

PARENTING TERRIFIC, TURBULENT TEENS

The **BEST** parenting style:

- ✳ Middle ground between autocratic (dictator) and permissive (give in) style
- ✳ Parent is leader
- ✳ There is order and routine
- ✳ Teens and parents treated with dignity and respect
- ✳ Teens are entitled to express their thoughts and feelings respectfully to parents

SEVEN STEPS TO HANDLING PROBLEMS

Problems can be prevented through discussion. The key is not to “lay down the law”, but to discuss and negotiate the situation. Both parent and teen must be in mutual agreement about rules and guidelines. As in any negotiation, the parent will have essential points that are non-negotiable. The parent can win cooperation by being flexible and talking with the teen to arrive at rules. Discussion should result in specific rules, and consequences for violation of those rules.

STEP 1: DEFINE THE RULES

Be as specific as possible. For example: Not “you have use of the car”, but rather:

- ✳ When will the teen have use of the car?
- ✳ Who pays for gas, insurance, repairs?
- ✳ What does the teen need to know about the insurance policy, the agent, and what to do if there is an accident?
- ✳ Does the teen know how to change a flat tire?
- ✳ What is the rule about wearing seat belts?
- ✳ Who may drive the car or ride in it?
- ✳ Is the teen aware of the dangers of drinking & driving and your attitude on the subject?

STEP 2: PARENTS AND TEEN TALK ABOUT THE RULES TOGETHER

This gives each of you a chance to express what is important to you, and to become aware of what is important to the other.

STEP 3: GENERATE POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS THROUGH BRAINSTORMING

The parents and teen work together cooperatively so that the group comes up with possibilities that none of the individuals alone could have produced.

STEP 4: ARRIVE AT A DECISION THROUGH DISCUSSION

For example, Dad may want the teen to buy all his/her own gas, but mom-- having grown up in a family where gas was provided-- thinks the teen should not; however, the teen is willing to pay for gas, but wants parents to pay for auto insurance.

STEP 5: DECIDE ON THE CONSEQUENCES FOR VIOLATING THE RULES

The goal is to establish **beforehand** what consequences will occur if teen breaks a rule.

STEP 6: WRITE THE RULES AND CONSEQUENCES DOWN

STEP 7: FOLLOW-UP AND CONSISTENTLY ENFORCE THE RULES

For Confidential Help Call St. John's Mercy Managed Behavioral Health
314-729-46000 or 1-800-413-8008 option # 1