

# Talking with Tee

From some therapists perspectives

# Agenda

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- Key points for adults
- Adolescent brain
- Communication - rules of consent
- Forms of communication / language style
- Introductions with teen
- Communication openers and skills
- Validation, empathy, normalization
- Consequences / boundaries
- Teen trivia
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- Talking Q&A

# Introductions

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# Key points for adults

Although young – teenagers are still **unique** individuals.

It will help if you know as much as possible about normal adolescent development.

Teenagers crave others to be interested in their life, thoughts, and feelings - on their terms.

Teenage behavior may appear contradictory, but there is always a good explanation for it. Boundaries are still good to have.

**It's cool to not be cool** – you're an adult – **don't try to be a teenager.**

# Adult brain vs adolescent brain

Adults think with the prefrontal cortex, the brain's rational part.

This is the part of the brain that responds to situations with good judgment and an awareness of long term consequences.

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Teens 'think' with the amygdala, brain's emotional part .

Their actions are guided more by the emotional and reactive amygdala and less by the thoughtful, logical frontal cortex.

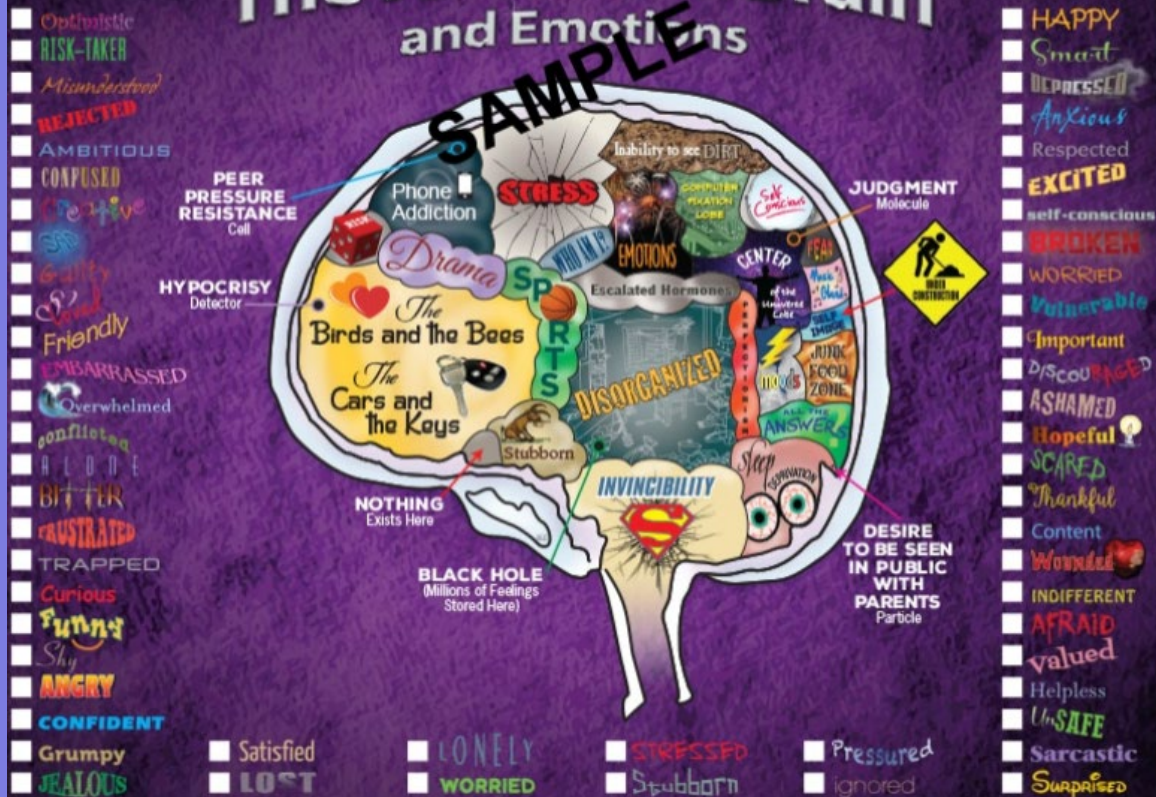
# Teen brain



In teen's brains, the connections between the emotional part of the brain and the decision - making center are still developing. These skills are 'under construction' until age 25.

That's why when teens have overwhelming emotional input, they can't explain later what they were thinking. They weren't thinking as much as they were feeling.

