



CHI Health

better you

IMAGINE THAT.

Pressure to be Perfect

Help your teen strive for
health and happiness

What were you Thinking?

It's not what teens are
thinking - it's how

Stop Bullying!

83% of girls and 79% of boys
experience harassment

Healthy Minds
2017/2018



Dear Parents,

Do you ever wonder why they never told you what it would be like raising a teenager when they placed that bundle of joy in your arms 15 years ago? That's because you might have run out of the delivery room kicking and screaming. Raising kids is hard work ... being a kid is even harder. Social media, peer pressure, the pressure to be perfect, the pressure to fit in – that's just some of the noise that gets in the way of growing up.

At CHI Health, we know feeding your mind is just as important as feeding your body – a good night's sleep, limits on caffeine and boundaries with toxic friends and outside temptations can help clear the clutter.

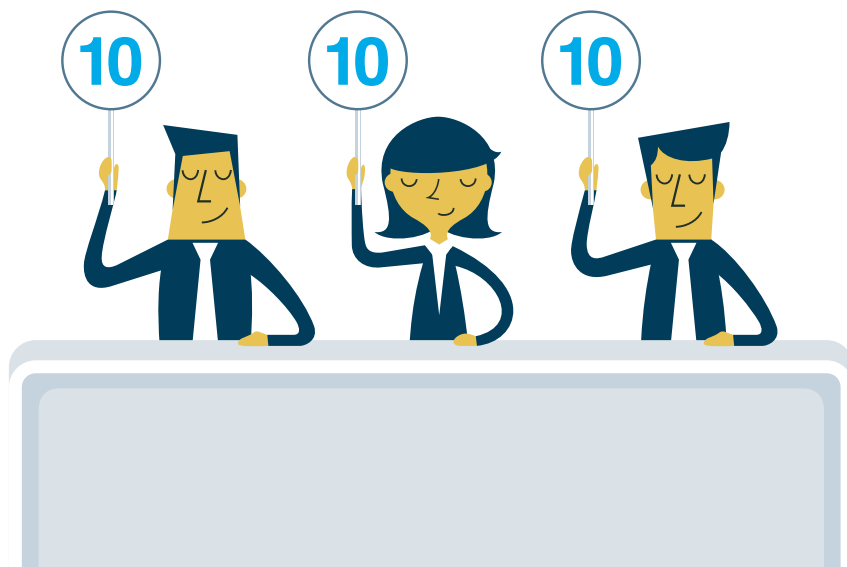
Better You Healthy Minds is our commitment to you and your family. Inside this publication you will find tips from mental health experts to help you understand what makes your child tick and some warning signs that shouldn't be overlooked. Our hope is that this publication will make it easier for you and your teenager to get through some of life's challenges together.

Dear Teenagers,

Does it seem like nobody gets you? Like everyone is picking on you, telling you what to do, how to act, or just disappointed in you? Grownups don't always get it. We try, but let's face it – we're old and look at the world through eyes that didn't have to deal with Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat when we were growing up.

At CHI Health, we know it's much harder being a teenager these days. The friends you've counted on since grade school aren't always there for you anymore. Drugs, alcohol and risky behavior seem to be everywhere. And life's special moments can turn into big worries when put under the microscope of social media.

Better You Healthy Minds is our commitment to you to help you get through the next couple of years. We all feel sad, lost, even angry sometimes. And yes, we all make mistakes. Our hope is that this publication will help you get through some of the rough spots, give you somewhere to turn and let you see you're not alone.



How to Curb the Pressure to be Perfect

In a go-go-go society, kids often suffer from being overcommitted – in both academic and extracurricular activities – and feel pressure to do it all while maintaining the illusion of perfectionism.

“Learning how to prioritize is huge for teens and tweens,” said Jamie Snyder, MD, CHI Health child and adolescent psychiatrist. “When parents help a child determine what’s most important – what can wait until later and what needs to happen now – they instill skills that will be used constantly throughout life.”

