistance Programs through your work

Youth Counsellors & Addiction Workers @ Local Health Units

Free Counselling. Anyone can make referrals. Provide counselling support related to mild mental health issues for youth such as family relationship problems, adjustment, peer-related issues, stressful situations, etc.

Pacific Spirit Community Health Centre	604-261-5973
Pine Community Health Clinic	604-736-2391
North Health Centre	604-253-3575
Broadway Youth Resource Centre	604-709-5720
Evergreen Community Health Centre	604-877-4690
Three Bridges Community Health Centre	604-714-3443

Mental Health Services

Vancouver Child & Youth Mental Health Referral Line 604-709-4111

Free. Anyone can make referrals. Provide mental health treatment for severe behaviour, social and mood problems.

BC Children's Hospital (children under 17) 604-875-2345

SAFER 604-879-9251

Free. Anyone can make referrals. Provide Suicide Intervention & Counselling Support

Others:

Ministry of Children & Family Development 604-660-5437

Family Services of Greater Vancouver 604-874-2300

Sliding scale. Provide individual and family counselling support