# The TEENAGE Brain and Emotions



# How to get a teen to talk

First – ALWAYS– remember they are a unique individual.

Conversation openers!

Respect privacy, which grows trust.

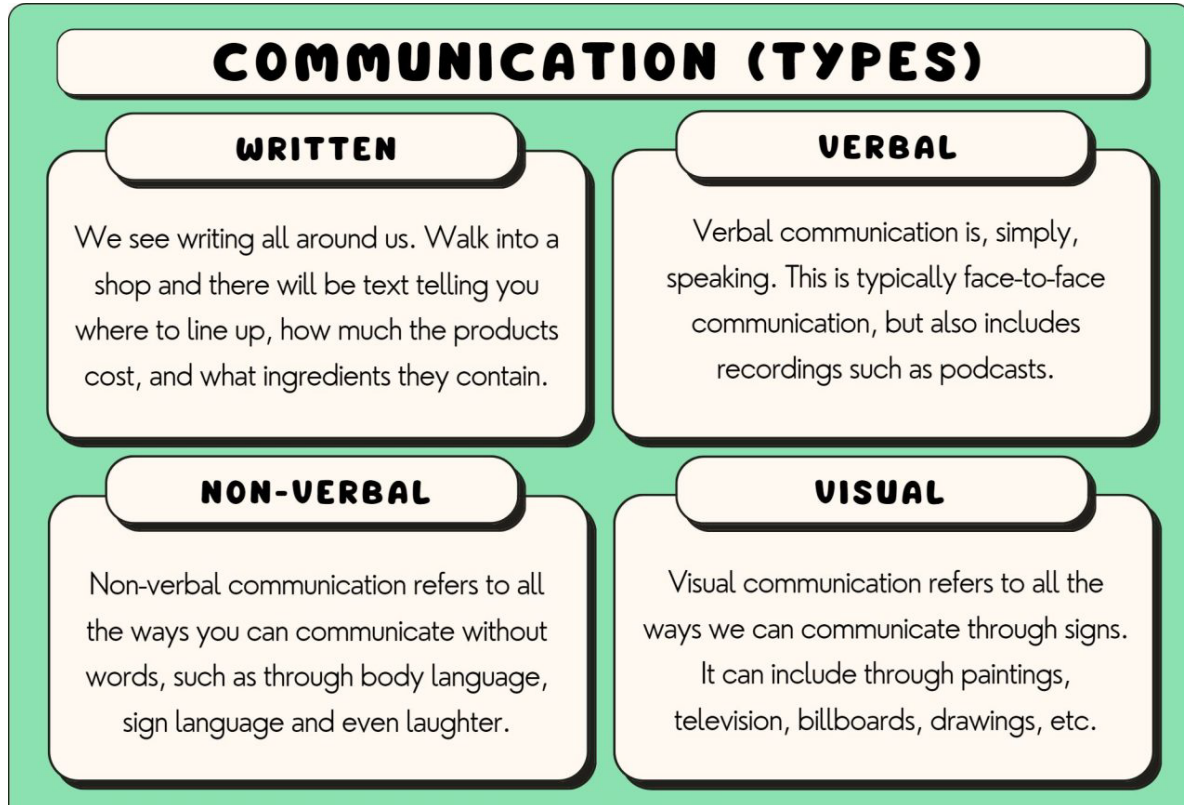
Empathy, validation, normalization.

Talk to them like an adult, but understand they are a teen.

Allow choice when possible ( i.e - let them pick the radio station or food.)

Roll with the resistance.

# Forms of communication / language style



# Teenagers preferred communication

Tiktok

Memes

And a dash of slang

Just watch their video or look at the meme.

# Communications of consent

Can I ask some questions?

Is this a good time to talk?

Can we talk?

Tell me more.

What are you feeling?

Help me to understand.

How can I help you?

Do you know what you need right now?

# Communication openers and skills

## Activities

- Card decks
- Would-you-rather questions

## Conversation openers

- Make the teen the EXPERT on themselves
- Show interest in their (clothes, music, hobbies)

# Example openers

Would you rather have the ability to see 10 minutes into the future or 150 years into the future?

Would you rather have telekinesis (the ability to move things with your mind) or telepathy (the ability to read minds)?

Would you rather have a one - minute conversation with your past self or your future self?

Who do you eat lunch with at school?

What bands are you listening to lately?

What's your favorite show right now?

What teacher do you like best this year?

How would you describe your style?

QUESTIONS

Do you like...

