



How do I help my teen deal with change?

Change can be hard for a young person, learn more about how to help them cope with it



Key Points

- Coping with change can be hard for young people.
- Routines help to build a sense of stability.
- Help your teen to view change as opportunity.

From transitioning schools to dealing with family moves, puberty, friendships, and more, adolescence is a time when teenagers are particularly vulnerable to the challenges brought about by change. While change can be uncomfortable for us all, it can be particularly overwhelming for your teen as they experience significant changes for the first time. During these times, it's important to help them learn to cope with change in a healthy and productive way.

“I’m here for you”

Change can bring on a wide range of emotions in your teen, including anxiety, sadness, and frustration. You can help validate their emotions by listening to your teen and letting them know that these feelings are natural and okay. Something as simple as saying “It’s okay to feel this way,” or “I understand that this is difficult for you, I’m here for you if you want to talk” can go a long way. As they say, a problem shared is a problem halved. Helping your teen to feel heard and giving them a chance to get something off their chest can help them process the change they’re experiencing.

Maintain a routine

In times of change, maintaining a level of consistency or having something they can count on can provide your teen with a sense of stability. By sticking to consistent mealtimes, sleep schedules, and daily routines you can provide an anchor for your teen’s life when things seem out of their control. Helping your teen understand how the change will affect them and providing as much clarity about the situation as possible can also help them to manage their concerns. Helping them understand what they can and can’t control about the situation can also free their mind from feelings of uncertainty.

Build coping skills

Skills such as problem solving, understanding emotions and the ability to adapt are all tools that can help your teen when it comes to dealing with change and stressful situations. Having a positive way to channel thoughts and emotions can help your teen to develop these skills further. Journaling, physical activity, and engaging in hobbies they enjoy are all positive outlets that can provide comfort in the face of change. Coping with change also requires flexibility and a period of adjustment. As your teen learns to be flexible in their thinking and approaches, navigating unfamiliar situations will become more comfortable over time.

View change as opportunity

Remind your teen that change is a normal part of life, and although it can be uncomfortable, it can also help to build skills such as resilience and flexibility. Viewing change as opportunity can empower your teen to embrace new challenges and broaden their perspective. Encourage your teen to take a step back, think about when they’ve dealt with a similar change in the past and what lessons they learnt along the way. Reflecting on some of your own experiences with change and sharing what has helped you in the past can also help to shed some light on the situation.

Help is available

If you notice your teen struggling significantly with the changes they're facing and feel they may need further support, you can contact Beyond Blue (1300 22 4636), eheadspace, Lifeline (13 11 14) or KidsHelpline (1800 551 800).

Last Updated: 22 February 2024