

# Parenting Revolution

Teenager Edition

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### SESSION 1

Introduction

### SESSION 2

Mind

### SESSION 3

Mouth

### SESSION 4

Move

### SESSION 5

Mates

### SESSION 6

Meaning

### SESSION 7

Morals

### SESSION 8

Manners

# Mates

## ACTIVITY SHEET



Navigating relationships throughout adolescence can be challenging at the best of times. As your teen learns more about themselves, their values and their convictions, they also discover their own voice. Combine this with the kindling of romantic interests, bullying, and ‘cliques’, and all you need is a spark to light the flame of drama. But as if to add fuel to the fire, the added element of technology and social media can also create barriers to healthy human connection. For this reason, in this session we’ll address the importance of teenage relationships. We consider ways to establish a healthy relationship with your teen, how to encourage and nurture healthy relationships between your teens and their peers, and how best to navigate the new digital landscape in which we all now live.



### OBJECTIVES SUMMARY

#### This session is designed to help you:

- (a) understand what a positive relationship with your teen looks like and how to build it
- (b) know how to help your teen deal with ‘frenemies’ and other relationship dynamics
- (c) navigate the digital landscape of online socialisation

# Relational Dynamics

You may have already noticed, your teen is becoming less dependent on you, yet increasingly reliant on the validation, feedback and influence of their peers. But just because they appear to lean more towards independence, they still need you to be their parent. It's important that as your teen matures and evolves, your parenting style matures and evolves with them.