What is your favorite...

What do you think about...

Where...

How did you...

When did you...

COMPLIMENTS

Cool

Awesome

Interesting

I like how you...

You're good at...

You know a lot about...

I like your...

FRIENDLY COMMENTS

Tell me something about ...

I noticed you seem to like...

I'm wondering about your...

You said something about...

# the teen still won't talk.. why?

They feel anxious and stressed

Difficulty putting their feelings and emotions into words

Embarrassed, vulnerable feeling about their situation

Don't know how to ask for help, or what to ask for

Afraid to disappoint others, or you

Too many questions

Predicting a negative response by you

They don't trust you

# Roll with the resistance

"It's okay if you don't think any of these ideas will work for you, perhaps you've been thinking about something that might work instead?"

"We want this to be your decision. So, what would you like to try?"

"I don't understand everything you are going through, but if you want to share what you've tried, maybe together we can find something that could work for you."

"I know you don't want to meet with me, is there anything we can do to make this time go quicker?"

"It's okay to feel \_\_\_\_\_, I can just sit here with you for a moment."

# Keep Knocking...

Yes, our kids need  
their space and privacy  
and we should respect  
that. But we shouldn't  
allow a door to divide us...

Knock so they know you care.  
Knock because they need you and you  
need them. Knock to hear about their day  
and to make sure they're okay.

Knock because being a teenager is hard  
and they might need a listening ear.  
Mostly, knock so they know you love  
them and you'll always be there. ♡

@raisingteenstoday

# Try again, from the top

Ask permission

Open up, focus on empathy

Really listen

Mirror back what you heard

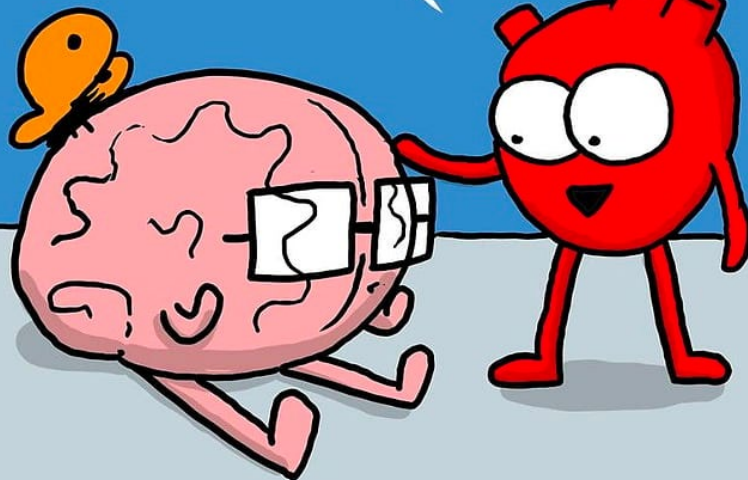
**You got them  
talking!**

**Now what?**

# Power of Empathy, Validation and Normalization

The most important  
communication skill  
is listening.

It's okay not to  
have all the answers.  
Super okay.



# What is effective communication

Effective communication is the sharing of information.

Message sent

Message received

Message understood

We often focus on what we should say. However, effective communication has an emphasis on listening. Listening well means not just understanding the words or the information being communicated, but also understanding the emotions the speaker is trying to convey.

# Empathize

“Empathize” is identifying and acknowledging the emotions the person is expressing. A key part is that you don’t need to agree (or support!) an action that someone took. All you need to be able to do is identify the feeling behind the words and show the speaker you hear them.

- Are actively listening
- Care about what they have to say and how they are feeling
- Understand their experience
- Can provide them with support

# Empathetic vs Unempathetic

You're in a tough spot here.

I wish you didn't have to go through that.

I'm on your side here.

You must feel so helpless.

That hurts me to hear that.

No wonder you're upset.

I'd feel the same way you do in your situation.

That sounds frustrating.

Let me try summarize what you're saying.  
You're saying...

Try to cheer up. These things happen.

Maybe this is a blessing in disguise.

Try to pull yourself together.

It looks like you'll just have to  
tough it out.

Perhaps this is God's will.

Anybody could have screwed this up.

You will just have to learn to adjust.

You're a tough person      —I'm sure you've  
been through worse.

# Validation

“Validation” means acknowledging how a situation can cause someone to feel upset. In this technique, the responder shows the speaker that the situation the speaker is in is difficult. It makes sense that the speaker is having a difficult time coping with it.

