



## EMOTIONAL MATURITY

Teenagers are preparing for adulthood and a life without constant guidance from their parents. Becoming emotionally mature is a long process, evolving over the course of our lives but it starts in earnest during our teenage years.

On the next pages, emotional maturity has been broken down into the following ten key areas with practical ideas to understand and apply maturity at the teenage stage of life. There are also examples of role model and immature behaviours to appreciate both ends of the spectrum.

- |                            |                         |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| - Responsibility           | - Honesty               |
| - Self-Awareness           | - Self-Acceptance       |
| - Self-Control             | - Dealing with Conflict |
| - Consideration for Others | - Relating to Others    |
| - Resilience               | - Open-Mindedness       |

### THE IMPORTANCE OF ROLE MODELS

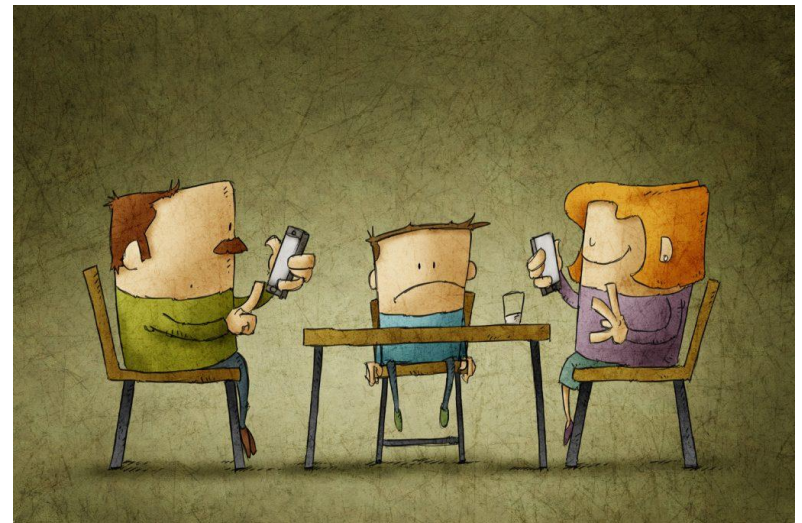
Teenagers will learn most from those around them; people they connect with who are role modelling emotionally mature behaviour will be particularly beneficial to teenagers at this impressionable time.

If you are lacking role models in your life, here are some ideas to help you to manage the challenges and thrive in your own emotional development:

- Recognise where the behaviours of people around you lie on the spectrum - considering which areas are better or worse than others. It will then be possible to focus on the positive areas where they display more mature behaviours as well as learn by the mistakes from their immaturity.
- Set clear boundaries with parents or care givers – you are not responsible for them; their mistakes are not your fault and how they feel is not down to you because they are responsible for their own negative emotions.
- Talk to a friend or supporter (see page 15) about how you are feeling and the impact that a lack of role models is having in your life. Sharing worries can be helpful and is a proven way to release anxiety.
- Don't be afraid to seek help from a professional such as a school counsellor or an organisation such as those that provide emotional support and practical advice found on page 13.

## Activity

- Who do you know that demonstrates many of the emotionally mature behaviours outlined on the following pages? Do you see them as a role model?
- Select a couple of practical ideas in the middle column to support your own emotional maturity. After a month or so, you can reflect on the progress you have made and think about others you may like to try.
- Do any mature behaviours seem more difficult to understand? Acknowledging these will be the first step towards making progress. Next you could try discussing your thoughts with a trusted person (perhaps your role model) as this often helps us to make sense of the numerous thoughts in our minds.



Are these parents good roles models?

# Maturity Model: Helping teenagers understand emotional maturity

## 1. Responsibility



Role Model Behaviours of Maturity	Practical ideas to help teenagers become more responsible:	Immature Behaviours
Makes plans and sets goals, taking responsibility for their actions, thinks through consequences of a decision before making it, trusts their own judgement, realises the source of emotional problems lies within themselves, forgives others easily and moves on, stands up for fairness and justice.	Accept the straightforward facts of the situation rather than making excuses for shortcomings	Feels sorry for themselves, blames others and rarely apologises for mistakes, feels life isn't in control - they are hard done by and people are out to get them, lacks preparation to ensure things don't go wrong in the first place and needs others to take their side to make them feel better.
	Take positive action to make plans and decisions rather than react to them once they have already occurred	
	Build trust with others by always doing what they say they will do	
	Take steps to influence and control more things in life, knowing that others are not responsible for them	
	Do regular chores and volunteer to take on new responsibilities, demonstrating dependability by doing them without being asked	



