

## DISCIPLINING CHILDREN / TEENAGERS.

- **Discipline is not about coaxing or forcing your child / teenager** to do what we want them to do. Its is about helping them learn self discipline and especially helping them through rough patches that they meet in their development. **Avoid ultimatums.** This could be seen as a 'challenge'.
- **Giving them clear boundaries and limits** helps them to feel secure. If boundaries are too tight – they feel penned in, uncomfortable with no room to move. If boundaries are too wide, they feel lost- lack for guidance and can get into danger'. **Keep your rules short and to the point.**
- **Be prepared to explain your decision.** They are more likely to comply with a rule when they understand its purpose.
- **Allow them to make choices (within limits) and to live with the consequences.** Many parents make threats about what will happen but quite often they do not follow through what they say. When children / teenagers have to live with consequences, they experience the security of firm boundaries; they learn about the real world and they become more responsible.
- **Ask them t suggest a consequence.** They might have an easier time accepting a consequence if they have had a role in deciding it.
- **Avoid humiliating your them or getting into a power struggle.**
- **Be reasonable. Avoid setting rules they can't possibly follow.** A chronically messy teen might have trouble immediately maintaining a spotless bedroom.
- **Skip the drama.** Calmly explain unacceptable behaviour and consequences.
- **Adults are constantly learning from consequences:** when we overspend, drink too much, forget something or drive carelessly. We learn because we are not protected from consequences.
- **Be flexible.** As they demonstrate more responsibility grant them more freedom/
- **Talking it out in advance** and taking time to prepare them for something will often win their cooperation. Preparing them with reminders will help to anticipate the events. Helping them to know what to expect can make discipline easier and it lessens the chance that you will end up resorting to anger or threats.
- **Set a positive example! Actions generally speak louder than words.**

**PLANNING AND SKILL PRACTICE:** Think of a behaviour you need to deal with at present, what choices could you offer and what consequences might help them to learn that the limits are to be taken seriously?