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### **Podcast: Why Parents Should Set Boundaries and Limits for Their Teens**

Hello and thank you for joining us today as we discuss a very important topic -- setting boundaries and limits for your teenagers. My name is Carrie and I will walk you through the basics of how you can set better boundaries and limits for your teenager.

According to the experts at Youth Home, parents who set clear boundaries and limits for their children are more likely to have less-troubled teens and healthier families.

“All teens need their parents to set limits for them,” says Rickie Lockwood, who is a clinical trainer and therapist at Youth Home. She also says “Children whose parents give them clear rules to live by are typically less troubled and more likely to respect authority as teenagers.”

The experts at Youth Home have the answers to several of the most popular questions regarding setting boundaries and limits for teens. We start off our discussion today by tackling the most basic yet important question:

#### **Why should parents set boundaries and limits for their teens?**

Well, one of the developmental tasks of an adolescent is to test limits. In fact, that is their job. So, it is the responsibility of the parent to set clear boundaries, and here are several reasons why you should:

- a). First and foremost, for safety and structure for the teen.
- b). Secondly, to teach teens how to respect limits, boundaries and authority

c). Thirdly, parents should set boundaries and limits for their teen in order to teach decision-making and coping skills. Once the teen learns to make choices, the boundaries and limits can then be relaxed or eliminated.

In addition to these reasons to set boundaries and limits for teens, parents need to remember that teens want clear boundaries set for them and they also want parents to be a positive role model.

**In order to better understand why boundaries and limits are necessary for teens, we must remember the issues that teens are facing on a daily basis.**

Today teens face peer pressure to abuse substances, to be sexual and/or promiscuous, and to be in gangs. Also, two-parent families are in the minority. One-parent families frequently have an additional stressor of attempting to make ends meet.

When considering these issues that teens are facing, we must be reminded that teens need a lot of adult supervision. They need stable adults in their life on a daily basis to process problems and to just listen to them.

**Youth Home recommends several things that parents can do to set boundaries for their teen.**

- First, let your teen know what the rules are.
- Second, be clear about the consequences of positive or negative choices.
- Third, make sure the teen understands why the rule is in place. When they make mistakes, process through the error with them so they can learn from the mistake.

**At this point in time, you are probably asking yourself what happens when boundaries and limits are not set?**

At Youth Home, we believe the answer to that question is very simple: teens do not learn how to follow rules, they don't learn respect for authority, they place

themselves (and others) at risk and develop their own internal boundaries. Learning about boundaries leads to a more orderly and less chaotic society.

**Parents often ask us what behavioral changes they can expect to notice when they set boundaries for their teenagers.**

We believe parents will learn what they can realistically expect from their teen. They will be able to promote safer, less risky behavior for their teen, and they will more than likely see a sense of peace, security and confidence in their teen. Also, teens will have more respect for their parents and the rules that govern them.

**The final question for today is “How can parents learn to not take it personally when a teen tests limits and boundaries?”**

Our answer is simple: parents must develop positive self-talk. Parents, tell yourself “My job as a parent is to set up boundaries for my teen and I am mature enough to set up boundaries for my teen.” Tell yourself “I am mature enough to get my needs met by other adults in a healthy way.” Tell yourself “I am strong enough to withstand manipulation.” Teens do not respect an adult they know they can manipulate.

If you have additional questions about setting boundaries and limits for your teen, please call us at 501-821-5500. We would love to hear from you.

Youth Home offers comprehensive treatment programs with inpatient, outpatient, day treatment and professional foster care and specialize in individual, group and family therapy. Youth Home is located in Little Rock Arkansas and our successful programs help 1,500 Arkansas adolescents and families per year grow into healthier contributing members of their community.

Thanks so much for joining us today. We'll be back in a few weeks to talk more about topics facing today's teens and parents.