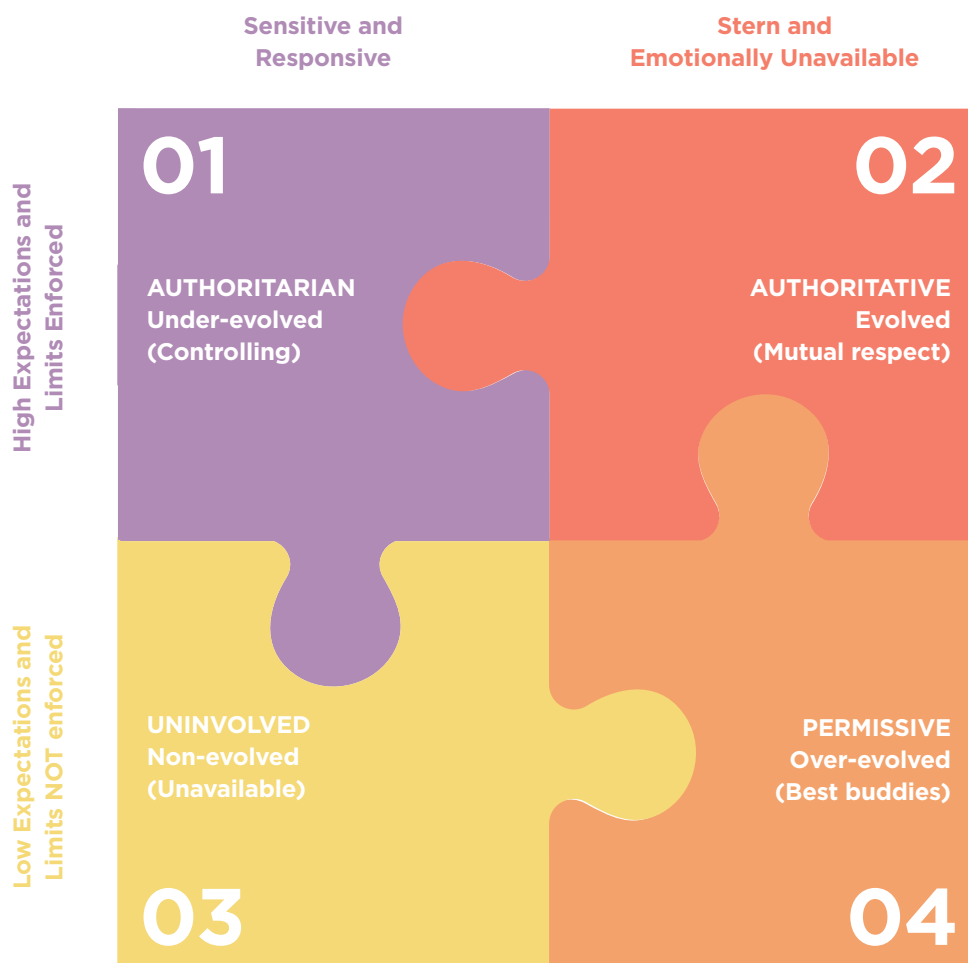


Who is your teen most likely to turn to in the following scenarios? ✓

	PARENTS	FRIENDS
Being teased or bullied online or at school		
Forming opinions about controversial topics (e.g. sexuality)		
Questions about God's existence, and destiny (e.g. who am I, where did I come from, why am I here, and where am I going?)		
Receive an award, or got great results on an assignment or exam		
Advice on most appropriate fashion style or outfit choice		
Whether or not to get a haircut or new hair style		
Encouragement about individual identity and value		
Received bad results on an assignment or exam		
Information about the physical changes that accompany puberty		
Deciding which subjects to enrol in for higher education		
Processing romantic interests in and feelings for another		
Questions about vaping, smoking, drinking or illicit drugs		
"How to, what if, and when should" questions about sex		
Difficulty with an assignment or trouble studying for an exam		
Got in trouble (reprimanded) or find themselves in trouble (crisis)		

# Parenting Styles

There are different approaches to parenting teens. When it comes to rules and boundaries, some parents tend to be strict, whereas others tend to be more permissive. When it comes to emotional availability, some parents are responsive whereas others are absent. Your parenting style is likely to have been influenced by many factors, including the way your own parents brought you up, your spouse's parenting style, your personality as well as your child's temperament and their individual needs. Your parenting style is likely to fall into one of four different categories. What's your approach?

