

Guided Self-Correction: Correcting Your Teen's Behavior

One way to correct your teenager when he or she behaves inappropriately is to use a Boys Town teaching method called *Guided Self-Correction*. This method encourages teenagers to be more active participants in correcting a situation. In *Guided Self-Correction*, the parent asks a series of questions to get the teenager to think about a situation and determine why a behavior or decision was inappropriate. Here are some tips for using *Guided Self-Correction*:

Ask questions.

Begin your Guided Self-Correction teaching by asking general, non-threatening questions such as "What happened?" or "Let's talk about what's going on here."

Have your teen describe the behavior.

The questions you ask should prompt your teenager to describe his or her behavior or the situation he or she is in. This is the first step toward correcting the problem.

Help your teen see whether his or her reasoning is sound.

If your teenager's answers to your questions don't indicate to you that he or she is using sound reasoning, take time to talk about his or her reasoning process and how the reasons connect to the situation.

Vary your questions.

After your teen has described the situation, ask more specific questions to focus on the problem.

Encourage your teen to take ownership of the problem.

As the discussion continues, ask question about what action your teenager can take to solve the problem. That's a good foundation for him or her to take ownership of the problem as well as its solution.

Help your teenager connect behaviors and outcomes.

As your teenager takes ownership of the problem, he or she should begin to see connections between what her or she did and what happened as a result.

Help your teenager apply ideas to other settings.

As teenagers learn to make connections and to take ownership of problems, they should be able to adapt their problem-solving skills to other situations.

Talk it out.

Remember that your role in *Guided Self-Correction* is to talk out the problem with your teenager, not to solve the problem.

Use empathy and encouragement.

Using empathy and encouragement shows your teen that you care about him or her and that you have faith in your teen's ability to change inappropriate behavior and make good decisions.

Source - from *Parenting To Build Character in Your Teen*, 2001, Boys Town Press
http://www.parenting.org/archive/flight/parenting/2001-02/Jun02_self_correction.asp