



# Teen Emotions

## 5 Tips for Parents



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### #1 Don't make assumptions

- **Jumping to conclusions** can backfire and lead to anger, frustration, and a communication breakdown.
- Teens need to learn to **manage situations** on their own and make mistakes.
- To become independent, teens need **time and space** to solve problems and seek guidance on their terms.
- **Teens are the experts** in their own lives. Respect your experience, but trust teens to say what they feel and need.

### #2 Inquire and listen

- Telling teens what to do or critiquing mistakes can **create tension** as teens develop independence.
- Teens do not always **seek advice** right away; sometimes they want to talk it out and arrive at their own solutions. Be a sounding board instead of immediately offering opinions.
- It may take time for teens to **process what they are feeling**. Let them know you're available whenever they want to talk and when they do, listen, ask questions, affirm their feelings, and remind them you love them.

### #3 Role model how to cope with stress (including caring for yourself!)

- **A bit of stress** can be energizing. The main concern for teens is that too much stress will feel overwhelming and lead them to shut down or become numb.
- **Human connection** is one of the most effective coping strategies. When we connect we gain and lend strength. It reminds us that we are not alone and that we are cared for and about.
- **Healthy coping strategies** like exercise, relaxation, good nutrition, and sleep help teens manage their emotions long-term.
- Avoiding people, places, and things that **trigger intense emotions** saves energy.
- **Practicing self-care** as a parent isn't selfish; it shows teens how to care for themselves.

### #4 Teach teens healthy ways to discover and express their emotions

- **Healthy escapes**, like reading or meditating, provide teens with safe, effective ways to feel better + prevent the need to turn to dangerous quick fixes.
- Teach teens to find comfortable, healthy outlets for pent-up feelings by **expressing emotions**. Have them complete this sentence: "I \_\_\_ it out." For example, I "ran, wrote, talked, prayed, drew, danced, rapped" it out.
- It can help to **take breaks from feeling so much** by taking advantage of the imagination and focusing on other interests and hobbies.

### #5 Remember that seeking professional help is a sign of strength

- **Emotional discomfort** is treatable, and teens need to know they deserve to feel better.
- **Seeking professional help** is not about giving up, it's about reaching out.
- **Professional guidance** can make a real difference in teens' lives; youth-serving professionals know how to support teens.