

PARENTS USE YOUR POWER

Parental Resilience: Ways Parents Support Each Other and Themselves

Parents at times worry, wondering if their adolescent is coping with school pressure, getting along with peers, or making healthy decisions when faced with addictive substances. When it comes to asking for help on their parenting dilemmas, however, they may resist seeking input. Here are a few encouraging things to keep in mind.

Intuitive parenting. Trust your instincts. You know your teen better than anyone. Most parents have innate skills and confidence that come from paying attention to and interacting with their child. In the private setting of the family home is where parents learn a lot just living with teenagers. Observing interactions and casual conversation help parents stay tuned-in. Googling parenting posts, and chatting on social media are some ways to explore teen issues. Find [credible resources](#) for understanding and proactively parenting teenagers.

Parental resilience is self-care. The parent who keeps a lot of plates spinning so no one feels pain, disappointment or failure, often cuts corners on self-care. What we model for our teen is what they learn about coping and taking care of themselves. Self-care is rest, physical activity, and nourishing foods. Unplugging in a healthy way can mean doing something nice for yourself, or spending some alone time. If you don't know if you are strong enough, perhaps ask for help. Managing strong when life isn't going well is role modeling coping behavior for your teen. The Surgeon General [reports](#) a home in which parents use alcohol or drugs increases an adolescent's chances of trying the substances and becoming addicted. Community resources and services are available when help is needed to care for yourself.

Parenting strong through social connection. Being around acquaintances, some who may become friends, builds a parenting support network. Being in the presence of parents, even watching a sporting or performing event, creates a rich learning environment. Experts author books on how to do this but it's when parents get around other parents of teens the same age that alliances form. We are all in this together. Around other parents, answers about teen issues just seem to float to the surface without posing the questions. Solutions emerge, discussed or not.

Tips To Be Supported by and Supportive of Other Parents (Without Alienating Your Teen):

- ⇒ **Try changing up the parenting support environment.** Occasionally, try a new environment, because fresh information is generated by changing things up: this can happen by going to a friend's house, book groups, parent meetups, attending a presentation at the high school, parent-school groups, social media chat rooms, special interest parent groups, or parent education workshops. Resources and options for communicating in calm times as well as times of stress on any given teen topic will come in handy. Parents tend to be highly competent. In a gathering with other parents who are friends or new acquaintances, capabilities are enhanced. We understand our own situations better by listening. Hearing general conversations builds a database of resilient parenting ideas on the care and feeding of teens. The Power of Choice provides [parent resources](#), and posters for local schools. Charge up your parenting superpowers by gathering knowledge.
- ⇒ **Seek friends who help facilitate your thinking out loud.** Become an active part of your teen's school community by joining organizations. Reach out to meet and get to know parents of other teens involved in your teen's activities. Being seen and acknowledged by your parenting peers supports you as you learn alongside your teenager. You can be the friendly face to make a difference in another parent's day by asking them about their teen. Look for parents who agree with your preventive ideas about substance use. If you talk about your expectations and consequences of alcohol, tobacco, vaping, marijuana and other drug use in your home, you might find other parents sharing your values. Unified in message, parenting as a community helps support teens in making healthy choices on substance use.
- ⇒ **No need to explain all of your child's personal struggles with other parents.** Respecting privacy of your teen is important. While you may want to unload to ease your burdens, oversharing risks embarrassing your teen. If other parents share their struggles with their teen, don't feel pressured to reveal something equally personal. Should that come back to your child, they may feel their privacy was violated, which might create trust issues.
- ⇒ **Avoid sharing the successes and struggles you heard about other teens from their parents with your teen.** Teens cringe hearing gossip about friends and acquaintances. "News," no matter how well-intentioned, can feel like comparisons. This is not as helpful as it may seem, counterintuitively, even if it's the same issue your teen faces. Your teen may worry you shared a story about them. For the same reason, hearsay about parents or teachers is not worth repeating to your teen, unless it is a safety issue. Imagine if your family told you about how you compare with other parents doing a better job. It would undermine your confidence, even if they meant well in trying to give you ideas.
- ⇒ **Keeping up with the Joneses is overrated.** What is best or most successful for one family is not necessarily what is best for all families. Comparisons often lead to emotional distress for the teen or the parents. Like parents, most teens do not excel at everything. [Celebrating the ordinary](#) is a trend that has yet to peak. Remember, it's ok to just be you and your family, just the way you are. A content parent is much better for the job than a weary one putting up a perfect front.



Conversations Starter

Who would you consider to be your best role model?
Who could YOU be a role model for?

Connect with other parents at:
[Power of Choice-Parents Use Your Power](#)



 Youth Services™ Janyce Hamilton
630.961.2992x1122
jhamilton@360YouthServices.org
www.ThePowerofChoice.info