

Helping Teens Cope with Divorce

Ways to Help Ease the Stress for Kids

Provide a Sounding Board

These teens are feeling a wide range of emotions. They may be experiencing anger, sadness, guilt, anxiety, resentment, and even jealousy. Make sure you let them know that this is normal, and that any feelings that they have about the situation are okay.

Don't Push

Don't force kids to discuss the divorce with you if they don't want to. They will let you know when they are ready to talk.

Put Things in Perspective

Remind kids that they may be blaming themselves that kids don't cause their parents' divorce, nor is there anything they can do that will magically make things okay again. They may need to hear this message over and over. Kids need to know that the divorce is an issue between their parents, and not something they need to take responsibility for.

Cut Them Some Slack

Help kids cope with the changes they are experiencing as a result of the divorce. Be understanding if they are not themselves, have trouble concentrating, or need a little extra support.

Don't Take Sides

Even if kids seem to focus all of their blame and anger on one parent exclusively, make sure you don't come across as putting their parent down. Instead, reflect their feelings by saying something like, "It sounds as if you have a lot of anger towards your dad right now." This will help the teen feel heard and encourage more sharing.

Show Some Sensitivity

Watch out for activities and events that may throw an unnecessary spotlight on the teen's family situation. Don't make him any more uncomfortable than necessary.

Help Kids Speak Up

Some teens may want to talk to their parents about the divorce, but don't know how. Help them figure out ways to bring the subject up, or help them put their questions and concerns into words.

Encourage Kids to Take Care of Themselves

Make sure they are eating right, getting enough sleep, and having fun with their friends. If you notice any sudden changes in these areas, it's time to alert a parent.

Know When to Seek Help

If the teen seems to be having an unusually difficult time adjusting to the divorce, seems depressed, or you have other concerns, a referral to a mental health professional may be in order. Talk to his parents about your concerns.

Read more: [http://at-risk-youth-support.suite101.com/article.cfm/helping teens cope with divorce#ixzz0GdM1T7PX&B](http://at-risk-youth-support.suite101.com/article.cfm/helping_teens_cope_with_divorce#ixzz0GdM1T7PX&B)