



Permissive Parenting

Do some parenting styles increase the likelihood that some teens develop substance use disorders? We know for a fact that when good boundaries are set by parents and accepted by adolescents there is a delay in rebellious behavior and a reduction in drug and alcohol experimentation.

Permissive parenting suggests that parents are unwilling or unable to set those boundaries.

GENERAL CONFUSED PERMISSIVENESS

Parents have a vague feeling that the best thing they can do for their teen is to be friends. These parents generally try to give the teen whatever he or she asks for.

COMPENSATORY PERMISSIVENESS

This is the style often adopted by parents who want to give their teens the material goods and behavioral freedom they were denied. Parents want to see themselves as an ally of their teen while really wanting to avoid the responsibility of being a healthy parent.

CONDITIONAL PERMISSIVENESS

This strategy is when the parent gives the adolescent what he or she wants on condition that the

teen satisfies certain parent demands. These parents tend to produce groomed children who become bitter and oppositional.

INDIFFERENT PERMISSIVENESS

These parents are too involved in their own lives to take an active part in their teen's life. They give materially in return for the teen's not making too many demands on their time. This self-absorption precludes taking a real interest in their teen.

OVER-INVOLVED PERMISSIVENESS

This parent is afraid to let their child grow and mature. These teens either rebel or become dependent while the parent feels growing frustration and fear.

Get out of the Cycle

These permissive styles impact upon substance use in negative ways. Ultimately the teen and the [substance abuse](#) control the family. With parents feeling guilt and fear they believe that everything they did for their child is unappreciated and that the adolescent's behavior is designed to punish the parent unfairly.

The teen thinks the parents are trying to control his or her life while behaving in ways that demand intervention. At the same time, the parent becomes angry, while denying there are any **real** problems. By gaining healthy parenting skills that include [setting boundaries](#), [being consistent](#), being [engaged](#) in a child's life, [following through](#) on decisions, and becoming healthy [role models](#) parents can regain control.