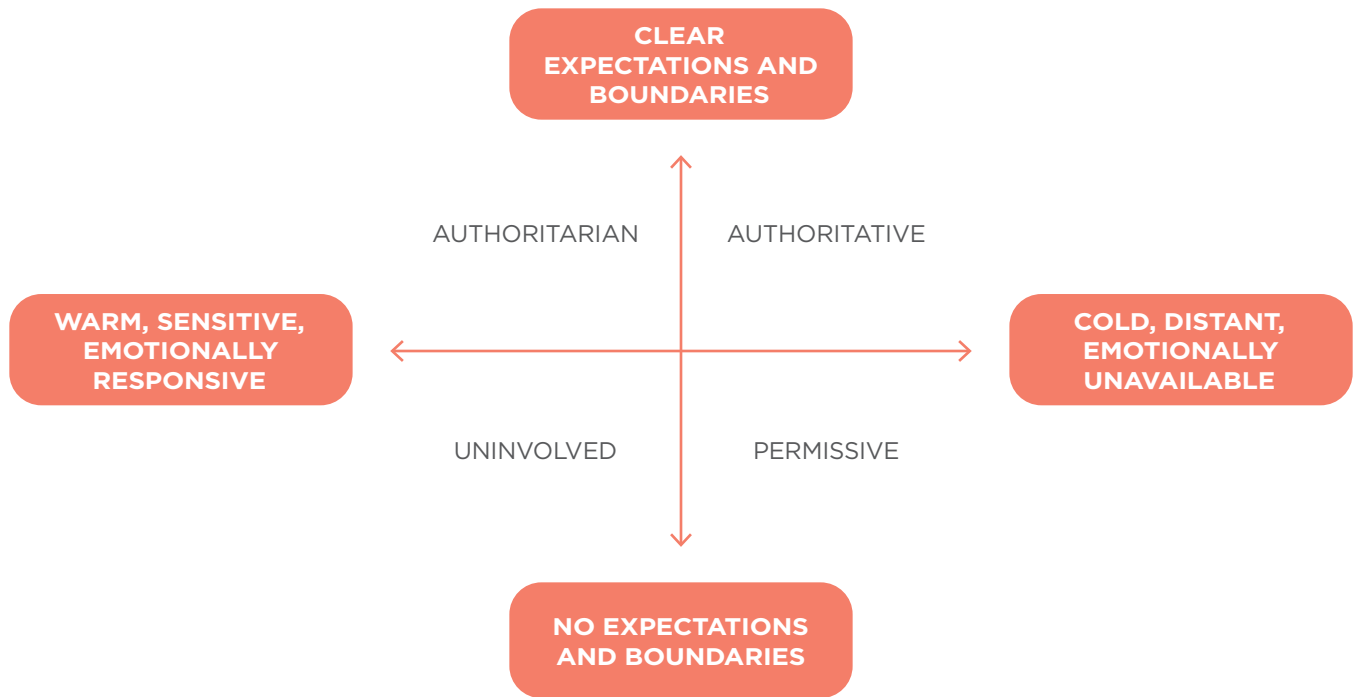



#### FUN FACT:

The first three parenting styles (Authoritative, Authoritarian and Indulgent) were first defined by clinical developmental psychologist, Dr Diane Baumrind, in the 1960s. They were later expanded to four categories (Authoritative, Authoritarian, Permissive, and Uninvolved) by Dr Eleanor Maccoby and Dr John Martin in the 1980s. Four decades on and these categories of parenting are just as relevant today.


In the following graph, plot your own parenting style (as well as that of your parents):

X = Father    + = Parents of Father    O = Mother    # = Parents of Mother


**AUTHORITARIAN**

An under-evolved style of parenting, where parents struggle to 'let go' and grant their teen autonomy. Parents typically treat their teenager like a young child - enforcing unrealistic rules and expectations, and curtailing independence. In this parenting style, parents typically use fear and threat as a means of control.




**AUTHORITATIVE**

Parents have found the balance between guardian and friend. Their relationship is characterised by warmth, security and support. However, these parents they also have high expectations, and both establish and enforce appropriate boundaries (fostering growth and maturity). This parenting style is based on mutual respect.



**UNINVOLVED**

Parents are emotionally (and sometimes physically) unavailable to their teens. Parents rarely set or enforce boundaries, don't typically have expectations or encourage their teen to excel in any meaningful way. Parents fail to provide support and understanding in order for a quality relationship to develop.



**PERMISSIVE**

Parents typically try to be a 'best buddy' - focussing more on having a positive friendship than enforcing healthy boundaries. Parents often avoid conflict, and therefore, are overly permissive. Parents may also lack emotional boundaries and over-share personal problems, resulting in a lack of respect from the teen towards their parent or possibly even rejection.

# A Healthy Balance

Time and time again, research has found that an authoritative parenting style leads to the best outcomes for teenagers. Parents who embrace an authoritative approach to their parenting tend to raise teenagers who are more securely attached in their relationships, have greater self-esteem, better emotional resilience and more positive behaviours.



## What parenting-style category do you fall into?

01 Authoritarian

02 Authoritative

03 Uninvolved


04 Permissive

**Q:** Are there aspects of your parenting you would like to change? If so what?

**Q:** What parenting style did your parents have when you were growing up?  
How has this influenced your own parenting style?

**Q:** As a couple, do you share the same parenting style? If not, what small changes could you make that will help you both move towards authoritative parenting?



A man in a teal jacket is balancing a white coffee cup with a black lid on his hand. The background is dark and out of focus.

**DON'T BE SO CONCERNED WITH 'LETTING GO'. RATHER, PAY ATTENTION TO THE POSITIONING OF YOUR HAND. INSTEAD OF EXERTING CONTROL, REPOSITION YOURSELF TO BE THEIR FIRM BASE TO SPRING FROM AND RETURN TO. ALLOWING YOUR TEEN TO EXPLORE NEW FREEDOMS AND MAKE THEIR OWN DECISIONS ALSO FACILITATES A SECURE ENVIRONMENT TO TRY, FAIL, AND TRY AGAIN.**