Remember that perfection is unattainable. Accepting and growing from mistakes is an important skill for children to learn. Mistakes made in childhood are usually smaller than those they might encounter as an adult and parents can model this behavior for them. Parents aren’t perfect either – kids know this – and adults who are open about coping with their own mistakes can model this behavior for kids.

Before pushing or pressuring a child to achieve on certain things, parents should take a step back and ask themselves these questions:

1. Will this actually impact my child’s future in a major way?
2. What’s the worst thing that will happen if the result isn’t perfect? Will my child still be okay?
3. What’s my motivation? Am I living vicariously through my child?

Teen Brains Demystified

When a child reaches adolescence, parents often find themselves asking, “What were you thinking?” Well, there’s a reason.

Scientists used to believe that human brain development neared completion by age 10, but that’s not the case. Studies have shown there are differences. For example, the frontal lobes — crucial to mature decision-making — aren’t fully connected in most teens.


Compared to adults, teen brains also don’t have as much myelin, a fatty coating that works somewhat like electrical wire insulation. Myelin is required for nerve signals to flow freely. Lacking it can lead to inefficient communication between parts of the brain.

That’s why seemingly normal teenagers, even excellent students, occasionally make questionable decisions. In fact, studies show that neural insulation isn’t fully developed until individuals reach their mid-20s.

“This research has been really helpful because it provides a concrete example that helps parents understand what their teenagers are going through,” said Caroline Jones, a CHI Health licensed mental health practitioner.

Tips for dealing with teen brain:

- Try family therapy when teens and parents aren’t on the same page.
- Remind teens that down times won’t last forever, and encourage them to seek help if necessary.
- Watch for substance abuse. Teens who start using alcohol before age 15 are four times more likely to become addicted.

 For more information on how to stop your child from overscheduling, visit CHIhealth.com/Overscheduled

 For more information on the teenage brain, visit CHIhealth.com/TeenBrain



Four Reasons Helicopter Parenting Hurts Children

As tempting as it is to help a child succeed, parents who hover – or are overly involved in their child’s life – can do more harm than good. Kids with helicopter parents end up:

1 Unable to problem solve/tackle basic life skills

Parents who tidy up situations for children or handle their chores leave kids without deductive reasoning. That, in turn, stunts a child’s ability to problem solve life situations like asking for directions to figuring out how to use a washing machine.

2 Entitled

Children whose parents make everything happen – from getting in the desired class to making the best sports team – are used to getting their way. This creates a sense of entitlement without having to do the work.

3 More anxious

When parents solve their kids’ problems, children don’t develop skills needed to handle minor problems. This can lead to high stress levels and anxiety when encountering any adversity.

4 Suffering from lower self esteem

Parents who inject themselves into children’s lives leave kids questioning their own ability to accomplish tasks independently.

Five-Second Post, Lifetime of Regret

Instant access has taken the simple act of growing up and transformed it into a field of land mines for today’s teen. Even the smallest misstep, in the unforgiving environment that is social media, can have harsh and long-term consequences.

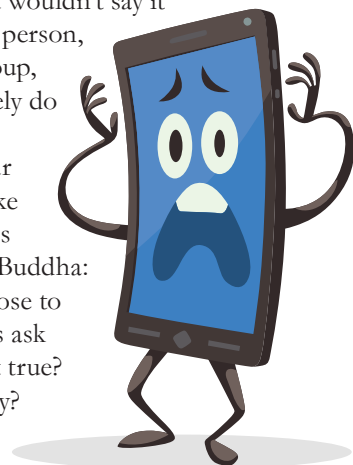
“Acting impulsively is part of growing up. Teens will make mistakes and learn from them. It’s the natural progression to adulthood,” said Bridget Mostek, LIMHP, licensed mental health practitioner at CHI Health. “What we’d like to prevent is for those mistakes to be forever on public display, diminishing their reputation before it’s fully developed.”