- Helps people see their emotional responses as justified
- Puts emotions into context
- Increases trust between the speaker and the respondent
- Separates the speaker from their emotional responses

# Validating vs invalidating

I can see that you are very (upset, sad, frightened, scared)

Here's what I'm hearing you say (summarize).

I can see this is important to you.

That really stinks! I bet you feel disappointed.

I can see you're overwhelmed. Let me help you with that. Can we talk?

Try to one - up the person. "Oh, you think you have it bad..."

Tell them how they should feel. "You should feel lucky, blessed..."

Try to give them advice. "What you really should do is..."

Try to solve their problem. "I'm going to call that girl's parents and..."

Cheerlead (there is a time for this, but not now). "I know you can do it..."

Make "life" statements. "Well, life's not fair..."

# Normalize

“Normalization” means helping a person realize a difficult situation is common. It is common for people to think they are the only person on the planet with a specific problem. This unhelpful thought makes us isolate, as we think ‘no one can understand.’

- Increases self-esteem
- Increases hope
- Reduces feelings of inadequacy

# MEANINGFUL COMPLIMENTS

to uplift your teenager

*love you*  
I LOVE hanging  
out with you...  
just being with you  
makes me SMILE!

I might be  
teaching you, but  
you're teaching me  
just as MUCH...  
*thank you!*

I hope you know  
how GRATEFUL  
I am to be your parent.  
You're a GIFT...

  
You're awesome at  
figuring things out!  
THANKS for helping me  
with all the techy stuff.

You are so SMART  
and talented. You're  
going to do amazing  
things one day.  
I'm PROUD of you!

*Be your  
OWN  
HERO*



You are  
freaking  
awesome!

@RAISINGTEENSTODAY

*Kind*  
You have SUCH  
a good heart.  
The world is a better  
place because of YOU.

*Be brave*  
You're FAR  
braver than I ever  
was... you inspire me!  
I LOVE how you're willing  
to try new things.

*Be  
YOU  
not  
THEM*

# Boundaries & consequences

# Consistency and clarity

Model preferred behaviors

Give respect to get respect

Share responsibility for the boundary setting

Be firm and consistent

Clarity and connection to consequences

Reinforce positive behaviors

# Don't forget you are the adult

Don't engage in power struggles

You are the adult - if the teenager is unable to act responsibly then it is your responsibility to model calm, consistent behaviors and conflict resolution.

# Types of Boundaries

## Physical

Personal space, who can touch you, where, when and how they may touch you.

## Material

The limits you set on how much money or resources you give or loan other people.

## Emotional

How you allow people to talk to you. Not taking responsibility for someone else's mistakes or actions.

## Time

What you're willing to spend your time on. Spending time on yourself.

