

3. Parenting teenagers – what’s going on for parents?

Hello again everybody.

We’ve already talked about the four constructs and where to go to get support.

In this video clip I’m going to talk about what’s going on for parents.

We’ve talked about empathy. It can be quite difficult to remain calm and be empathetic when you almost feel rejected as parents.

There’s a feeling of rejection because our teenage children have friends, their peer groups and social media which appear much more important to them.

But all research has shown that parents are very important to their teenagers’ development.

A lot of research has gone into parenting styles. What is the best parenting style for parents to use?

What research tells us is that an authoritative parenting style is the best way forward.

What I mean when I say authoritative style, like I’ve said before, the “KFFC” - being kind, fair, firm and consistent.

Having warmth, but also structure, and having clear boundaries, but also giving a bit of independence to your teenager.

We are aiming for a positive parenting style as opposed to other styles which may be a very authoritarian approach, “Do it my way because I say so”.

And, okay, my parents probably got a result in the past, but it wasn’t great for my emotional health.

So the authoritarian style may get you results with them staying in and doing the right thing, but it’s looking at their perspective and developing our teenagers’ emotional health. That approach is not a great approach.

The other approach that is sometimes used by parents is indifference. Sometimes they’ve been rejected so much that parents have almost been abused both verbally and sometimes physically by teenagers.

They just kick off and do whatever they like. So parents just give up and say, “Do what you want”.

But this approach is not helpful for our teenagers either.

And then last but by no means least, they talk about an indulgent approach where there’s lots of warmth, but they lack structure and boundaries.

You are almost your teenager’s friend, which is not very helpful because they have lots of friends. To a certain extent teenagers want you to be friendly but they have their own friends.

So, what we're aiming for is your authoritative style. That's KFFC – kind, fair, firm and consistent.

Now to do that we have to have effective communication.

Sometimes it's not what we say it's what they fear. Be very mindful of what you're saying and how they feel it.

Another thing about communication is the importance of listening. Sometimes it's almost better to just listen.

Unfortunately, teenagers might pick 10.30pm at night to talk to you because they are full of beans at that time. But it is about making time to listen to them.

Remember that communication is a two way process. They may want to talk to you when you are on your phone. It's about you putting your phone down and listening to them.

Communication is not just about talking, it's about their body language. I might say "yes, I'm here for you" but if I am on my phone I can't listen at the same time.

So if I've said it once I've said it a 100 times: listening is really important.

And finally, it's communication not confrontation.

So in the next video I'll talk about what's going on for teenagers and the one after that I'll give you tools in your box about how to respond.

Thank you very much.