

Growing up and how to cope with relationships

A Discussion for parents on the importance of relationships in adolescence

David Trevatt and Stefania Grimandi

- Open Door Young People's Consultation Service and Parenting Teenagers Project
- Child Psychotherapists
- Some descriptions of difficulties and challenges presented by young people and parents at Open Door

What do we mean by relationships?

- Thinking of young people 11 to 18
- The importance of friendship:
- Having an ally – protective
- Someone to stick up for you
- Someone you trust - confidante
- Someone to share experiences with:
- Spending time, common interests etc.

Relationships with whom?

- Do you know your child's friends?
- Do you think your child is a good influence on others?
- Do you think your child's friends are a good influence on your child?
- Does your child have lots of friends?
- Does your child have some close friendships?
- Is your child isolated?

Mental Health and Relationships

- Relationships are important protective factors against developing mental health problems (generalisation)
- Some relationships can influence young people to indulge in destructive behaviour e.g. Gangs; friends who self harm together; friends who share eating disorders.
- Better to have friends than to be isolated

The Family Origin of Relationships

- The Family is the template from which young people develop their own friendships.
- Parents should try to keep a warm involved relationship with their children from childhood through adolescence.
- Children who have experienced good close family relationships are generally more confident and able to make and sustain good relationships themselves.

Sexuality and Relationships

- Puberty and the changes that come with it.
- Becoming aware of sexual feelings.
- Differences in growth and development
- Identity and sexual identity
- Heterosexuality and Homosexuality
- Can your child talk to you about all of these issues?

The outside world

- Influences and challenges of the media
- Social networking
- The sexualization of the media
- Peer pressure
- Social pressure
- Helping young people to look after themselves
- Recognizing dangers