

Wellbeing Waterloo Region

Working & Being at Home During COVID: Tips for Parents of Teens

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Agenda

- Understanding Teens
 - Brain and development
 - Grief and loss
- Adapting to this "new normal"
 - Communication and conflict management
 - Connection
 - Routine
 - Self-care and life hygiene

UNDERSTANDING TEENS

Brain, development, grief & loss



Brain & Development

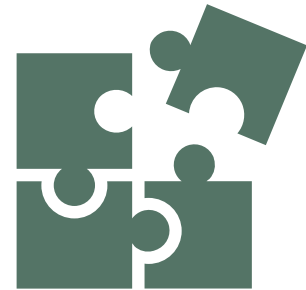
- Brain development – still learning!
- 15-24 years old – brain is still hard-wired for impulsivity, novelty, and connection to peers
- Highly developed reward centre/pleasure seeking centre
- Low development of prefrontal cortex (not until mid 20s)
- "risky teen behaviour" a function of need for reward and lack of ability to think through risk
- "I'm invincible"
- Brains producing less serotonin at night

Grief & Loss

- Disenfranchised grief
- Loss of:
 - Contact with teachers, classmates, friends
 - Prom, graduation, other school events
 - Sports and extracurriculars
 - Safety and predictability
 - Contact with grandparents/extended family
- Make space for sadness and frustration
 - *“I hate that you have lost so much so fast and I am sorry it has happened. You’ll get through this, but that doesn’t make it any less miserable right now.”*
 - *“This is tough, and you are too”*
- Make space for relief and joy
 - *“It’s okay to feel relief now too”*

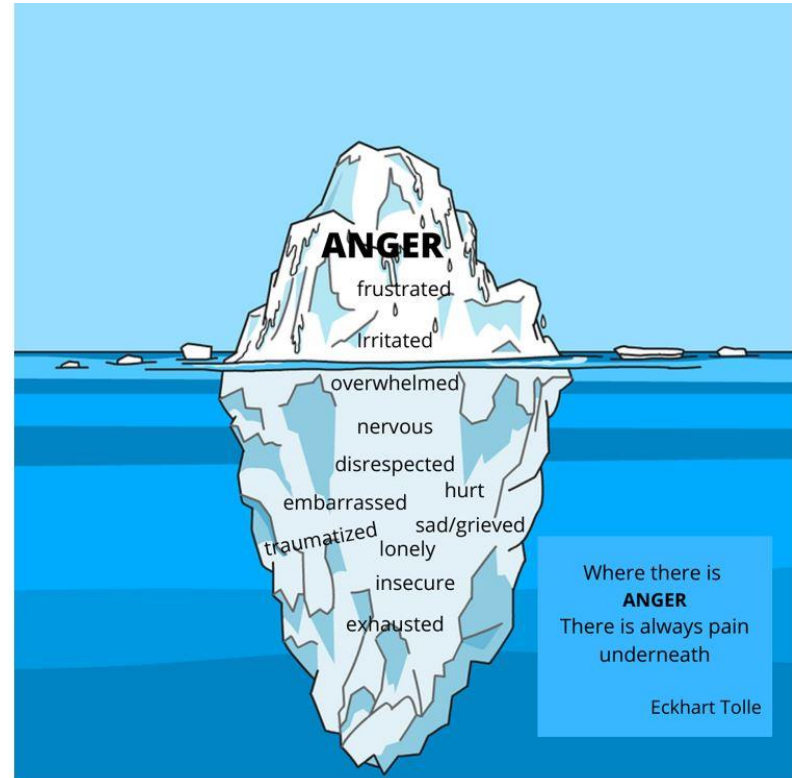
ADAPTING TO THIS “NEW NORMAL”

Challenging behaviours, conflict and communication,
connection, routine & self-care



Challenging Behaviours

- Behavioural Miscues
- Anger Iceberg
 - Where there is anger, there is pain underneath
- Empathy
- 3-Step response
 1. *Label & validate the feeling*
 2. *Set limit*
 3. *Offer alternative*
- Empowering resilience
- Role modelling



Conflict and Communication



- Establish 'Time-outs'

- Respect the call
- Set time-limit
- Dos/Don'ts
- Return to discuss

- BIFF Responses

B – BRIEF

I – INFORMATIVE

F – FRIENDLY

F – FIRM

Connection

- Partners
 - normal 'long-distance' relationships, letters/video chats, encourage video for conflict resolution, share piece of clothing/scent, cautious of what we're sharing over media
- Friends
 - watch parties, workout together, game nights, school work, facetime/video chats, etc.
- Parents & family
 - Balancing together and alone time, mealtimes, managing conflict

Connection



- Calming and connecting activities
 - Sharing a TV show, learning about their interests, going for a walk, cooking
 - Listening... no advice giving
- Balancing screen-time
- Teens as problem-solving partners
- Realistic expectations, and focusing on the “good enough”



Routine



Inspiring Hope + Wellness in Our Community

- Balancing work and play
 - Adapting school routines – breaks, walks, attention
 - Manageable/realistic expectations
- Using your space
 - Designated zones, communication of worktime/playtime
 - Use of outdoors and movement
- Importance of sleep routines

Life Hygiene and Self-Care

- COVID information management
- Teen stress management skills
- Self-care – journal, connect, hobbies
- Nutrition, sleep, exercise
- BEST check-ins
 - *BODY - EMOTION - SPIRIT - THOUGHT*
- Mindfulness with teens - "this sucks and what's important now?"
- Gratitude and Top 5

Resources

- Children and Youth Planning Table Events and Activities Calendar <https://childrenandyouthplanningtable.ca/calendar/>
- Adolescent Development: A Primer for Parents http://teenmentalhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/parentyourteen_October-29th-2019.pdf
- Teenmentalhealth.org <http://teenmentalhealth.org/>
- WRDSB Mental Health Resource List <https://www.wrdsb.ca/our-schools/health-and-wellness/public-health-information/novel-coronavirus-covid-19-information/mental-health-resources/mental-health-supports-and-resources-for-students/>

Any Questions?

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