Lecturing teens about how their online presence could affect applying for a future job is valid, but it might not matter to teens today. Emphasizing that it could make or break their current reputation or a friendship might help them understand.

Mostek encourages teens to think before posting and then think again. “Getting ‘likes’ is enticing, some even argue addictive, but don’t fall victim to regret. If you wouldn’t say it or show it in person, to a large group, then absolutely do not post it.”

Before your next post, take some timeless advice from Buddha:

“If you propose to speak, always ask yourself: Is it true? Is it necessary? Is it kind?”



For more information social media, visit CHIhealth.com/Unplug



Don't be Fooled, Your Life is Just as Great

Approximately 90 percent of teens worldwide use social media. Always on, always available, connecting, supporting, inspiring, and yes, comparing. Researchers find that the more time teens spend on social media, the more depressed they become as they compare their lives to others. Don't let social media breed self-hate and feed insecurities.

Realize that social media is the highlight reel. We only post the top 1 percent of our day, not the average 99 percent. Everyone has bad hair days.

Remember there's plenty of happiness, beauty and success to go around. Just because someone is having a great

life doesn't mean yours isn't just as great. The world isn't going to run out of awesome.

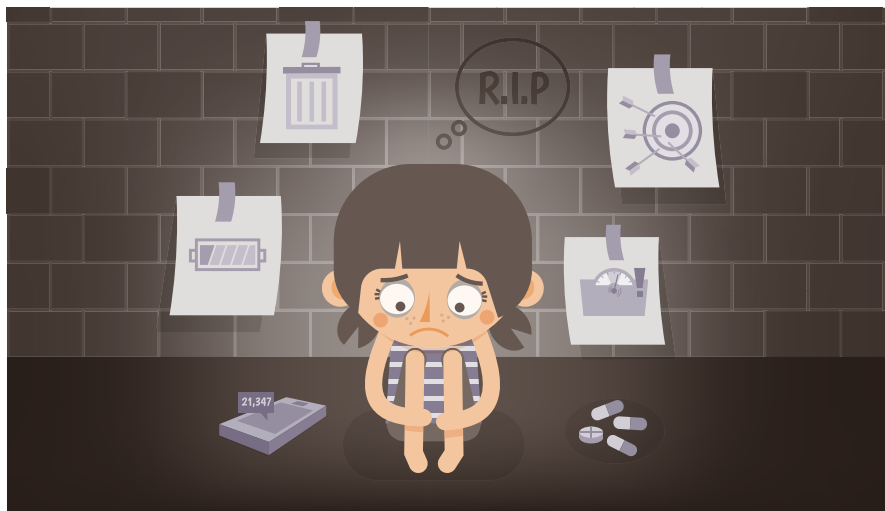
Be proactive instead of reactive. When you start negatively comparing yourself to others, you're only reacting to the situation. Instead of feeling down, do something! Set a goal and achieve it.

Recognize that likes do not equal love. Research shows that getting "likes" triggers the same pleasure as taking drugs. Just as you'd say "no" to drugs, do not hand over your self-worth to anyone with a smartphone.

Positive Parenting Checklist

Parenting teenagers doesn't come with a manual. These hands-on tips from the Centers for Disease Control can help.

- ✔ Talk with teens about concerns and pay attention to behavior changes. Ask about suicidal thoughts; asking will not cause teens to have these thoughts, but it will show you care. Seek professional help if necessary.
- ✔ Show interest in school and extracurricular interests and activities; encourage involvement in activities.
- ✔ Encourage teens to volunteer and become involved in their community.
- ✔ Compliment your teen and celebrate efforts and accomplishments.
- ✔ Show affection; spend time together doing things you enjoy.
- ✔ Respect your teen's opinion. Listen without playing down concerns.
- ✔ Help your teen to problem solve and make good decisions. Be available for advice and support.
- ✔ Encourage good decisions about social media.
- ✔ If your teen works, talk about expectations, responsibilities and behaving respectfully.



