

Tips and Ideas about Assisting Young People

Things to remember about your relationship with teens

1. Build close peer relationships

Young people will stay involved in a project or support group because of each other and because of you and who you are. Personal relationships are a key. Make the relationships real in your life, not just a place to be a helper. The dance of objectivity is not as helpful with teens as it is with adults.

2. Be consistent

Stay in there, no matter what. "Don't give up" is an important rule. Teens need persistent people in their lives. You may feel awkward, but always remember that young people want the connection. Consistency is the most important thing. Making a commitment to a young person or a group for a period of time and following through is the best way to be allowed inside the teenage culture. By doing this, you will battle all their feelings of hopelessness about change that they are currently growing up with and dealing with each day. Be aware that your hopelessness will block the connection.

3. Be comfortable showing yourself

Share your experiences, your struggles and your successes in life. Talk about very specific areas of your own life without using teenagers to work out your troubles. Use your life or someone else's teenage story as a metaphor for them to gain skills and competency, without at the same time expecting them to live the way you would live.

4. Always speak to young people with complete respect

Our society has a level of repression that conveys to young people that their thoughts, ideas, and concerns are not very important. Be aware of your tone. Is this the way that you would speak to an adult in your life? Do you speak to teens differently? Is there a perjurious nature about your talk? Do you assume that they cannot make decisions? Show them that you can respect their thinking and listen carefully with as much absolute delight as possible. Taking teens seriously for what they say will empower both you and the young people around you. This particular interface is probably the most important thing in your relationship with teens.

5. Don't assume that you will always be right

Sadly and with absolute contradiction, you do not always know better. Our experience in this life is often the excuse we use to oppress young people. You may have more information that would be valuable to young people when called upon, but young people truly do know what is best for them in many situations,