

# What Parents Need to Know about Teens

## FACTS, MYTHS AND STRATEGIES

David A. Wolfe



camh

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health  
Centre de toxicomanie et de santé mentale

# Contents

- 1** What this booklet is about
  
- 4** Strategies for effective parenting
  - 4 Being an effective parent takes planning
  - 7 Keeping up with your teen
  
- 11** Strategy 1: Be an effective parent: Balance sensitivity and firmness
  - 12 Examples of parenting styles
  - 15 Common dialogues between parents and teens
  - 20 What is an authoritative parenting style?
  - 21 Why authoritative parenting makes a difference
  
- 26** Strategy 2: Place an emphasis on safety, responsibility and obeying rules
  - 28 Another common dialogue between parents and teens
  - 30 What you do—and how you do it—matters!
  
- 33** Strategy 3: Teach—don't just criticize
  - 33 Myth 1: "The teen years are the worst!"
  - 34 Myth 2: "Everything turns into an argument!"
  - 35 Myth 3: "I can't reason with her—she doesn't listen!"
  - 37 Myth 4: "My teen pushes my buttons" (This may be partly true...)

**39 Strategy 4: Understand your teen’s development—and how it affects your relationship**

- 40 Asserting independence
- 40 Physical and emotional changes
  - Appearance and behaviour
  - Brain development and judgment
  - Self-awareness

**44 Strategy 5: Understand the pressures—and the risks—you teen faces**

- 44 Pressures to drink, smoke and have sex
- 46 Pressures to be seen as tough (boys) or popular (girls)
- 48 Pressures to fit in
- 49 Pressures to put others down
- 50 Pressures to do well at school
- 51 The relationship connection
- 53 “What message do I give?”

**55 Practical strategies to promote safer choices and healthy relationships:  
10 tips for parents**

**62 Resources for parents**

**65 About the author**

**65 Acknowledgments**