

A photograph of two women walking in a park. The woman on the left is a Black woman with long blonde hair, wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt, smiling and looking towards the right. The woman on the right is a young woman with dark hair, wearing a blue jacket with bright green accents, looking towards the left. They are walking on a grassy path with trees in the background.

Parenting Challenges during COVID-19

John Muir Health Behavioral Health Center



JOHN MUIR
HEALTH

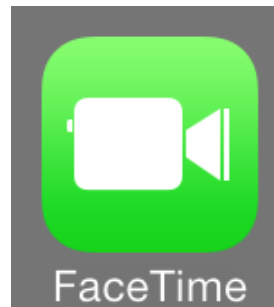
Use of Electronics

- **Why are they spending more time in front of screens?**
 - There is a necessary dependence on screens during this time.
 - Parents need uninterrupted time.
 - They don't have access to the same activities as before.
 - They don't know how else to spend free time.



Use of Electronics

- **What are the different types of use?**
 - Creative/Constructive – ZOOM lessons, DIY
 - Communicative – FaceTime, texting
 - Consumptive – TV, video games, social media

The Zoom logo, consisting of the word "zoom" in a blue, lowercase, sans-serif font.

Use of Electronics

- **Communicate: Voice your concerns.**
 - Sleep
 - Mood
 - Violent and/or inappropriate content
 - Social media and self-esteem
 - Ask them how they feel about their increased use



Use of Electronics

- **Reflect: What are your screen habits?**
 - How much time are you spending in front of a screen?
 - What about others in the house?



Use of Electronics

- **Provide: Alternatives**

- Encourage hobbies - do they need supplies?
- Create opportunities to do things together.



Use of Electronics

- **Make your expectations clear.**
 - What were the rules before?
 - Do the rules need to be adjusted?
 - Are the expectations the same for everyone?



Use of Electronics

- **Don't be afraid to set limits.**
 - We all need rules, even during a pandemic.
 - Screen-free zones?
 - Shut-off times?
 - Systems for earning electronics time?
 - Keep rules, rewards and consequences consistent.



Angry Children and Teens

- **They have a lot to be angry about.**
 - Missing friends, teachers, coaches.
 - Grieving special events and routine.
 - Feeling cooped up and confused.



Angry Children and Teens

- **Anger never stands alone**
 - Anger accompanies other feelings.
 - Sadness, fear, pain, disappointment, worry, embarrassment, frustration, jealousy, boredom...
 - Acknowledging these other feelings makes us feel vulnerable.



Angry Children & Teens

- **Communicate: Voice your concerns.**
 - Find a calm moment.
 - We often do not realize how out-of-control we become.
 - Share how their anger makes you feel.
 - “I feel confused when you slam doors.”
 - “It scares me when you scream like that.”

Angry Children & Teens

- **Reflect: How do you manage anger?**
 - What are you modeling?
 - What's your style?



Angry Children & Teens

- **Provide: Education**

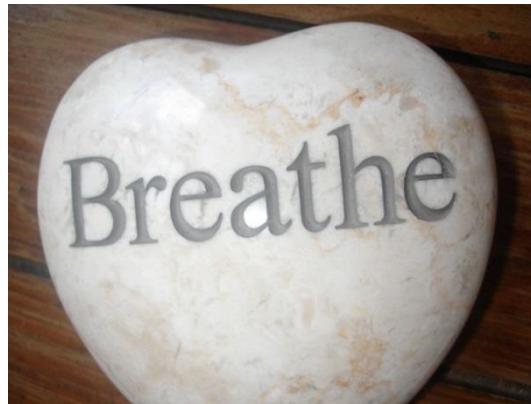
- Help them identify what they are feeling underneath the anger.
 - “Are you missing your friends?”
 - “Are you bored from being cooped up?”
 - “Are you annoyed at your brother?”



Angry Children & Teens

- **Provide: Skills**

- Give them tools.
- Practice together.
- No one was born knowing how to manage anger.



Angry Children & Teens

- **Provide: Insight**

- Anger does not help them get their needs met.
 - “When you cry hysterically, I have no idea what you’re upset about.”
 - “When you talk calmly to me, I understand what you are asking for and can try to do it for you.”



Angry Children & Teens

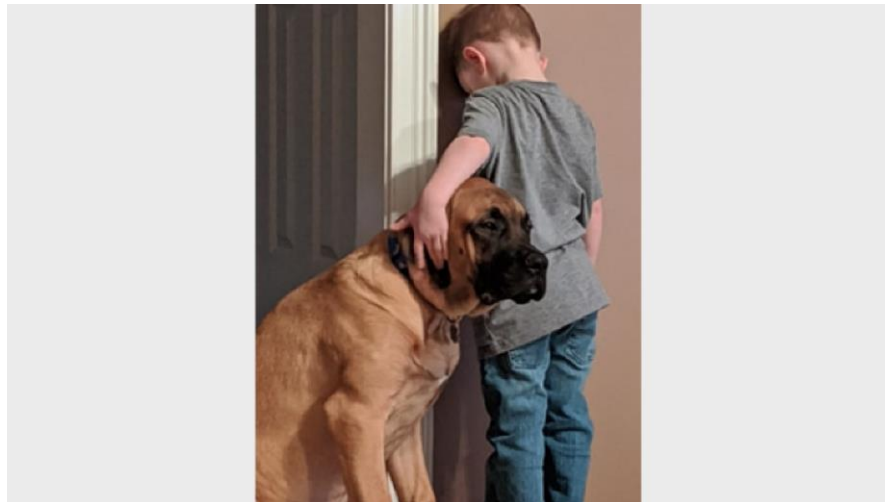
- **Make your expectations clear.**
 - Feeling angry is not the problem – it's what we do with our anger that can be the problem.
 - Encourage use of words.
 - No tolerance for unsafe behavior.