## 2. Self-Awareness



Role Model Behaviours of Maturity	Practical ideas to help teenagers become more self-aware:	Immature behaviours
Understands themselves, their core values, strengths and weaknesses and how past experiences have shaped them, is open to change, knows things aren't always black and white and others see things differently, understands their emotions and how to manage them.	Take an interest in getting to know yourself better by listening to feedback and reflecting on previous experiences to become more self-reliant, productive and flexible	Believes they are always right, compares themselves to others, has a lot of conflict in life, frequent emotional outbursts, gets defensive when challenged, not able to see their faults therefore sees no need to change, often changes their mind, jumps to conclusions quickly and does things such as overeating, drinking, smoking and drugs in order to not feel emotions.
	Understand that two people who see the same thing will each interpret it their own way, creating different perceptions	
	Understand their triggers in order to control emotions	
	Look at themself objectively when receiving feedback from others, without getting defensive	
	Take responsibility and learn from mistakes or problems they may have caused, recognising positives as well as negatives in a situation	
Recognise the feelings of different emotions and able to identify what they are		



## 3. Self-Control



Role Model Behaviours of Maturity	Practical ideas to help teenagers develop self-control:	Immature behaviours
Can resist temptation and show restraint towards things that might be detrimental to their longer term well-being, has healthy habits which mean less room for unhealthy ones, avoids situations where they'll confront temptation in the first place and can control negative emotions when they aren't getting their way.	Make positive lifestyle choices that effect the longer term	Has a low stress tolerance, is impatient, makes poor judgements, gives into pressure from others and frequently regrets decisions, puts thing off, is easily distracted and finds it difficult to complete a task, has frequent heated arguments due to difficulty with controlling emotions.
	Be patient in order to get what they want, persevering with tasks they know are important but rather not do	
	How and when to say no	
	Avoid doing things they'll later regret	
	Appropriately reward themself when they have exercised good self control	
Avoids situations which could get out of control and try to calm others before an argument erupts		



## 4. Consideration for Others



Role Model Behaviours of Maturity	Practical ideas to help teenagers develop their consideration for others:	Immature behaviours
Feels empathy and concern for others, celebrating their success and helping where they can, gives wholeheartedly not seeking anything in return, is genuinely curious wanting to understand others' ideas and promotes unity and oneness.	Show compassion to themself in the first instance as the compassion they develop will naturally spread so they are more understanding of those around them	Is quick to criticise, voices strong opinions giving little thought to how they make others feel, has difficulty feeling happy for others, likes to talk a lot about themselves making out they are better then other people, interrupts to turn the conversation towards themselves rather than listening to others and excludes people promoting division within a family or group.
	Treat others the way they wish to be treated	
	Do the right thing when no one is watching - appreciating recognition if it comes their way but do things without a need to be recognised	
	Consider why another person is feeling the way they do and why they might be hurting	
	Really listen to another person in order to understand, asking them questions	
Not be afraid to speak what they feel when the timing is right		





## 5. Resilience





Role Model Behaviours of Maturity	Practical ideas to help teenagers become more resilient:	Immature behaviours
Comes up with resourceful ideas, stays positive and is flexible to help them cope with whatever comes their way, uses strengths gained from past challenges and shows patience - understanding pain eases with time and sticks at things rather than giving up. Has trusted people they can talk to about problems and returns the kindness as a supportive friend.	Utilise their skills and strengths to cope and recover from problems and challenges	Finds it difficult to cope in life, worries about the future, doesn't like uncertainty or change and refuses to adapt expecting others to adapt to them. Can feel overwhelmed by things they cannot control, dwells on sorrow and seeks pity from others, gives up on things easily rarely finishing what they start.
	Make realistic plans that can be adapted when needed, focusing on ways to tackle the problem and make changes that will help	
	View themself as a fighter rather than a victim	
	Understand that setbacks happens and sometimes life is hard and painful	
	Understand what they can influence and control and what they cannot	
Gain satisfaction from solving their own problems		





## 6. Honesty

Role Model Behaviours of Maturity	Practical ideas to help teenagers appreciate honesty:	Immature behaviours
 <p>Is authentic and comfortable with who they are, open and honest with those around them, realises that honesty is the best policy and doesn't exaggerate or embellish things to impress others, respects others' feelings by exercising tact and recognises the importance of honesty to create connection and harmony.</p>	Be truthful to themselves about what they are thinking and feeling	 <p>Deceives others by lying, conveniently forgetting, changing the subject or staying silent, behaves differently in front of different people, says one thing to one person and something different to someone else, gets pleasure out of telling the truth to hurt someone, gets tangled in a web of lies needing to tell more to cover up earlier ones.</p>
	Don't strive to be somebody else	
	Appreciate the benefits of honesty such as closer relationships, feeling good about themselves and avoiding trouble	
	Think about why they tell a lie and how they could avoid it in future	
	Consider how they want to be treated by others - would they rather know the truth or untruths that may appear kinder?	
	Think before they speak for the sake of themselves and others	



