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Living with Teenagers

“YES BUT, NO BUT”

Adolescence, the interval between  
the onset of sexual maturation  
and the attainment of adulthood

Adolescence can start in your child when they are 8 years old. We might not see them however; hormones are busy at work internally. We often feel the impact of the emotional change way before we notice anything physical.

Many of the ways children react to us are unconscious and not planned. It's important we remember not to take things personally, after all we are 'the people children sharpen their teeth on'. They will be testing boundaries, experimenting and developing their own 'map of the world' much as we did when we were of a similar age.

## Changes in Young People



## The Tinderbox in the Teenage Brain

Hormones:

**Adrenarche** promotes the growth of hair and changes in skin

**Growth hormones** group promotes rapid growth

**Oxytocin**, is associated with pair – bonding

And these are just a few

Some of the important changes are hormonally driven. Whilst this is not an excuse for unacceptable behaviours, it can be a cause of them and therefore out of your daughter's control. It is worth considering this and perhaps not reacting every time. You might like to lead by example, be the change you want to see by managing your own emotions and staying calm.

How do you feel about letting things go to avoid a constant battleground? 'Don't sweat the small stuff' think about what is important in your family identify no more than 5-7 things at any one time. Choose an appropriate time to discuss these with your daughter. Help her to understand why they are important and agree a boundary together. Boundaries will need to evolve and change as time passes and new stages occur.

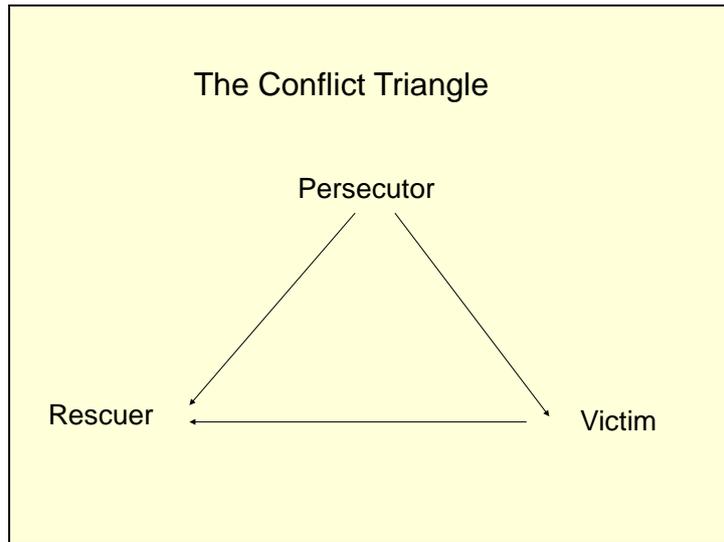
## Some effects

- Clumsiness due to bone growing quicker than nerve endings.
- Sleepiness due to sleep hormone being released later.
- A reduced ability to recognise emotions in others due to pruning of neurological pathways.
- An inability to think things through rationally.

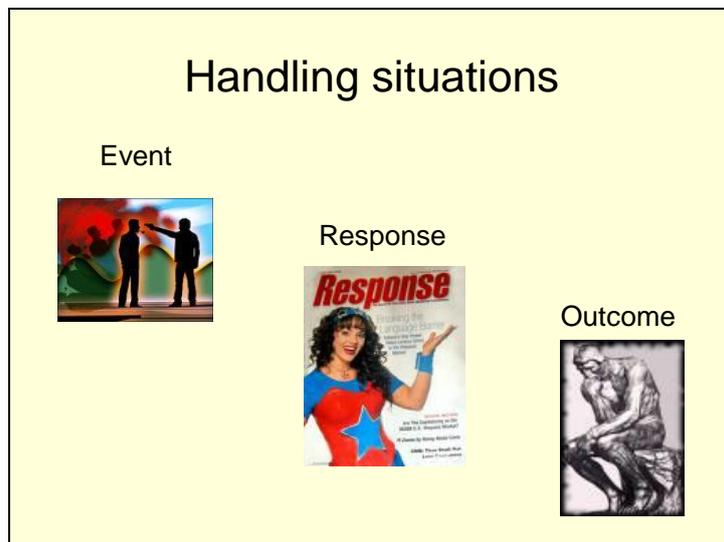


What we focus on is what we get

'What we focus on is what we get'. Its important that when you see the light at the end of the tunnel, it is not beneficial to go out and build more tunnel. Maybe you've caught yourself doing it. Just when things look like they're getting better, you start seeing more things that "aren't right," or "could go wrong." Notice all that is good it can really make a difference.



Of course conflicts can and will occur and so they should. This is after all an important time for your daughter to develop the skill of challenging and where better than an environment she feels safe in? However the game of conflict: **persecutor, victim or rescuer** is not so useful. When there are 3 parties (Mum, young person and sibling or Mum, Dad and young person) in a conflict, the triangle will be involved. Identify the triangles in your life and consider how to avoid them e.g. let Dad and young person have their disagreement. Stay out of it.



Event – Outcome – Response. In most situations, we have an event occur and we respond, giving an outcome. We suggest parents use a calming technique before reacting to an event thus giving themselves time to react. Engaging the thinking brain will enable them to react in a

more appropriate and adult way. It will also enable the young person to calm down as well. Once the emotions are managed there will be more time to plan the outcome they want and enable them to choose a course of action that is most likely to achieve it. It can take up to 90mins to calm from an emotional explosion remember to give yourself enough time remember act in haste repent in leisure. Make sure your reaction doesn't back fire on you e.g. grounding for a month – is it achievable and what impact would it have on you and others in your family. By taking time to think things through we often find the best solution.

“Between stimulus and response, there is a space.

In that space lies our freedom and power to choose our response.

In our response lies our growth and freedom.”

From Victor Frankle Man's search for meaning

## Handling situations

Event



Outcome



Response



## **And finally**

- **If you always do what you've always done you'll always get what you've always got**

**Do something different !**

## **Some comments from parents**

- **"A ray of light breaks through and you can almost feel the weight being lifted"**
- **"I am now far more aware of my role as a parent"**
- **"I realise that I am not on my own and things can get better"**