Parents Resolve Conflict With Their Teens

The Situation
Raising teens today can be a real challenge for parents. Adolescence is one of the most complex transitions in the life span. It is a period of accelerated growth, both physical and emotional. This period of adolescent transition can lead to conflict within the family.

Research confirms that the teen years are very different today than a generation ago. Two-thirds of eighth graders report that they have already tried alcohol and a quarter say they are current drinkers. From 1980 to 1992, the rate of suicide among young adolescents increased 120 percent. In 1992, 12- to 15-year olds were victims of assault more than any other age group. (Carnegie Council Report)

Our Response
Valley County parents are looking for help in addressing these issues and strengthening their parenting roles. Few opportunities are available for parenting classes in this rural county. The county Extension Educator, in cooperation with juvenile probation officers, offered three different sessions of the six hour parenting workshop, “Resolving Conflict With Your Teen”.

The workshop was promoted in the Cascade and McCall High School and Junior High. Parents were also referred by the County Juvenile Detention Center.

One workshop was offered in Cascade and two were offered in McCall.

The following topics were covered in the workshops:

• The social and emotional developmental stages of teens.
• Positive and negative risk factors of families and communities.
• Conflict management styles.
• Natural and logical consequences.
• Setting and managing successful limits for teens.

Achievements
Twenty parents attended the workshop. Surveys indicate parents feel the program meets their needs. Eighty percent of the parents stated that they gained ideas to help resolve conflict with their teen. All of the parents agreed that they had a better understanding of the emotional and social development of adolescents and how it relates to conflict issues within the family.

Nine parents were referred by the county probation officer. These parents either had children temporarily housed in the detention center or were working with the Health and Welfare social worker on custody issues.

One parent stated that the course was the best class she and her husband had ever taken. Their son was
charged with a petty theft and spent 10 weeks in the detention center. Following the class, she and her husband set limits and consequences for their son and found they were able to follow through and reduce the amount of conflict in the home. The mother reported that the son was exhibiting more responsible behavior and that family communications had greatly improved. She stated that the parenting class was an important factor in improving the family environment.

Cooperators
Valley County Juvenile Detention Center
Health and Welfare, McCall

The Future
Similar classes will be offered each year in the county. A parenting self-study course will be developed for parents who are court mandated to participate in parenting classes when there are no current parenting workshops offered. The Extension Office will continue to work closely with the Health and Welfare office and the Juvenile Detention Center to offer classes which meet the needs of families.

For More Information
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