

SAFETY PLANNING FOR ADOLESCENT VIOLENCE

Notice your body reactions - These often provide you with early warning signs to escalating tension.

"I hear myself saying: Oh no, here we go again, and I remember that means I need to back off and prioritise safety"

Start with small changes before tackling big ones - Trying a different parenting strategy can increase violence when first tried. Have a plan that prioritises safety that includes the possibility of retribution. Trial new strategies for a while before reviewing.

"I thought there is no way this will work but I said what do I have to lose, I gave myself courage and did it, it actually worked!!"

Pre-warning your adolescent - of the changes during non-violent times can reduce reactionary violence.

"I decided to change the way I handled my son's chores, so I took him for ice cream after basketball, I explained why and asked for his help setting up the new routine. He didn't yell this time"

Repetition and consistency - can be important when trialling something new.

"I put lipstick on and chased him saying give me a kiss, we ended up both giggling on the floor"

Organise and schedule regular time out and breaks - Avoid cancelling your break as a consequence for your adolescent's bad behaviour.

"Because Sunday nights are always a problem I decided that we would go to our local cheap movie nights. It really helped break the pattern of fights before school on Mondays"

Don't take the bait - by not responding to the invitation to argue it can deflate the emotional pressure.

"I tell myself don't bite, it's the only thing that's working at the moment"

Timing is vital - Give yourself and your adolescent time to cool down.

"I just waited instead of trying to negotiate and then he said ok"

Choose your battles - practice letting go of the other issues.

"I ask myself, is this what you want to fight about at the moment?"

Prioritise safety - If violence escalates stop focusing on the task you have been doing and prioritise safety.

"I am so busy in what I'm doing it's taken me a while to recognise we're at that spot again, once I remember I know exactly what to do. It's like changing gears"

Keep it brief and concise - Use simple or short sentences when you first notice escalating tension or potential violence.

"I realise I talk too much when I'm anxious, but she just stops listening so words don't help"

Practice your safety plan – it should be practiced like a fire evacuation and reviewed afterwards

"Now we just look at each other and my husband is already at the door with the keys"

Model the calm - which you want in your adolescent

"Actually if I take a few breaths myself, it slows everything down"

Notice the non-violent times - Ask yourself what part of the Cycle of Adolescent Violence you are up to

"I have trouble calming down after violence so I often miss the sign he's ready to reconnect, he often comes and asks me a question."

Be aware of what escalates the violence - Some adolescents react strongly if you walk away

"I realised I couldn't walk away so I sat down and said I don't know what to do and she sat next to me and said I don't know either"

Consider who to include in the safety plan - Don't isolate yourself. Include your neighbours, friends and family if they are supportive and trustworthy.

"My mother was always interfering so I invited her to a planning meeting with my worker"