

Parent Tips for Avoiding Rescuing Behaviors

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Acknowledge their Struggle

- Validate, listen, validate, and listen more.
- Empathize!
- Recognize these situations as a source of unrest for your teen.
- Let him/her know that you understand this situation really stinks.

Recognize When You Are Doing Too Much

- Notice the pattern, particularly when anxiety is high.
- Pay attention to your contribution to the problem and make a conscious effort to take responsibility for only what belongs to you.
- Instead of immediately giving advice, you might say, “I don’t know, I would have to think about that.”
- ***Hand your child back the responsibility to struggle to find her own answers and solutions.***

Expect Push Back When You Pull Back

- Pulling back will initially cause a problem - you’re changing a system.
- Your teen might get sick, whine or argue with you more, and act even more helpless at first.
- It will be very tempting to slip back into your old role if you’re addicted to being the person that does everything.
- Say to yourself that you are not going to do things for your teen that you know he/she can—and should—do for him/herself.

Don’t Detach Completely

- Don’t detach completely—stay loving and connected.
- Let your teen know that her problems are *hers* to solve and that you are there to help her figure out solutions.
- Be responsible but don’t rescue - just listen and don’t jump in and fix things.
- Let your teen see that you believe in him and that you’re not mad at him for struggling in life.

Stop and Ask Yourself . . .

- Does this belong to me or to my teen?
- Am I doing this to calm myself down because I feel less anxious when I know they’re going to do well?
- Do I feel like this is somehow my responsibility?
- Am I doing this because it’s in my best interest, or *their* best interest?

Ask Curious Questions

- Ask your teen for her ideas and be collaborative.
- Listen openly to what he says and ask him to think critically about each choice.
- What will work and what will be problematic about each decision?
- What would be the natural consequences of each choice—and how would she feel about dealing with that?

Use Encouragers

- Provide words of encouragement when your teen is struggling with an intense situation.
- You never know how much a hug or an arm around a shoulder with a firm shoulder to cry on will be appreciated.
- Sometimes that affectionate touch is just what your kids will need to get through the day!

Be on the Look Out for Devastation

- Although teens are growing into young men and women, they are still in fact children.
- They do not have the same coping skills as older adults.
- Monitor the problem and step in when your teen is hurting him/herself or may hurt another person.

Be Grace-Fully Redemptive

- How do you respond to your teen does something wrong?
- All teens encounter temptation and all will make sinful choices.
- Your goal is to redeem these situations by turning a mistake into an opportunity for your teen to become a more Christ-like person.
- When mistakes, difficulties, and rebellion rear their heads in your home remember how your heavenly Father has treated you.

The Sun Will Rise Again Tomorrow

- Remind your teen that it may not rise over the day they expected, but it will rise!
- An unfortunate situation gives us the opportunity to find a solution to our problem we might not have thought of until we were plunged in the middle of this problem.
- Your blessings may come when you least expect it.

Think of the Space Between

- Think of your teen as standing to your right and the problem she/he needs to solve is on your left.
- If you step between her and the problem, *you become the problem.*
- They cannot see the solution on their own.