

# How to Show Your Youth You Care!!!

This handout is to help remind you of the ways you've shown love and appreciation to your youth and to offer suggestions how to further build that important relationship. Your youth may be experiencing challenges associated with being a teenager and will likely be looking to you for both encouragement and guidance. It can be confusing or overwhelming for parents to define how "to best" facilitate their youth's growth while building a strong relationship. This is a guide filled with some tangible tips on how to improve or maintain the connection with your youth, but also offers room to come up with your own ideas.

## Boundaries

The parent/child relationship is based on trust. This means that your youth is able to trust you to provide a safe and supportive environment, and in turn you can trust your youth to meet your expectations. In order to keep this balance of trust, there needs to be conversations about family boundaries. This means you will need to outline your expectations, set family limits and explain consequences. You are responsible for creating what is "normal" for your youth, and you're about to determine the natural family culture through these boundaries.

In outlining your expectations for appropriate behaviour, your youth will have an understanding of how to act in the family and community. Even when you have built family trust, your youth may make a mistake and be unable to meet your expectations. This is where consequences come in.

## Consider These...

- Include your youth in creating family rules and expectations *prior* to inappropriate behaviour, so that they agree to the rule and understand the consequences of not meeting the expectation. This does not mean that they will like the rule, but they can trust you to follow-through on your limits.
- If your youth arrives fifteen minutes late for your expected curfew, the natural and logical consequence is to shorten his or her curfew by fifteen minutes.
- It is ok to say "we don't do that in our family" or "we don't allow that in our house, and my expectation is that you won't participate in that behaviour outside of the home".
- From time to time, your child may be involved in a healthy activity such as a sports game, employment, or a movie that extends their curfew. On these occasions, you may allow them to come home later than the set curfew.



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