## 7. Self-Acceptance

Role Model Behaviours of Maturity	Practical ideas to help teenagers develop their self-acceptance:	Immature behaviours
 <p>Accepts themselves for who they are, doesn't overly care what others think, accepts they are prepared by their past not defined by it, suppresses negative emotions about themselves focusing on the positive aspects of their character, reframes negative situations in order to see opportunities in them, doesn't take things for granted and is thankful when their basic daily needs are met.</p>	Understand their strengths and how to apply them as well as areas in which to develop and grow, resisting comparisons to friends and siblings	 <p>Compares their life unfavourably to others, allows envy to consume them, never satisfied with what they have, unable to make peace with difficulties in the past, consumed by negative emotions and regrets, dwells on mistakes and ruminates, often complains they are hard done by.</p>
	Can pick themselves up after setbacks and start over with a renewed belief in themselves	
	Manage negative emotions and find the words to explain to others how they are feeling	
	Find positive things even in challenging situations and consider things they can learn when events don't go their way	
	Set realistic goals, understanding no one is perfect and take the pressure off themselves if it leads to not starting things or feeling inadequate	
	Value strong friendships and endeavours to be a good friend	
	Look for the good in all people and things	



## 8. Dealing with Conflict

Role Model Behaviours of Maturity	Practical ideas to help teenagers deal with conflict:	Immature behaviours
 <p>Gets over disagreements easily and refrains from going over past issues, is available to others and able to discuss emotive subjects calmly and rationally, remains calm on the inside to keep control on the outside, can openly articulate thoughts and feelings with no hidden meanings and de-escalate an argument by using their calming influence and communication skills.</p>	Move on from disagreements and make peace	 <p>Often starts and has long, drawn out arguments, finds it difficult to let past grievances lie, takes things very personally, likes to remind others of their mistakes, changes the subject if there's something they don't want to discuss, says mean things in the heat of the moment and verbally abuses others by criticising them or calling them names, has a need to win every argument.</p>
	Can find the right times to speak, not interrupting others but being assertive when they want to be heard	
	Not retaliating if they are verbally abused, setting clear boundaries telling others this behaviour is unacceptable to them	
	Consider what is worth disagreeing over or debating with someone and avoid correcting people on minor points	
	Understand their own triggers and minimise / control their reactions	
	Bring calm to a tense situation by listening, acknowledging both sides and encouraging people to take time out to cool off	
	Find the words to explain to others how they are feeling, without holding grudges or sulking	

## 9. Relating to Others

Role Model Behaviours of Maturity	Practical ideas to help teenagers to relate to others:	Immature behaviours
 <p>Believe they are responsible for their own happiness, trusting and loyal to family and friends accepting them unconditionally, holds balanced conversations - talking and listening equally, has fun and is silly at appropriate times and shares their good fortune when they have it.</p>	Rely more on themselves and less on others for their happiness	 <p>Thinks they are better than others, offers advice when people haven't asked for it and puts on an act in front of others. Enjoys talking far more than listening, regularly feels disappointed or let down by others and tries to change people, keeps secrets, spreads gossip, finds any opportunity for a competition, sulking if they don't win, has a low generosity of spirit.</p>
	Make good judgements about the people they can trust and reply on	
	Become aware of what they are giving as well as receiving in relationships	
	Be respectful of others, accepting they feel as they tell them they do	
	Not ashamed to seek advice and wisdom from others. Can say what they mean in a tactful way without hurting people	
	Enjoy healthy competition, celebrating their own success as well as losing graciously and celebrating others success when they win too	

## 10. Open-Mindedness

Role Model Behaviours of Maturity	Practical ideas to help teenagers develop their open-mindedness:	Immature behaviours
 <p>Is open to many ideas and opinions and doesn't judge people who think differently, accepts they are wrong at times seeing disagreement as a thoughtful way to expand their knowledge, is curious and finds excitement in the miracles of nature and asks deep questions about their own existence and the complexity of life.</p>	Learning about different cultures and their origins and interested to know why people see things differently and adjust their opinions accordingly	 <p>Focuses more on being understood rather than understanding others. Blocks others from speaking, preferring to hear their own voice, considers how to refute another person's thoughts rather than understand them and gets frustrated when others challenge their ideas, has little interest in how things work or come into being, feels unfulfilled about their own beliefs to the meaning of life without attempting to explore possible answers.</p>
	Become more interested in listening to understand and they don't see everything as simply black and white	
	Be less judgemental of others because they know they aren't perfect themselves and realise that being right can mean changing their minds when someone else knows something they don't	
	Ask more genuine questions and make less statements in order to learn, assessing the merits in each part of a two way disagreement	
	Understand different areas of science and the natural world, taking an interest in the things around them	
	Take time to reflect on day to day observations, forming their own thoughts and ideas	