Is It Sadness or is It Serious? How to Pick Up on Depression

Emotions can run high with teenagers. So how can parents determine when teen moodiness is normal, or if it could be something more serious like depression?

Think Cause and Effect for Sadness

If something positive happens, like getting a good grade or making a sports team, a teen will likely react with emotions of happiness and excitement. Alternatively, when a teen does NOT do well on a test or does NOT make the sports team, he or she will likely react with emotions of sadness or disappointment. As time passes, these very high and very low emotions will typically fade.

Think Sustained Unexplained Emotions for Depression

Depression, on the other hand, may have no clear cause or can start as general feelings that linger indefinitely or balloon up and consume the teen's life. While sadness is considered a common symptom, depression can also be masked by anger, irritability or agitation. In fact, these symptoms are often more dominant than sadness in teenage depression. Depression can also start with a clear cause, but the emotions don't dissipate over time or worsen.

"Parenting teenagers can feel like an emotional roller coaster at times," said Jamie Snyder, MD, a CHI Health child and adolescent psychiatrist. "But don't forget that some ups and downs in a teenager's emotions are normal. If these emotions don't get any better after two weeks, it might be time to seek professional help."

Why Kids Can't 'Snap Out of It'

Depression is more than sadness — it's a medical disease. It might be a knee-jerk reaction to tell a teen who is acting mopey to "snap out of it" or "just get over it." But it can actually be physically impossible for teens to change those actions.

When someone is depressed it means their brain is not producing enough serotonin and therefore it's challenging for the brain to do "normal" things.

"Think about it like this: Just like you cannot will a type 1 diabetic to naturally produce more insulin, you cannot ask a depressed person to produce more serotonin," said Jamie Snyder, MD, a CHI Health child and adolescent psychiatrist.

One approach to treating depression is prescription medicines called selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs). These can help correct someone's serotonin levels and thus lift the effects of depression. Lifestyle changes and therapy can also help.

Remember, depression is a disease and the way an adolescent acts is a symptom of this disease. Being sad and withdrawn is a symptom. Performing poorly at school is a symptom. If you suspect your child might be depressed, keep this framework in mind as you begin a conversation about how they're feeling and what can be done to make things better.

Signs Your Teen Might be Depressed

A word cloud featuring various signs of depression in teenagers. The central and largest word is "SAD" in a dark teal color. Other prominent words include "CONSTANTLY SAD" in light blue, "No Energy" in light blue, "HOPELESS" in orange, "PERFORMING POORLY" in purple, "Change in appetite" in orange, "irritable" in orange, "Withdrawn" in purple, "Negative Thinking" in orange, "Hostile" in purple, "Unexplained Aches & Pains" in purple, "Filling all free time with sleep" in orange, "Aggressive" in orange, "finding no enjoyment in activities that used to bring happiness" in purple, "irritable" in purple, "Sensitive to Failure" in orange, "Loss of Weight" in light blue, "Change in appetite" in orange, "Can't Concentrate" in purple, "HELPLESS" in dark teal, "LACK OF ENERGY" in light blue, "Not Sleeping Well" in purple, "More Grumpy than Average Teen" in orange, "SADNESS" in dark teal, and "hypersensitive" written vertically in light blue.

For a depression risk assessment, visit CHIhealth.com/DepressionQuiz

When Nerves Attack: How to Tame Teenage Angst

No one likes anxiety, but everyone gets it.

For teens, it can be particularly distressing because they don't know how to manage this uncomfortable emotion.

"Anxiety and worry can very much be a normal reaction to everyday life stressors, and it can be useful as it helps us to increase our focus as well as be prepared," said Michael Grove, LIMHP, CHI Health licensed mental health practitioner.

Learning to deal with nerves is part of growing up, but kids often struggle in silence.

A little empathy goes a long way. "I encourage patients and their

families to start an open dialogue regarding anxiety at a young age," Grove said. "Talking about anxiety, fears and worries with someone who loves and supports you can be one of the most helpful things you can do."

