At Parent Line we are committed to helping families develop richer, more rewarding relationships and create safer, more nurturing environments for children to grow and develop into happy, healthy, confident, contributing young adults.

**Issues in Parenting Adolescents**

One third of parents who call our counselling team talk to us about issues to do with adolescent children. Raising adolescents is a particularly challenging parenting stage. Young people want more independence and can become less connected with their parents and family. They tend to have more focus on their peers and developing their own identity.

In 2009 the top 5 reasons that parents of adolescents called our service were:

1. Managing challenging behaviours (e.g. refusal to cooperate in the family, aggressive and disrespectful behaviour, internet use issues, social networking concerns, gaming issues, peer relationships, going out)
2. Parent-child relationships (challenges and difficulties in finding a way to have a connection, arguments)
3. Running away from home
4. Violent behaviour of child (towards parents)
5. Study and educational Issues (e.g. school refusal, HSC, difficulties with relationships at school, bullying).

During adolescence the brain is developing in unique ways and for a period of time, the frontal lobe is “under construction”. This means that skills like problem solving, empathy and emotional regulation are affected for a period of time.

To add to this, parents may be caring for ageing family members, may be managing their own developmental issues and many times managing busy working lives. It is also around this time that parents start to have less contact with other parents. The school, sporting and community connections are not as strong and parents can feel isolated, alone in carrying a multitude of concerns for their child’s wellbeing and future. On top of this, the parenting strategies that worked before often seem to no longer work!

It can be a volatile and challenging time in the family. The opportunities for connection, real conversation and closeness are less obvious and do not come around as often as with younger children.

At Parent Line we firmly believe that there is always a possibility that things can change and that relationships can improve. Our philosophy is that if something isn't working, let's try something different. Our aim is to focus on today’s issue in a way that works on a better relationship with your child tomorrow.

The highly qualified and experienced Parent Line counselling team are available 24 hours a day for the cost of a local call (charges may apply to mobile phones) and are happy to talk through the issues that you are experiencing with your adolescent.

Call us at Parent Line **1300 1300 52**, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week or log onto our website for more parenting information [www.parentline.org.au](http://www.parentline.org.au)

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