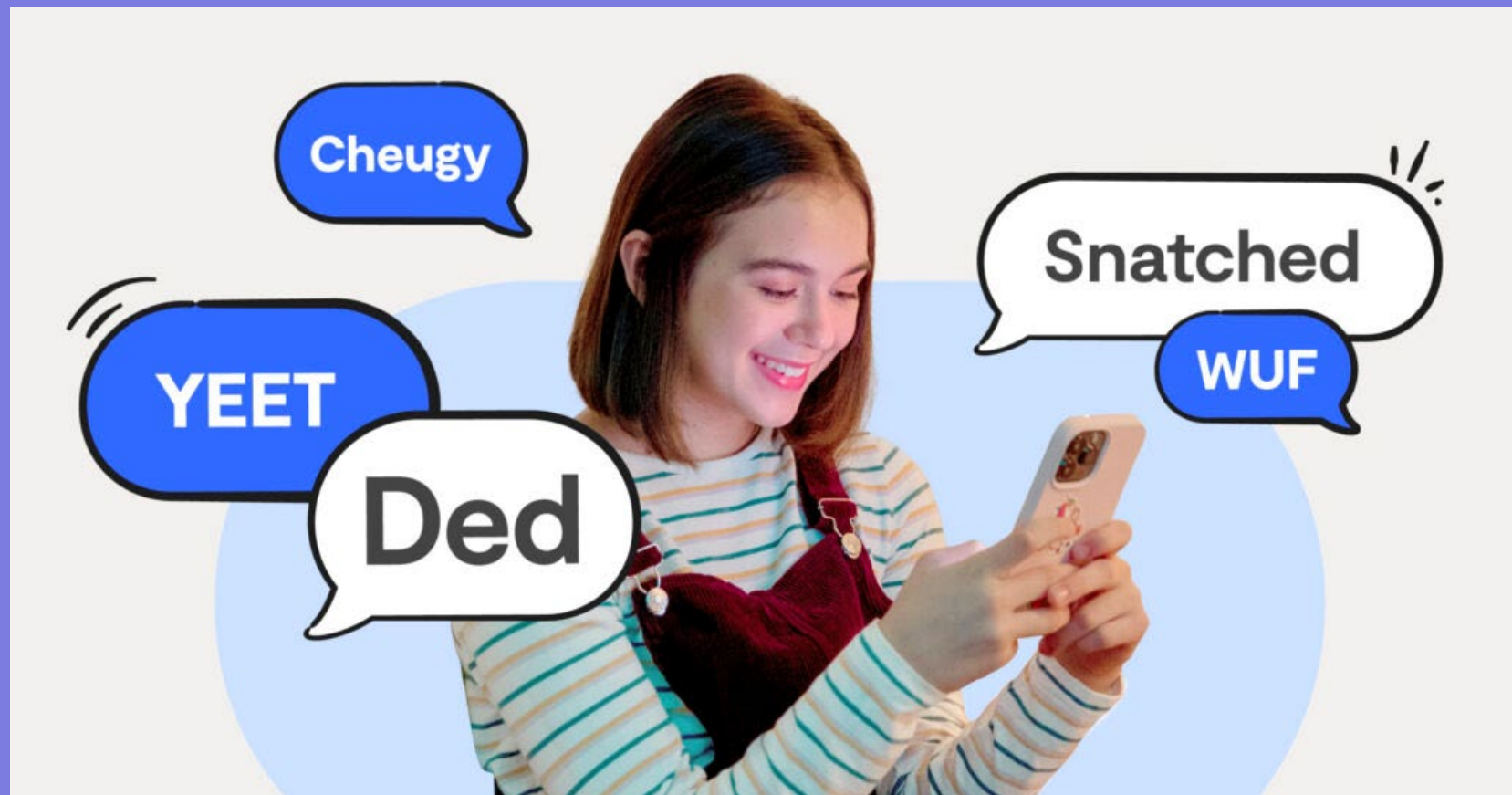
## Sexual

Your comfort with sexual experiences as well as the sharing of details.

## Relationships

Behavior that you are or are not willing to put up with in the context of relationships.

**Questions?**



**Cheugy**

**YEET**

**Ded**

**Snatched**

**WUF**

# Teen trivia

# SOME Teen Slang

A mood — A relatable feeling or situation (often “mood”)

Beef: we’re fighting over a problem

Bet — A response indicating agreement. Example: “Wanna go to the store?” “Bet.”

Bussin’ — Awesome. Example: These tacos are bussin’.

Bye Felicia: I don’t need you in my life, goodbye

Cheugy — Used to describe someone or something that is basic, out of date, or trying too hard

Ded — Used when something is really funny or embarrassing. “I’m ded!”

Finna: I’m about to or going to do something

Lowkey: implies a more relaxed attitude, keeping information secret — “downlow”

Mid: Mid - tier, AKA below average or boring

No cap — Used to indicate that someone is not lying  
“cappin’ = lying

Tea — Gossip or interesting news shared between friends

Vibing — Chilling out, having a good time, or identifying with a certain kind of energy

YAAS — A very emphatic yes

YEET — ‘yikes’ or a very strong word for yes, to throw something “I yeeted”

Go Off - Encourages someone to continue, usually in agreement to a rant or opinion

# Apps



Instagram



TikTok



Kik Messenger



Whisper



WhatsApp



Discord



Snapchat

# Resources

Teen Slang: Decoding Gen Z

<https://gabb.com/blog/teen-slang/>

The Teen Brain: 7 Things to Know

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/the-teen-brain-7-things-to-know>

Raising Teens Today

<https://raisingteens today.com/>

Your Teen Really DOES Want to Talk to You: Tips for Opening Up the Lines of Communication

<https://raisingteens today.com/your-teen-really-does-want-to-talk-to-you-tips-for-opening-up-the-lines-of-communication/>

Tips for Communicating With Your Teen

<https://childmind.org/article/tips-for-communicating-with-teen/>

Teen Mental Health: How to Know When Your Child Needs Help

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/Pages/Mental-Health-and-Teens-Watch-for-Danger-Signs.aspx>