

Helping Your Teen Thrive: Supporting Study, Wellbeing, and Connection

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Overview

1. Supporting study and decision-making
2. Managing anxiety and emotional wellbeing
3. Building connection with your teen
4. Navigating digital influences and toxic content

Background - Being 16yrs old...

- Increased academic pressure
- Growing independence & peer influence
- Identity formation and emotional vulnerability
- A time when support matters more than ever

1. Supporting study and decision-making

Supporting Study

- Create a consistent, quiet study space
- Use planners/timetables
- Set aside time for their chores so as not to interrupt study
- Break work into manageable chunks (Pomodoro Technique etc.)
- 5 minute rule - Mel Robbins
- Encourage progress over perfection
- Use exam papers/flashcards

1. Supporting study and decision-making

Supporting Study

Watch For:

- Over-scheduling (burnout) Happy Medium
- Unrealistic expectations
- Excessive pressure disguised as motivation

1. Supporting study and decision-making

Supporting Decision-Making

- Encourage discussion of options aloud
- Avoid making choices for them—**be a guide**
- Share personal stories to normalise uncertainty
- Use decision tools (pros/cons lists, timelines)
- Attend open days/career talks together
- Get them to talk to your friends/relatives
- Tell them what they are good at
- Encourage them to try work experience if possible

2. Managing anxiety and emotional wellbeing

Understanding Teenage Anxiety

Signs:

- Avoiding school or social settings
- Sleep issues/Fatigue
- Irritability/Withdrawal
- Perfectionism
- Physical symptoms (headaches, stomach pain)

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What Helps:

- Stay calm, validate before advising
- Help label emotions 'I sat with my anger long enough, until she told me her real name was grief' CS Lewis
- Reinforce routines, sleep, exercise
- Know when to seek further help (school counsellor, GP)

2. Managing anxiety and emotional wellbeing

What Parents can say

- “It’s okay to feel like that—we’ll figure it out.”
- “Want to talk this through or plan it out together?”
- “Let’s take a break and come back to it.”

3. Building connection with your teen

Staying Connected with Your Teen

- Prioritise small daily interactions
- Share an activity (TV show, meal, walk)
- Ask about their world—friends, music, apps
- Be there, even if they don't talk back
- Apologise when needed—model emotional honesty

4. Navigating digital influences and toxic content

The World in Their Pocket



4. Navigating digital influences and toxic content

The World in Their Pocket

- Teens often spend 4–7 hours/day on phones
- Algorithms reinforce their current interests
- Pressure from idealised online lives
- Risk of exposure to negative or extreme content

4. Navigating digital influences and toxic content

What Parents Can Do

- Ask open questions: "What made you laugh at that?"
- Watch online content with them
- Avoid overreacting—be curious, not critical
- Encourage media literacy: **"Who made this and why?"**
- Suggest breaks, not bans: "Let's both do a no-phone hour"
- Focus on connection, not control
- Every family is different
- Presence not perfection

Final Thoughts

- Your teen doesn't need a perfect parent—just a steady one
- Listen more than you speak
- Stay involved, even when pushed away
- You matter more than you think