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The Power of Parenting

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Parents who read this are well aware of the complexities involved with parenting at any

stage of their child's development. Children observe and learn about their environment very quickly and, according to Erik Erickson's eight stages of human psychosocial development, their perspective of safety, security, trust and confidence is largely developed by the age of three, at which time the child's most significant relationships are with parents. Biological, psychological and social development continues across the lifespan, of course, but perhaps more than others, the stage of adolescent development is a mysterious and challenging time for young people (not to mention for their parents!)

The adolescent journey is characterized by the need to discover one's identity separate from the family of origin. At this stage the adolescent's most significant relationships are with peer groups. Parents who resist and struggle against this normal transition in an attempt to "control" or manipulate the adolescent frequently create more conflict and less trust in the relationship. Growing up is hard work, especially during the "between" years when young people are *between* childhood and adulthood, *between* dependence on the family and independence from the family, *between* having decisions made for them and making decisions on their own.

They can be tough years, and what complicates them even more is that most teens simply don't have the life experience and critical thinking skills necessary to always make good choices. They take risks. And they make mistakes (who doesn't?), some of which are easily fixed, others are not: some risky behaviors (such as abusing legal or illegal drugs) can lead to life-long consequences. In the long-run, it is in the teen's best interest to experience the consequences of poor decisions. Consequences teach. When parents step in and protect teens from consequences, there's no lesson learned, and the teen often interprets this as implicit permission to continue the questionable behavior.

As a parent, don't underestimate your importance during this mystical period of life transition. Your teen may not say it outright, and may even try to push you away or seem ungrateful about the advice and love you have to offer, but s/he does need you. And that's the first and most important thing all parents of teenagers must know—while your son or daughter may not show it in ways you understand, s/he does need you.

There is a truth about effective parenting: whatever the situation, be *child (or teen)-focused*. Being child/teen-focused means parents do their utmost to provide a *safe, secure, consistent and structured* environment for their children. In this, parents have a self-awareness that goes beyond any particular situation with the teen; they recognize and take ownership of their emotions and do not project their own anger and frustration onto the teen. As another example, parents who are child/teen-focused attend to the undesirable *behavior* of the child rather than focus on any perceived character flaws. Following an interaction with your teen (or



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anyone, for that matter), do a self-check and ask yourself if what you said or did was truly child/teen/person-focused; if the answer is "no," take a moment and consider why that might be and strive to change your approach.

It should go without saying, seems like common sense and is backed by research, but parents should (from day one) model the behaviors they expect from their child. If parents don't want their children to do something or behave a certain way, they shouldn't do it themselves. For example, parents who abuse substances are more likely to have children who abuse substances; parents who express anger inappropriately are more likely to have children who express anger inappropriately; and so on. A parent is a provider, a leader, a comforter, a supporter. But perhaps above all, a parent is a teacher. Teach your child behaviors you expect by practicing those behaviors yourself.

As mentioned, not all teens make good decisions for themselves. Some will turn to alcohol, other drug use or other risky behaviors that compromise their safety and could lead to disability or death. Know when it's time to intervene. Some symptoms or behavior changes that could point to a problem with alcohol, other drugs and/or a mental health problem, such as depression, include:

- Unexplained or sudden changes in school performance
- Lack of attention to dress or hygiene
- Change in peer group
- Apparent loss of motivation, ambition or interest in things the teen once enjoyed
- Frequent accidents
- Severe oppositional behavior with parents or teachers
- Increasingly aggressive behavior or severe mood swings

Effective parenting is the hardest and most important job any of us will ever have; it is a life-long commitment and can be overwhelming. Parents don't have to make this journey alone. Parenting skills training groups, counseling, family therapy and school/community resources, to name a few, are available to help support and assist parents and families with problem-solving and developing new strategies and solutions.

Chemical Health Corner: New Drug Trends



VAPORTINI The Vaportini provides a revolutionary way of consuming alcohol. It is inhaled rather than swallowed. It is smooth and flavorful, the subtleties of the individual spirits are apparent. It is absorbed directly into the bloodstream and does not go through the digestive tract. This has the advantage of no calories; no carbs, no impurities and the effects of consuming alcohol are immediately felt, making it easier to responsibly imbibe. Unlike traditional consumption of spirits, Vaportinis give more control, shortly after exhaling all of the effects of the alcohol consumed are felt. In contrast, it takes 20 to 30 minutes to feel the full effects of spirits that are swallowed. To read more: [click here](#)

Keef Cola



Bottled Marijuana Drinks targeting the medical industry or our teenagers?

Keef Cola has a new look!

For the well-being of medical marijuana patients, Keef Cola is introducing new labels on all drinks in support of Colorado's initiatives and regulations on



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accurate and complete product information for the medical marijuana market.

New Types of Smokeless Tobacco

Present Growing Risks for Youth:
Products Mistaken for Candy
by Kim Krisberg



"The time to stop the spread of dangerous products is before they become the fad of today," Myers told *The Nation's Health*.

FDA's Tobacco Products Scientific Advisory Committee is set to begin its review of new dissolvable tobacco products that are shaped and flavored like candy. Earlier this year, the agency sent letters to tobacco manufacturers requesting information on the perception and use of such products and about the health consequences of their misuse. Besides being a serious oral health risk, dissolvable products such as Orbs, Sticks and Strips pose a poisoning risk to children. In fact, in April, some members of the U.S. Senate called on FDA to immediately recall the products from the market.

