

1 Parenting the Teen who Has Intense Emotions

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2 Who is this Person Living in My Home?

3 Adolescence is a Time of Transformation

- Physical changes
 - Body (Puberty)
 - Brain
- Psychological Changes
 - Identity formation
- Social Changes
 - Peers
 - Academic and social pressure

4 Physical Changes

- Puberty & hormones
 - Intense emotions
 - Adjustment to body image
- Do not play as much of a part as the changing brain

5 Neurobiology & Teen Brain Development

- 3 main areas of the brain:
 - Brain stem (primitive brain)
 - Limbic system (emotional brain)
 - Cortex (thinking brain)
- Neurons as superhighways and nuclei as towns or cities
- Amygdala is a nuclei in the limbic system involved in fear, anger and pleasure
- Adults utilize cortex, teens utilize limbic brain
- Increase risk taking, emotionality, decrease in self control

6 Teenage Brain is Being Reshaped by Rush of Hormones

- Myelination of the neurons help speed up thinking in adolescence
- Pruning of unused pathways- “use it or lose it”
- Sprouting of new connections- one of the most important times for learning new things

- Housekeeping- changes in personality
- Impact of engaging in healthy versus unhealthy behaviors

7 **Psychological Development**

- B. Bradford Brown- 4 key tasks of adolescence:
 - Stand out (develop an identity and pursue autonomy)
 - Fit in (gain acceptance from peers)
 - Measure up (develop competence and new ways to achieve)
 - Take hold (make commitments to goals, activities, beliefs)
- If these go well, less likely to engage in risky behavior and/ or struggle with mental health issues

8 **External Pressure**

- Social pressure- the new 'family'
- Peer pressure- to engage in risky behavior
- Social Media- 'post before you think'
- Academic pressure- expectations, college, future
- Activities outside of school
- Behave/ think like an adult

9 **Unhealthy Coping Mechanisms**

10 **Self Harm**

- The most common form:
 - cutting or scratching the skin with anything that can draw blood (ex: razors, paperclip, knives, scissors, pen caps, etc...)
- Other forms of self harm can include:
 - burning
 - picking at skin & wounds
 - hitting themselves
- Common reasons to self harm:
 - to distract from intense emotional pain
 - in order to feel something because they feel numb
 - to communicate their feelings

11 **Red Flags**

- Collecting sharp tools such as razors, shards of glass, safety pins, nail scissors, etc.
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts in warm weather
- Wearing a lot of band aids
- Refusing to change clothes in front of people (ex:locker room, friends, parent)

12 **Drugs/Alcohol**

- Contributing Factors:
 - Teens start going to parties
 - Peer pressure
 - Experimenting
 - Genetic Pre-disposition
- Common drugs:
 - Alcohol
 - Marijuana
 - Prescription drugs
 - Molly (Ecstasy)
 - Cocaine

13 **Red Flags**

- Sudden decline in school achievement
- Marked shift/change in the child's friends
- Marked personality changes
- Withdrawal from extracurricular activities or interests
- Cutting classes, tardiness or truancy from school

14 **Eating Disorders**

- Types of Eating Disorders:
 - Binge Eating Disorder
 - Anorexia
 - Bulimia
 - Orthorexia
- Contributing Factors:
 - Societal pressure

- Participation in activities that value leanness — such as modeling & elite athletics
- Genetics or biological factors
- Personality traits: such as perfectionism, anxiety or rigidity

15 **Red Flags**

- Stashes food in the bedroom
- Backs out of dinner plans often
- Plays with their food to avoid eating
- Has become a picky eater
- Frequently makes excuses to skip meals
- Goes MIA after meals
- Wears baggy clothes
- Excessive focus on food and healthy eating

16 **Parent Role**

- Encourage communication
- Encourage healthy-eating habits
- Discuss media messages
- Promote a healthy body image
- Foster self-esteem
- Share the dangers of dieting and emotional eating
- Use food for nourishment — not as a reward or consequence
- Schedule medical check up

17 **Anxiety & Depression**

18 **Anxiety Red Flags**

- Disruption of child or family functioning, difficulty with going to school, friend's houses, religious activities, family gatherings, errands, vacations
- Excessive time spent consoling teen about distress with ordinary situations, excessive time coaxing child to do normal activities

19 **Depression Red Flags**

- Sadness or hopelessness
- Irritability, anger, or hostility
- Tearfulness or frequent crying

- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Loss of interest in activities
- Poor school performance
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits
- Feelings of worthlessness and guilt
- Lack of enthusiasm and motivation

20 **Parental Distress**

21 **What helps you Reset?**

22 **What Can You Do?**

- Remember you are the parent & you are in control (\$, car, phone, etc...)
- Relationship is key
- Keep the lines of conversation open
- Spend some undivided, one-on-one time each week with your teen
- Show interest in your teens interests
- Get to know their friends & friends parents

23 **Resources**

- Local Eating Disorder Specialists & Resources:
 - Austin Eating Disorder Specialists: <http://austineds.com/>
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse Resources:
 - Teen and Family Services: <http://www.teenandfamilyservices.org/>
 - Palmer Drug Abuse Program: <http://pdapaustin.org/>
 - Sage Recovery Center: <http://www.sagerecoveryaustin.com/>
- Local Hospitals:
 - Cross Creek Hospital: <http://www.crosscreekhospital.com/behavioral-disorders/self-harm>
 - Rock Springs Hospital: <http://www.rockspringshealth.com/>
 - Austin Oaks Hospital: <http://austinoakshospital.com/programs/childadolescent-inpatient-program/>
- List of Crisis Hotline Numbers:
 - Crisis Hotlines: <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/mhsa-crisishotline/>

24 **Questions?**