Angry Children & Teens

- **Don't be afraid to set limits.**

- Limits help us feel contained when we feel out-of-control.
- Keep ages/developmental stages in mind.
- Make sure consequences are reasonable and enforceable.
- Provide the opportunity to make amends.



Withdrawn Children & Teens

- **What do you attribute their withdrawn behavior to?**
 - Personality
 - Development
 - Boredom
 - Loneliness
 - Depression
 - Anxiety



Withdrawn Children & Teens

- **What behaviors are we seeing?**
 - Crying
 - Isolating
 - Lack of emotion
 - Irritability
 - Changes to sleep
 - Changes to appetite
 - Loss of interest/pleasure in things



Withdrawn Children & Teens

- **Communicate: Voice your concerns.**
 - They may not realize their behavior has changed.
 - Be non-judgmental and non-threatening.
 - “You’ve been spending so much time in your room – we miss you.”
 - “I notice you haven’t had as much of an appetite.”
 - “Have you been tired? I feel like you’re sleeping more.”



Withdrawn Children & Teens

- **Communicate: Ask questions.**
 - How have they been spending their time?
 - How do they think things are going?
 - Did something upsetting happen?
 - Who/what do they miss?
 - What would be helpful?



Withdrawn Children & Teens

- **Provide: Structure**

- Create a general schedule for waking up, showering, eating, distance-learning, going to bed.
- Invite their participation in developing routine.
- Include time for space/privacy.
- Schedule things that are fun and inclusive.
- Structure should be flexible – consider it a guide.



Withdrawn Children & Teens

- **Provide: Creative ways to interact with others**
 - Parades
 - Virtual celebrations
 - Scavenger hunts
 - Video montages
 - Virtual greeting cards
 - Group activities: workouts, movies, crafting, anything!
 - Giving back



Withdrawn Children & Teens

- **Provide: An environment that encourages interaction**
 - Limit screens in bedrooms
 - Limit eating in bedrooms
 - Encourage use of common areas
 - Ask for doors to be kept open



Withdrawn Children & Teens

- **Provide: Private sources of support**
 - Therapists
 - School Counselors
 - Crisis lines (2-1-1 in Contra Costa County)
 - Text “START” to 741741
 - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK



Withdrawn Children & Teens

- **Reflect: How are you coping?**
 - Have you been managing your mood and anxiety?
 - Shelter-in-Place means we have an audience.
 - Encourage hope and positivity.



Teens Violating the Shelter-in-Place Order

- **Adolescent Development**

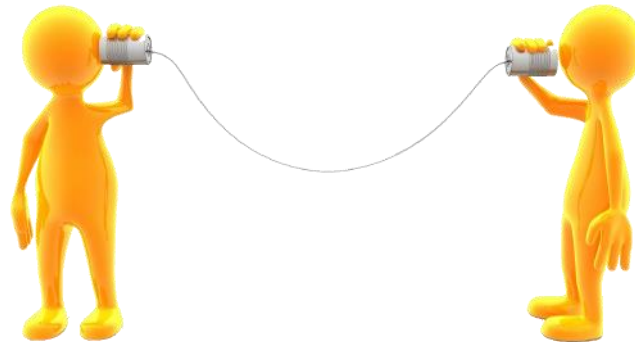
- Teens think they are invincible.
- Rebellion is part of individuating.
- Teens have lost independence/autonomy during this time.



Teens Violating the Shelter-in-Place Order

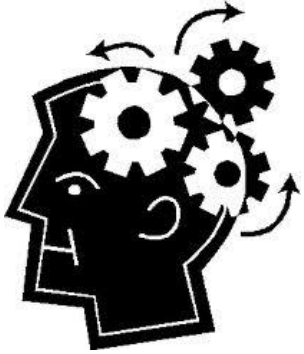
- **Communicate: Voice your concerns**

- Have an adult-to-adult discussion.
- Engage them in a dialogue about how confusing the information has been.
- Empathize with their desire to go out and be a teen.
- Emphasize your desire to protect, not control.



Teens Violating the Shelter-in-Place Order

- **Communicate: Appeal to their personalities.**
 - Logic
 - Emotions
 - Integrity
 - Consequences



Teens Violating the Shelter-in-Place Order

- **Reflect: How are you handling the Shelter-in-Place Order?**
 - Words matter.
 - “Safe at home” versus “Stuck at home.”
 - Be mindful of your audience.



Teens Violating the Shelter-in-Place Order

- **Provide: Options**

- Help them feel they have control over something.
- Engage them in making plans for the future.
- Choose your battles. Avoid power struggles.



Teens Violating the Shelter-in-Place Order

- **Make your expectations clear.**
 - Be consistent.
 - Give explanations.
 - Give examples of behaviors you are ok with and those you will not condone.



Teens Violating the Shelter-in-Place Order

- **Don't be afraid to set limits.**
 - Safety is at stake.
 - Remind them that consequences may be enforced by others.
 - You may need to be firmer than you have been before.



Conclusion

- **Healthy communication will always be relevant.**
- **Everyone is in uncharted territory and doing the best they can.**
- **You are still the parent and rules still apply.**
- **Children and teens are resilient. And so are you!**



Questions?

Type your questions into the Chat box