

Self-Management: Why it's Important to You and Your Teen

One part of self-management is having the ability to control your emotions and your responses. If you can identify your emotions and how they influence your actions, you will be better able to act on the emotions you experience. Being able to take a breath to calm yourself in a challenging situation to avoid over-reacting, yelling or getting into a fight is what self-management looks like in daily practice. Everyone experiences both positive and negative emotions, but knowing how to regulate and act appropriately on those emotions is key to self-management.

Have you ever done or said something you wish you hadn't? Everyone has! For improved self-management skills, throughout the day, make time to deal with stress and teach your teen this too. In a challenging situation, before doing anything else, take a deep breath (5 seconds in, 5 seconds out). By doing this you can actually calm your body's "fight or flight" response to strong emotions. In addition, learn to accurately name your emotions. These actions will allow your brain to start processing your emotions using your brain's cortex (thinking part). Practicing these two things can help you problem solve and think more clearly.

Reflecting on your emotions and how they influence your reactions is important for self-management. It can also help you think of how you can best model appropriate emotional responses for your teen. Admitting to having emotions is not a sign of weakness or failure. It's okay to say, "I'm feeling upset right now, just give me a few minutes and then we can talk about this." It models that everyone has difficult emotions at times and that they can be managed in appropriate and safe ways.

Adopted from www.parenttoolkit.com



In Alberta, Alberta Health Care covers the cost of eye exams by a Doctor of Optometry for all children until they turn 19. Many vision and eye health conditions have no symptoms, and can only be detected through an eye exam. For more information about childhood eye examinations and to find an optometrist in your area, please visit: www.optometrists.ab.ca

All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Safety

Many Albertans take out their ATVs in the summertime. Riding an ATV can be a thrilling experience but it is important to remember that ATVs are not toys; they are fast, powerful machines that need strength and skill to operate safely. In Canada, 25% of all ATV-related deaths involved teens younger than 16. Experts at Alberta Health Services state that nobody younger than 16 years of age should ride an ATV anytime, anywhere, any size. This is because teens under 16 are not physically and mentally ready to handle an ATV, regardless of its size and are at higher risk for serious injury and death than those 16 years and older. When your teen is 16, they should take a [Smart Risk Approach](#) to manage the risks of ATVs. Here are a few Smart Risk tips to help keep them safe:

Look First. Make sure headlights, tail lights and the muffler work before riding. Follow posted signs and stay on the trails. Driving away from marked trails can result in encountering unexpected obstacles, like ditches, drop offs, cliffs, and trees.

Wear the Gear. Always wear an approved motorcycle or ATV helmet. Make sure it fits snugly and is securely buckled up to protect you from a head injury. Eye protection, like a helmet shield or riding goggles, boots and gloves will also help keep your teen safe.

Get Trained. Taking an ATV training course is the best way to understand and manage ATV risks. Riding an ATV safely requires skill and practice.

Drive Sober. Even one drink can impair your teen's judgement and pose dangerous, even fatal risks. It can also result in impaired driving charges. Your teen should never drink or use drugs and ATV.

These Smart Risk strategies will help your teen, 16 years or older, enjoy many summers of fun and safe ATVing. To learn more about ATV safety in Alberta, visit: <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/injprev/Page4861.aspx>