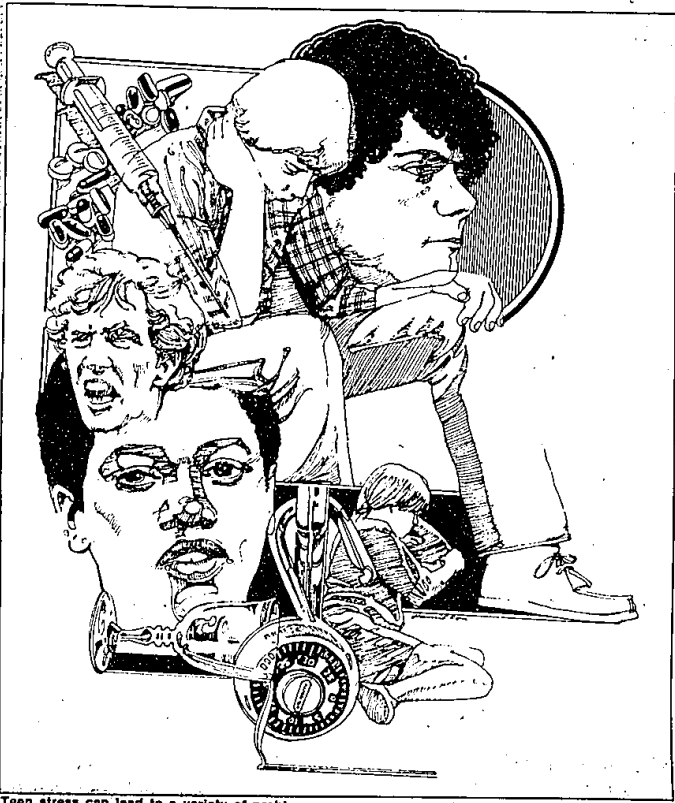


Teen-age stress

Psychologist says 'straight talk' is best remedy



Teen stress can lead to a variety of problems, including alcohol and drug abuse, truancy and even criminal behavior.

By Carol Azizian
staff writer

You set a midnight curfew for your 16-year-old son, and he comes home stoned or drunk two hours later. Flunking a class is the last thing you expect from your 17-year-old daughter, usually an all-A student. Running away is the final act of rebellion for your 17-year-old son. Do you — as a parent — impose harsher restrictions and punish your teen-agers? Or are you understanding and patient without being too permissive?

The key to communicating successfully with teen-agers is to realize they, too, feel stress, says Dr. Gail Parker, a psychologist.

"Parents must change their attitudes," emphasized Parker, co-founder and associate director of the Center for Contemporary Psychology in Birmingham.

"When they see teen-agers as bad kids, they've already written them off. But if they say, this is a child who's in trouble and confront the reality, they'll see a change."

PARKER will discuss techniques for helping teens adjust in a program entitled "When the Growing Gets Tough" at 7:30 p.m. Thursday in Southfield High School's House B Cafeteria, 10 Mile at Lahser. The "dialogue" between teens and adults is sponsored by Southfield Parent-Youth Guidance Commission.

"Every crisis is an opportunity for learning or teaching," she said.

For example, when teen-agers repeatedly come home after their curfew, parents shouldn't resort to grounding them as a means of punishment, Parker said.

"Parents should set limits to ensure their children's safety. If the child doesn't follow through, he or she has to pay the price."

But grounding usually doesn't work. If a teen-ager stays out two hours after a curfew, parents should say: "You stayed out later than you were supposed to. You've wasted two hours of my time — time I spent worrying. You owe me two hours (cleaning or doing other chores)."

"That teaches the teen-ager empathy and responsibility. It's disciplining — without being punitive or harsh."

will become drug addicts must recognize that "kids who abuse drugs are depressed," Parker pointed out.

"Often, teen-agers who use drugs were taught that it's not OK to be in pain. They deal with pain by avoiding it or masking it with other substances — alcohol, drugs."

"When they abuse these substances, they're really saying 'it's too scary to grow up. We don't have any support. It hurts too bad.'"

Some parents respond by sending their children to a therapist. Others lash out.

The best tactic is "straight talk," Parker suggested. "If you say, 'you're a loser and nobody likes losers,' they'll know what you're talking about."

"Then parents should say, 'I'm willing to invest my time to make sure you're not a loser.'"

"Teachers can do the same. You don't have to be a psychologist — just someone who talks to."

When emotional problems affect academic achievement, it's a clear signal that either the home or school environment may not be conducive to learning, Parker explained.

"Every time a student is asked to perform in the classroom, he's risking his self-esteem."

"If a student doesn't do well in class, it's not because he's a hopeless case. He may feel bad about himself and act out angrily."

"That's when a parent, principal, secretary, counselor or teacher should reach out and say 'I'm here if you ever need someone to talk to.'"

When Parker visits area high schools, she attempts to listen to the students' problems and concerns without being "critical or putting them down."

During a series of interviews conducted last week for WXYZ-TV, she discovered most teens "panic about going to college. They're also concerned about dating, popularity and keeping up with their peers."

In one encounter, a 17-year-old girl gave Parker a new perspective on why teens place so much emphasis on being popular in school. "She told me: 'My mother goes to work and she has 15 people to deal with. She has to feel liked to perform her job. I have 2,000 people whose opinion I have to be concerned about. If they like me, I can do my school work. If they don't, it's terrible.'"



Dr. Gail Parker

Parker said she understands their problems because, "I'm on their wavelength."