"It was clear from the very beginning that tobacco candy was de-signed and marketed to appeal to children," said Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore. "Now we have clear evidence that children are not only obtaining these candies, they are being poisoned by them."



To read more: [click here](#).

Wanna get better grades?

(Answer: Pick different friends!)
Los Angeles Times



Researchers have some new advice for high school students who want to improve their grades: Become friends with

academically oriented classmates. It may sound obvious, but researchers went to considerable effort to prove it. They surveyed members of the junior class at Maine-Endwell High School in Endwell, NY, and asked students to rate each of their classmates as either a "best friend," a "friend," an "acquaintance" or someone they didn't know. They used student responses to reconstruct the social networks among the 158 11th-graders, and sure enough, the researchers found a linear relationship between a student's grades and the academic environment of their social network.

Stereotypes Can Fuel Teen Misbehavior

Drinking. Drugs. Caving into peer pressure. When parents **expect** their teenagers to conform to negative stereotypes, those teens are in fact more likely to do so, according to new research by Professor of Psychology Christy Buchanan of Wake Forest University.

"Parents who believe they are simply being realistic might actually contribute to a self-fulfilling prophecy," says Buchanan, who studies adolescent development and behavior. "Negative expectations on the part of both parents and children predict more negative behaviors later on."

For the complete article: [click here](#)

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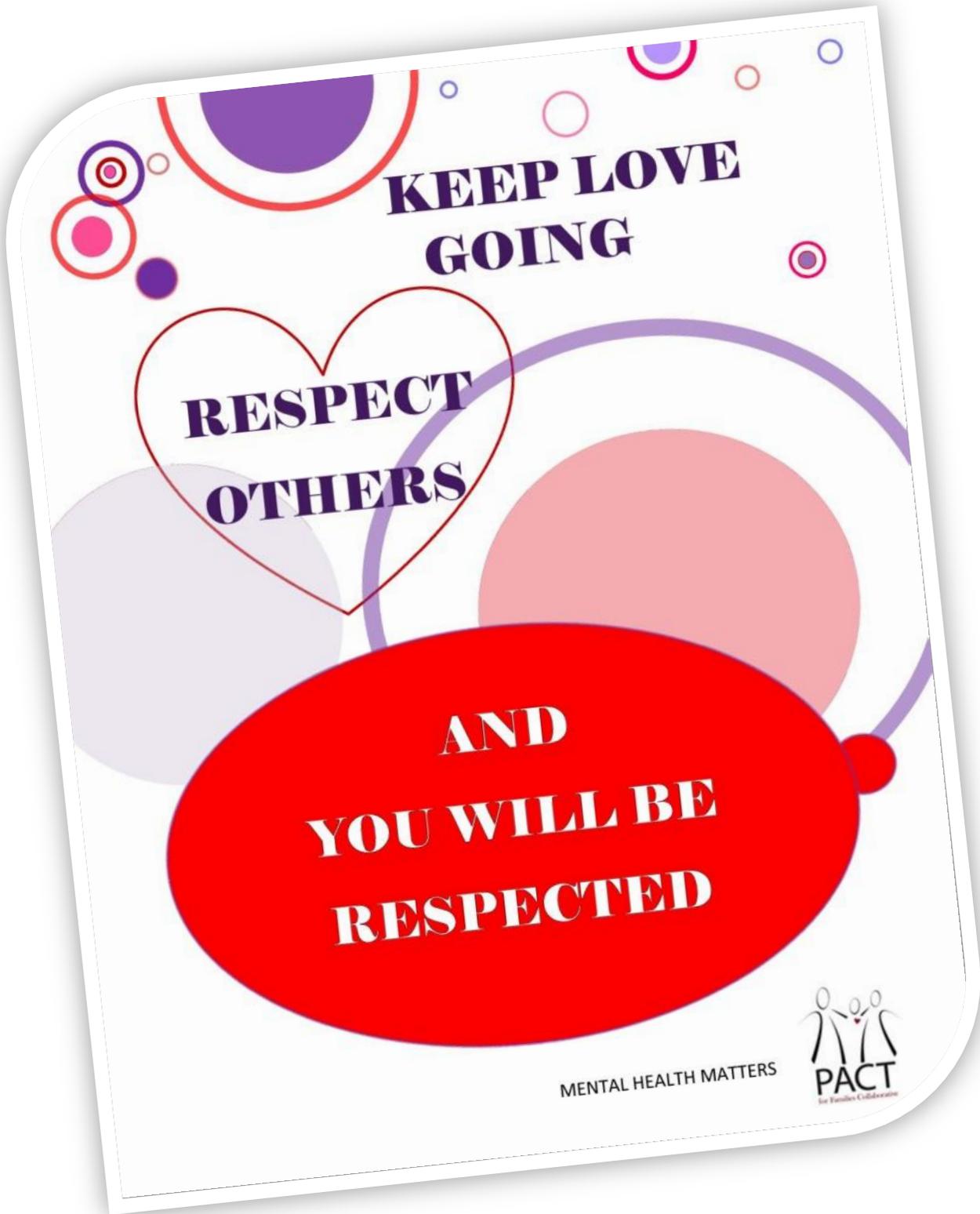
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MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

