

Playbook for Teens

Community and Peer Based Activities
that Drive Healthy Lifestyle Practices

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What are the Developmental Tasks for Teens?

- 1. Developing a personal identity separate from parental figures-finding their own “unique”.
- 2. Separation from parents and learning to think for themselves (decision making/executive skills).
- 3. Autonomy- the right to self-govern, make their own choices- Challenging parental and societal values.

Characteristics of Teens: Do they look familiar?

- Impulsive
- Believe they are invulnerable
- Risk Takers which doesn't necessarily mean "risky behavior"
- Moody
- "Hormonal"
- Rowdy
- Peer focused and influenced
- Rebellious- resist any authority
- Thrill Seekers (that adrenalin rush)



The Non-Prescriptive Solution: Community and Peer-Based Activities That Work

Common elements that work:



- Becoming part of something larger than life
- Includes elements of “healthy” risk taking
- Availability of non-judgmental adults to trouble shoot when problems arise
- Provides context for grown up decision making skills with real consequences
- High value rewards during and at completion of project or activity
- Values peers as community
- Adults provide boundaries and information but not limits.

Examples

- Cooking with Kids-Lynn Waters
- Randy Chatto and Empowering Ramah Navajos to Eat Healthy Project (ERNEH)
- Teen adventure camps and activities
- Fund Raising and development of initiatives for : sustainable food solutions; housing; and disaster relief



Playbook “Rules”

- Listen without judgment
- Address a community problem-Ask for their ideas
- Provide additional facts in the context of the project or problem solving activities
- Never lecture (It doesn't work for adults either!).
- Inspire “healthy” risk taking
- Take advantage of peer culture and social networking like texting and selfies to drive the campaign or project
- Enhance the protective/nurturing and loyal instincts in our teens.

Resources

- “Rollercoaster Highs: Substance Abuse and Adolescence”; Naomi Weinstein, MPH. sweinstein@phoenixhouse.org.
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