"My adolescence was very tumultuous. When I was 12, my father (an Air Force colonel) was sent to Vietnam. My family relocated from Arizona to Michigan."

"I suffered a tremendous loss. My father was gone. I left all my friends. My mother had her own problems and didn't know I was troubled."

"Feeling insecure at her new school — Cass Tech — Parker, usually a good student, began performing poorly in class."

"It was a nightmare," she recalled. "I would cut class, get caught and then lie about being caught. My mother panicked and tried to exercise more control. I became more rebellious."

Finally, Parker recognized she needed help and asked her parents to send her to a boarding school.

"I knew I needed structure. But I also needed social interaction."

Parker is grateful that her parents consented to enroll her in a Catholic school in Virginia.

Parents must realize that most teen-agers know what they need. "They should let their kids make mistakes, fall flat on their faces."

"But they should say, 'we'll be here to help you pick up the pieces.'"

memory lane

Memories, memories . . . have we got the memories. And we'd like to share them with you. Using local newspaper files, we're digging up precious slices of life in the Farmington community from 40, 30, 20 and 10 years ago.

NOV. 18, 1943 — IN AN EFFORT to curb criticism of the lack of recreation facilities in Farmington, officials opened the high school gymnasium on Saturdays and Sundays for use by youngsters through the Christmas holidays. All equipment will be available, and a supervisor will be on duty at all times. Girls and boys will be segregated, each having a set time to use the gym.

AN EDITORIAL, entitled "Assembly Line Training," said, "There's no telling who you'll meet on an assembly line these days. The author of eight sophisticated novels is punching a clock in a factory along with a woman whose picture used to be on the society page every week, the landscape architect with a famous old name, and the widow of a Civil War general."

"And so it goes from one end of this busy country to the other. There's nothing 'queer' about working in a factory these days. It's 'being done,' and by the very best people."

"HAVING DIFFICULTY finding something for your Thanksgiving Dinner?" asked the Around the Block column. "If so, you'd better get over to the Town Hall Saturday night about eight o'clock. Yes, that's right — you've guessed it."

SHORT ITEM: "Gout, kid, shark, snake, kangaroo and many other skins are being used increasingly as uppers for women's shoes." Another short item: "South Africa has started a roundup of rent racketeers."

"FARMINGTON TOWNSHIP," a column written by Mrs. H.A. McIntyre, reported: "John Graham and Thomas Caltra of North Farmington are spending a few days hunting in Northern Michigan."

NOV. 19, 1953 — AN AROUND THE BLOCK item noted, "Buck fever . . . has really hit the Farmington Area this week with almost everybody heading northward in search of a trophy. Meetings are being cancelled or postponed left and right because of the great exodus. The first success story comes from Maurice L. Wilcox, 20301 Angling Road, who got a six-point buck shortly after the season opened at Canada Creek Ranch near Atlanta, Michigan."

AN EDITORIAL said, "Growing pains are not the most pleasant things in the world to live with and yet they are as common and natural as life itself."

"The entire Farmington community is experiencing growing pains and it is going to continue for quite a few years to come."

CLASSIFIED AD: "PERMANENTS — Done by permanent wave specialist. Machine, \$5.00. Ma-

chinese, \$7.50. Cold wave, \$10.00. Farmington 1982." Another classified: "37 Pontiac, good condition, radio and heater, good tires, new battery, \$1100. baby buggy, like new, used twice, \$15. bath-nette, used once, \$10. Farmington 0157-W, 2116 Cass, Farmington."

FARMINGTON MEATS, 33419 Grand River, advertised "practically boneless" pork butts for 39 cents a pound and sirloin steaks at 59 cents a pound.

CLARENCEVILLE High School football team, under coach Nick Ianni, closed out a successful season with a 32-6 thumping of Brighton High.

NOV. 21, 1963 — FARMINGTON'S CITY Council delayed action on a proposal which would allow the Bel-Aire Lanes, a bowling establishment and cocktail lounge on Orchard Lake Road, to hold dances. Council instructed the city manager and the director of public safety to study the matter.

FRED SIEBERT of 41456 Birchwood has been appointed to the Farmington Planning Commission to fill the unexpired term of Bayard Tupper, who resigned for health reasons after several years on the commission.

FARMINGTON MASONIC Lodge officials announced plans to purchase the Town Hall building on the northwest corner of Grand River and Farmington Road. The building was owned by the city and township of Farmington.

ONE OF THE busiest places in town this past Monday was Conroy's Market where many successful hunters took their deer for dressing and storage.

WIN VALLEY Views, a column written by Marie Brauer, noted "On Nov. 15, the Cub Scouts from Den 9, Pack 110, enjoyed a tour of the office of the Farmington Enterprise. To commemorate the paper's 75th anniversary, a paper-weight made by the scouts was presented to the paper."

NOV. 16, 1973 — DEED RESTRICTIONS, semi-private zoning laws which give legal power to subdivisions, will face both policy and legal tests in Farmington Hills.

Ridgewood Manor, located east of Farmington Road and south of 11 Mile Road, was subdivided with deed restrictions allowing only one house per lot, in effect requiring twice as much land as the city zoning laws because of the over-size lots.

Larry Ferguson, a Southfield builder, divided one of the few remaining lots in the subdivision, building and then selling a house on half the property.

STEVEN EAGLE, a Farmington Harrison High School student, won national recognition for film making recently when he earned a special award in the senior category of the Kodak teen-age movie awards.

Eagle received two \$25 cash awards and two bronze medals for his films "Let Me Come In" and "In the Middle of a Cloud."

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