For typical anxiety-provoking situations, it's important to know that nervous feelings are normal. The trick is managing these emotions. Lifestyle tools that can help:

- Mindfulness techniques teach the brain to stay in the moment.
- Exercise boosts neurochemicals that calm the brain.
- Breathing relaxes the body and mind.

• Healthy eating has been found to improve mental health.

One more thing: "Never underestimate the impact of sleep on mood and ability to cope with anxiety," Grove said.

With good habits and practice, everyday nerves can be calmed. But if anxiety persists or escalates into panic, seek professional help.

There's an app for that. Some helpful anxiety tools:

- Relax & Rest Meditations
- Headspace
- Stop Panic & Anxiety Self Help
- Self-help for Anxiety Management

Crushed: When Teen Relationships Turn Troublesome

One in three U.S. adolescents suffers emotional, physical or sexual abuse from a dating partner. Sometimes, they just don't know better.

"Parents play a very important role in teenagers' lives by helping them create and foster positive, healthy relationships with dating partners," said Monica Arora, MD, CHI Health child and adolescent psychiatrist.

Support

"Be authoritative, not authoritarian or confrontational in your parenting style," Arora said. "Avoid ultimatums and negative statements about partners."

- Model healthy relationships.
- Share your values and traits of healthy relationships.
- Create a safe/secure environment for teens to discuss relationship issues.
- Help teens determine their own relationship expectations and values.

Encourage

"Engage your teen in conversations about dating strategies. Empower them to remove themselves from uncomfortable situations," Arora said.

- Recognize gut feelings about relationships.

- Develop problem-solving skills.
- Seek positive peer influences.
- Engage in extracurricular activities and positive social behaviors.

Monitor

"Strike the balance of being present but not invasive of your teen's privacy," Arora said.

- Set dating rules.
- Limit unsupervised contact.
- Restrict car use, phone use and access to money.
- Keep tabs on their social media.
- Get to know teen's friends and friends' parents.

Signs of an abusive relationship:

- Mood – irritable, withdrawn, isolative, anxious.
- Academic performance – declining grades, truancy, dropping extracurricular activities.
- Appearance – appearance or weight changes, unexplained scratches and bruises.
- Social circle – no longer hanging out with friends.
- Behaviors – constantly checking phone, making excuses for partner's behavior, drugs or alcohol use, acting out sexually, extreme jealousy or insecurity.





Washing Dishes? Isn't There an App for That?

On average, teens spend 70 percent of their time with peers and the media. But there are some things BFFs and smartphones can't do. Enjoy family time while helping your teen master these basic life skills:

- **Cook simple meals:** grocery shopping, basic recipes, preparation safety
- **Do basic chores:** general housekeeping, laundry skills
- **Make phone calls:** proper phone etiquette, scheduling appointments, conducting business
- **Write letters and address envelopes:** how and when, buying stamps
- **Make conversation:** social etiquette, shaking hands, making eye contact
- **Manage money:** budgeting, balancing a checkbook, paying bills
- **Take care of themselves:** nutrition, exercise, regular doctor appointments, self-care, dangers of drugs and alcohol

Chugging Energy Drinks and Pop: Is Your Child Over-Caffeinated?

Almost half of teens in a recent study said they drink caffeinated beverages up to six times a week. That can lead to insomnia, anxiety and headaches.

"They're particularly susceptible to the negative effects as they have less body mass and they likely have had less exposure," said

Kayla Pope, MD, CHI Health child and adolescent psychiatrist. "Some research suggests caffeine may even stunt growth – as they miss out on necessary nutrients – and interfere with brain development."

Make sure you discuss negative side effects – the impact caffeine may have on mood or sleep – and

"get them in the habit of looking at nutritional labels," Pope said. "And talk with them about what would be a reasonable daily limit."

The American Academy of Pediatrics advises teens not exceed 100 mg of caffeine, the amount in one cup of coffee, per day.