**Become your  
teen's safe  
place to fall**

# Listen. Learn. Love. Lead.

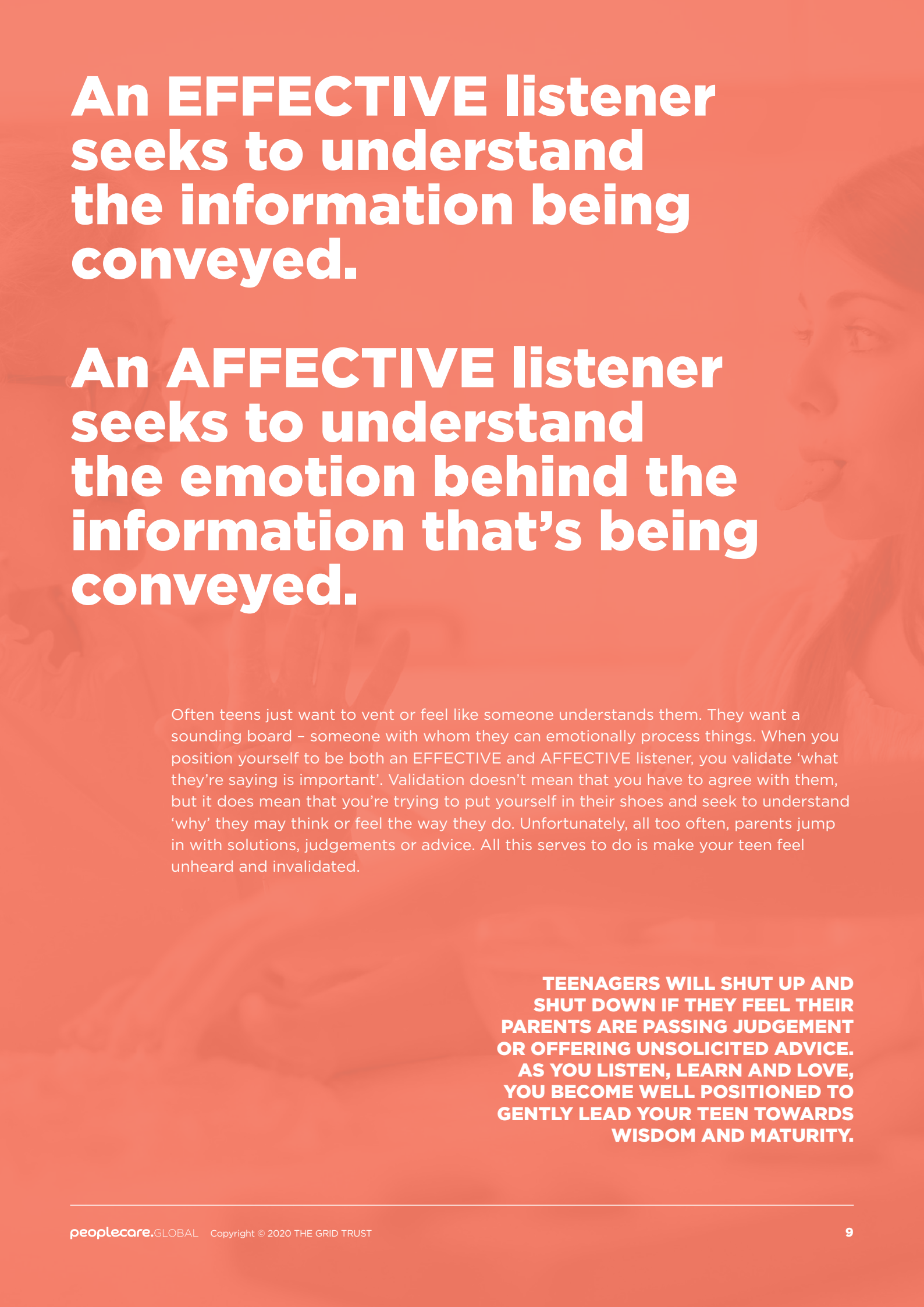
The process of ‘evolving’ as parents can be incredibly challenging. Learning to loosen the reigns of control typically follows an internal tug-of-war. However, when you reposition yourself to be your teen’s firm base for them to explore some new freedoms and make their own decisions, even if they make poor choices, you are there to catch them. The goal is to create a foundation of emotional security such that your teen feels safe to come and talk to you about anything and everything. You may not be able to protect them from the pain and disappointment that accompanies failure, but by becoming their ‘safe place to fall’, you can help them process and grow through the experience.



