

HIGH CONFLICT HELPSHEET FOR PARENTS

If there is an adolescent in your home, you probably aren't a stranger to conflict! But when this becomes the youth's "go to" response, a young person may have found a level of comfort, identity or power in creating conflict. Thankfully, something can be done. Young brains are uniquely pliable and able to develop new ways of relating. Relational connections with you and others can form new pathways toward healthy emotional regulation.

NOTICE THIS:

The whole household is tiptoeing around your teen because anything can light the fuse that sets them off.



WATCH FOR THIS

An all-or-nothing thinking pattern. "Everybody hates me," or "I can do whatever I want," or "You never let me..."

A victim mentality and a preoccupation with blaming others. "The teacher doesn't like me so they made me fail," or "It's your fault I'm so angry."

Anger and sometimes rage as the standard response to situations where the youth's will or plan is thwarted.

Conversations that spiral quickly out of control or where anything you say is a "trigger."

Responses that are regularly out of proportion to the situation experienced.



SAY THIS

Whether you agree with their perspective or not, offer your E.A.R.:

Empathy: "It must be frustrating to feel so irritated."

Attention: "I'm going to put down what I was doing and listen because I can tell this is important to you."

Respect: "What ideas do you have for how we can resolve this? I'd really value hearing them."

"Let's negotiate a way of resolving this together. I'm willing to compromise on _____. What are you willing to compromise on?"

And when the conflict is over...
"It seems that conflict is taking our family captive. Can we find a better way together?"



TRY THIS

Mid-conflict is not the time to argue, discuss or try to resolve the situation. When feelings are high, thinking is low.

Not reacting to their hurtful words removes the fuel. Choose grace, no matter how you feel inside.

Kindly and specifically state the positive behavior you require of them rather than telling them what to stop doing, and then step aside to give them space to de-escalate.

Pick your battles. Be brief, calm and consistent in your responses.

Dissipate the atmosphere of competition by seeking ways to stand with them—not overpower them.



RESOURCES

To access all of our helpsheets online, visit youthunlimited.com/teentools

Remember:

"A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."

(Proverbs 15:17)