Stand Tall Against Bullying

One in five children report being bullied in school – and it takes a toll. Grades drop, absenteeism rises and emotions take a dive.

“Kids internalize a lot of what they believe about themselves from what they hear and how they are treated by others,” said Jennifer Peter, PsyD, CHI Health licensed clinical psychologist. “Depression and anxiety are prevalent in kids who are bullied.”

What can parents do? A lot. Research shows that responding quickly and consistently can help stop bullying behavior.

Remember that children take their cues from you. “Model confidence and positive ways to problem solve,” Peter said. “Model kindness toward others. Always be aware of how you treat and what you say about others.”

Kids need to know their self-worth is not determined by another child’s actions. “Work every day to strengthen your child’s value of himself or herself,” Peter said.

Teasing vs. bullying? Where's the line?

Teasing isn’t intended to hurt; bullying is. If you ask someone to stop teasing you, and they don’t, the line is being crossed into bullying.



Do:

- Pay attention and keep lines of communication open.
- Gather info on who’s involved and how your child responded.
- Save pertinent screenshots, emails and texts.
- Contact school authorities and police, if necessary.
- Report cyberbullying to social media sites/ smartphone providers.
- Stick to facts; avoid placing blame.

Don't:

- Ignore bullying behavior.
- Jump in too fast and try to “fix it.”
- Tell kids they’re overreacting or being oversensitive.
- Blame kids for being bullied.
- Tell kids to retaliate or respond with aggression.

 For more on bullying, visit CHIhealth.com/Bullying

Volunteering: Good for More Than Scholarships



While it looks good on applications, the benefits of volunteering reach beyond gaining skills and experience.

Research shows the more teens volunteer the happier they are. By increasing awareness of the needs of others, teens build empathy, improve self-esteem and strengthen social bonds. Gaining a greater sense of gratitude and hope helps teens combat stress, anxiety and depression.

“Grateful people experience fewer toxic emotions and more positive ones,” said Lori Tinkham, PLMHP, CHI Health licensed mental health practitioner. “This helps make them better able to cope, less stressed, more satisfied with the simple things in life and have a greater appreciation of what they have been given, as well as others around them.”

According to one study, teens who

give back markedly decrease their involvement in at-risk behaviors like underage drinking. Another study shows teen volunteers experience a steep drop in risk factors for cardiovascular disease, including cholesterol levels and body mass index.

If your teen needs a little boost or is just bored, suggest volunteering. Who knows? The life they change could be their own.

It's Okay to Let 'em Sleep

It's as important as the air they breathe but the National Sleep Foundation says only about 15 percent of teens get eight-and-a-half hours of sleep on school nights.

They need about eight to 10.

“Too little sleep can have a significant impact on attention and memory formation,” said CHI Health



child and adolescent psychiatrist Kayla Pope, MD. “And that can interfere with school performance. Sleep deprivation can also lead to depression and can impair the body's immune system.”

How do you ensure enough shut-eye? Pope's suggestions:

- Go to bed and awaken at the same time every day, even on weekends.

- Create a routine that signals your brain to recognize you're getting ready to sleep.
- Engage in soothing activities like reading or listening to soft music – no iPads or Snapchat allowed.

 For more on information on the effects of poor sleep, visit CHIhealth.com/PoorSleep



**For help and answers call
402-717-HOPE**

**CHI Health Omaha/Council Bluffs
Metro Locations**

Creighton University Medical
Center-Bergan Mercy

Immanuel

Lakeside

Lasting Hope
Recovery Center

Mercy Council Bluffs

Midlands

Psychiatric Residential
Treatment Facility

Additional help:

Nebraska Family Helpline
Any Problem. Any Time.

1-888-866-8660

Boys Town National Hotline

1-800-448-3000

National Suicide
Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-8255

Red Nacional de
Prevención del Suicidio

1-888-628-9454

** If you are a danger to yourself or others, or know someone who is, call 911.*