**As your teen leaps from the nest and endeavours to spread their wings, create a safety net of emotional security by listening and learning, extending love and grace, and gently guiding them in the way they should go. Match THE BEST emotionally supportive response to each of the following scenarios: ✓**

<b>SCENARIO</b>	<b>Your teen feels “unprepared” for the school presentation next week</b>	
<b>Response 1</b>	“Tell me, what is it that worries you the most about this presentation?”	
<b>Response 2</b>	“It’s no big deal, presentations are easy. You’ve got this!”	
<b>Response 3</b>	“You’ve had three weeks to prepare for this. Why are you so unorganised?”	
<b>SCENARIO</b>	<b>Your teen voluntarily confesses a mistake or poor choice they’ve made</b>	
<b>Response 1</b>	“Your actions have brought shame on yourself and embarrassed your family.”	
<b>Response 2</b>	“It’s no big deal. We all make mistakes. In fact, I remember when I was young...”	
<b>Response 3</b>	“I’m proud of you for confiding in me, that must have taken courage. Let’s talk.”	
<b>SCENARIO</b>	<b>You learn your teen has a romantic interest in (feelings for) someone</b>	
<b>Response 1</b>	“It’s pretty common to start having feelings for others. Tell me about them.”	
<b>Response 2</b>	“You’re not allowed a boy/girlfriend. You’re in big trouble if you deceive me.”	
<b>Response 3</b>	“Oooh, a boy/girlfriend hey? So, have you kissed them yet or are you scared?”	
<b>SCENARIO</b>	<b>You’ve discovered inappropriate behaviour online (computer or phone)</b>	
<b>Response 1</b>	“How dare you breach my trust? I’m confiscating your device until further notice.”	
<b>Response 2</b>	“What do you think is an appropriate consequence that’ll help you learn...?”	
<b>Response 3</b>	“Well that was stupid. Make sure you don’t do it again, okay?”	





**An EFFECTIVE listener  
seeks to understand  
the information being  
conveyed.**

**An AFFECTIVE listener  
seeks to understand  
the emotion behind the  
information that's being  
conveyed.**

Often teens just want to vent or feel like someone understands them. They want a sounding board – someone with whom they can emotionally process things. When you position yourself to be both an EFFECTIVE and AFFECTIVE listener, you validate ‘what they’re saying is important’. Validation doesn’t mean that you have to agree with them, but it does mean that you’re trying to put yourself in their shoes and seek to understand ‘why’ they may think or feel the way they do. Unfortunately, all too often, parents jump in with solutions, judgements or advice. All this serves to do is make your teen feel unheard and invalidated.

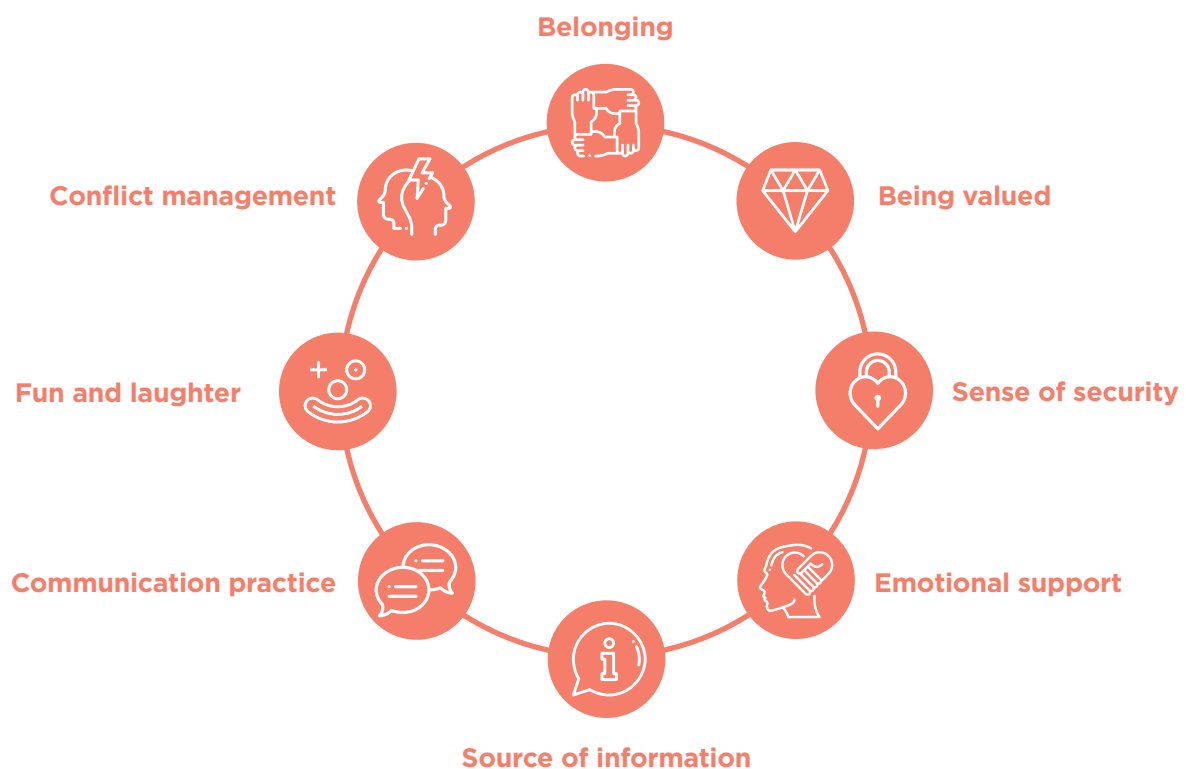
**TEENAGERS WILL SHUT UP AND  
SHUT DOWN IF THEY FEEL THEIR  
PARENTS ARE PASSING JUDGEMENT  
OR OFFERING UNSOLICITED ADVICE.  
AS YOU LISTEN, LEARN AND LOVE,  
YOU BECOME WELL POSITIONED TO  
GENTLY LEAD YOUR TEEN TOWARDS  
WISDOM AND MATURITY.**

# Peer-to-Peer Influence

As your child entered into the “tween” years, you may have noticed a shift. You may have once been your child’s go-to person for fun, entertainment, advice and comfort, yet somehow, somewhere along the way, you may suddenly feel like you’ve been replaced by your teen’s peer group. While this can be a tough transition for parents, as your teen becomes more independent, it’s normal for them to gravitate to their peer group (because in our adult years, we all turn to peers). Friends are becoming increasingly influential in your teen’s life and it’s important they are surrounded by the right people!

**HEALTHY FRIENDSHIPS ARE IMPORTANT AT EVERY STAGE OF LIFE, BUT PARTICULARLY THROUGHOUT THE ADOLESCENT YEARS WHEN A YOUNG PERSON’S SENSE OF SELF IS FORMED.**

**In addition to helping shape identity, positive friendships can facilitate:**



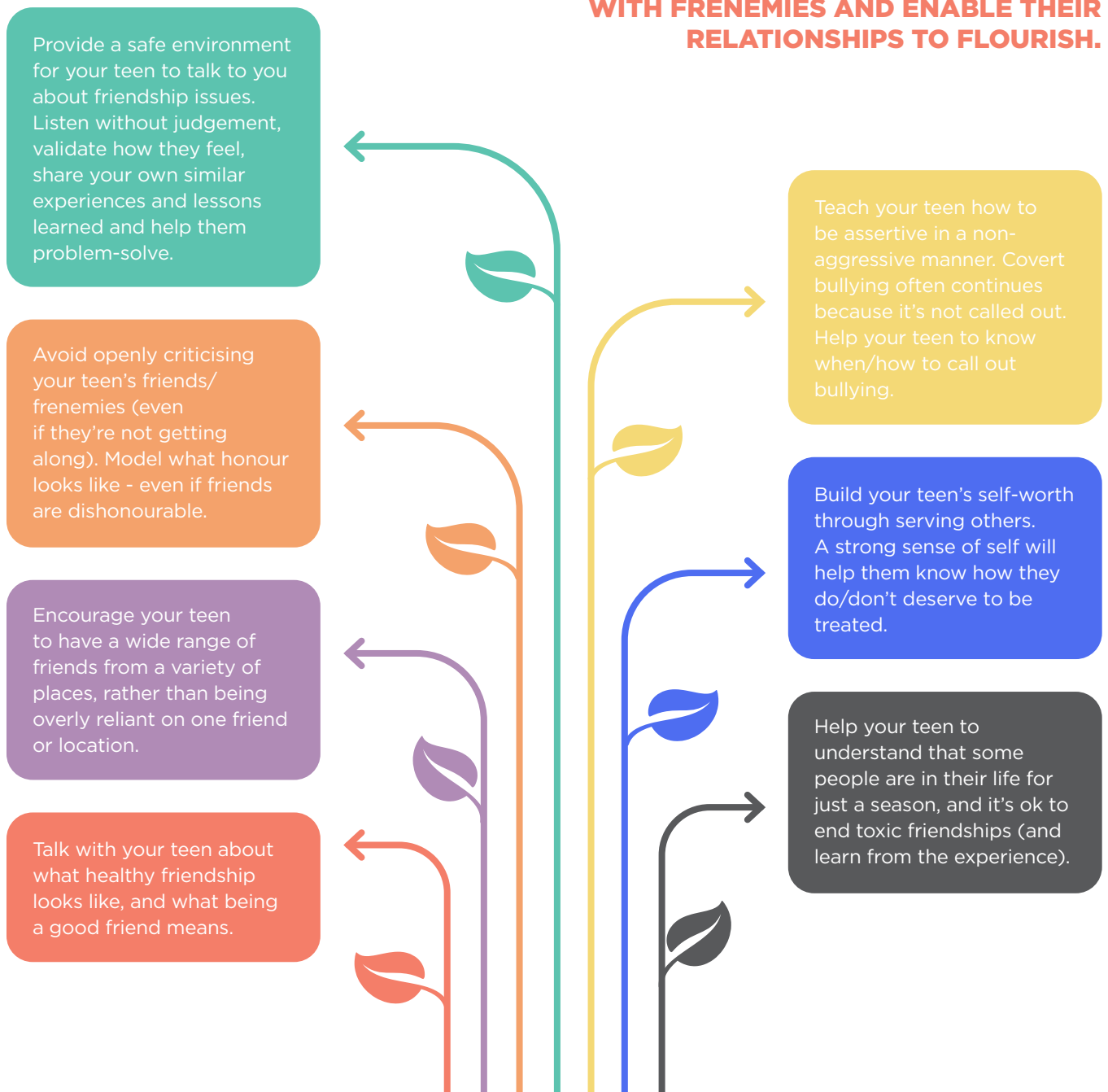
#### **NEGATIVE INFLUENCES:**

Toxic friendships can cause long-term damage to a teenager’s self-esteem and values system and can lead them to engage in behaviours that may have far reaching consequences. It’s important your teen is surrounded by healthy role models and functional friendships. Parents can encourage this by (a) befriending your teens friends, (b) modelling healthy relationships, and (c) encouraging your teen to have a mentor (someone they look up to whom they can seek advice from as an alternative to their parent or peers – e.g. youth pastor, uncle/aunty, school chaplain, connect group leader, grandparent or trusted family friend).

# Dealing with Toxic Peers

Friendships that are akin to a rollercoaster ride (best friends one-minute, mortal enemies the next) are commonly referred to as 'frenemies'. Toxic relationships can be quite unhealthy for teens. A frenemy will often engage in subtle 'put down' behaviour (for example, say mean things, exclude, manipulate, engage in cyber bullying, gossip and other disrespectful behaviours). Instead of encouragement and security, toxic relationships promote insecurity, and lead to negative thoughts and feelings about one's self.

## CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING PATHWAYS TO HELP YOUR TEEN EFFECTIVELY DEAL WITH FRENEMIES AND ENABLE THEIR RELATIONSHIPS TO FLOURISH.



# The Digital Landscape

Thanks to technology, your teen is likely to be in constant communication with their peers. They are likely to be communicating before, during and after school on multiple platforms. However, social media is not without its downside. By becoming overly reliant on technology, social skills, mental health and moral behaviour can go into decline. Here are some things you can do to help safeguard your teen online:

Help your teen find uplifting accounts on social media to follow. Encourage them to create posts that add value and set a positive example.

Create a technology-free time for your teen each day. Establish a social media curfew and ensure they don't have access to any device overnight.

Set age-appropriate boundaries and time limits around device or social media use.

Require transparent passwords (for device and social media account monitoring) as a term of use. Where required, install accountability software or set parental controls.

Talk with your teen about what they should do if they ever feel harassed or are inappropriately approached online.

Follow your teen on social media and have regular conversations about what they're consuming online.

Teach your teen to become a 'critical consumer' of social media. Rather than absorbing content at face value, teach them the ability to see beyond perfect imagery.

Create a family social media and internet use policy together with your teen. Sign the agreement at the start of each year.