

TEEN REBELLION

TYPES OF BEHAVIOR & WHEN TO ACT



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Introduction

Teenage years can be a struggle for the teen and parent alike. As a teen develops and begins to transition into adulthood, the desire is for increased independence, space, and privilege. Often referred to as the 'transitional phase', teenage years are the phase of life sitting between a child and an adult. As the teen grows both physically, mentally, and emotionally during this time, it can seem to be a trying period for the entire family.

Teenagers often will engage in behavior contradictory to a family's expectations (or rebellious behavior). These rebellions can be subtle, such as showing up a few minutes past curfew or pushing limits. Or rebellions could be extreme, such as openly defying the rules of the home, engaging in risky behavior, or blatantly defying authority.

Types of Teenage Rebellion

[Psychology Today](#) breaks down teen rebellion into two basic groups.

The first group is rebellion against society. This type of rebellion is also known as non-conformity. During this type of rebellion, a teen works hard to stand out or be different than society. A teen may choose to act or appear a certain way in a protest to societal norms. This type of rebellion could take place in an academic setting, where a teen decides to rebel against the institution of education. They may refuse to study or take part in class activity. The rebellion could also take place within society, encompassing various areas of the teen's life.

The second type of rebellion is against adult authority. This rebellion is also called non-compliance. Noncompliance may start out small with toeing the line of disobedience, but it could also grow to blatant and outright disregard for rules or laws.

Both types of rebellion attract attention. As teens seek to realize and identify who they are going to be, this type of attention can seem desirable.

Rebellion, put simply, is the act of deliberately opposing rules or norms. To teenagers this type of behavior is often seen as a positive, while to adults it is very negative. Parents often fear adolescent rebellion because they know that it not only makes parenting harder, but it can be dangerous to the teen and their peers.

Rebellion in teens can lead to serious harm. It can cause many teens to shy against their own self interests. They reject activities they used to enjoy which contributed to their self-esteem. Rebellion can turn out to be self-defeating and self-destructive behavior. A teen's self-esteem can be damaged. Their grades could suffer. Or they could even physically harm themselves or others. Rebellion can cause a teen to:

- Experiment in High Risk Situations
- Reject Rules & Restraints
- Injure Valued Relationships

While rebellion is often a teen's cry for independence it becomes the opposite. Rebellion actually creates a dependence on doing the opposite of what others' expect or desire. True independence is earned by responsibly creating a successful environment.

Adolescent Rebellion by Age

Early Teens (9-13)

Rebellion typically rears its head at the early onset of adolescence. This is the point of life where a child is beginning the transition into adulthood. Wanting to 'grow up', the child expects more independence and will oftentimes act out in order to gain their desired goals.

Many parents believe that rebellion at this stage is in direct opposition to them. This is not necessarily the case. While the child is rebelling, the rebellion is not against the parents. It is acted out against the parents as the authority.

When dealing with early teens in rebellion it is effective to ask the teens to put their feelings into words. Allow them to express what they are going through and what they perceive they need. Then, strategically guide the conversation.

Mid-Teens (13-15)

Mid adolescence is the time in which rebellion tends to push the hardest. During this stage of life we see that teens are striving to develop their identity. They often will work to differentiate themselves from the crowd and use opposition to gather power.

During this period of life teens will often find themselves dealing with the consequences of their actions. They may receive consequences at home for breaking rules such as curfew. They may also face consequences of society for more severe actions such as [experimenting with drugs](#) or damaging property.

Late Teens (15-18)

Teens who rebel during the later stages of their teenage years typically do so as a result of delayed adolescence. This is one last ditch effort to release themselves from childhood. They are tired of being the "good kid" and want to create a new image for themselves.

This stage is particularly scary for parents, as teens at an older age tend to engage in riskier behavior. Parents should strive to provide clear guidance and established expectations for their teen during this stage.

Early Adulthood (18-23)

Now that the teen has ‘rebelled’ against the authority of others, this stage finds teens in rebellion against themselves. They find themselves under the weight of responsibility that they, at early ages, thought they desired.

For example, the young adult realizes they need to get up to go to work today, but they don’t want to, so there is rebellion against self. Young adults suffering this rebellion can also find themselves in damaging situations, ruining their reputation or work ethic.

When to Act on a Teen’s Rebellion

While teen rebellion is oftentimes considered ‘normal’ it is important for parents to be aware of and involved in the lives of their teenager to determine if the rebellion is a symptom of a larger issue. According to She Knows, there are questions to consider to determine if your teen’s rebellion is beyond the norm.

- Does your teen’s behavior seem extreme compared to their peers?
- Has your teen suddenly stopped showing interest in activities and things previously enjoyed?
- Is your teen showing flashes of [anger](#)?
- Is your teen engaging with peers who are involved in [drugs](#) or [alcohol](#)?
- Is there a family history of mental health/behavioral issues?
- Are there unusually stressors involved in your teens life?
- If you answered yes to any of these questions, it may be time to seek external help to get your teen back on track.

Shepherds Hill Academy: Dealing With Rebellion

Shepherds Hill Academy is a Therapeutic [Christian Boarding School](#) for troubled teens. Our 12 month program features a wilderness component, taking your teen out of their comfort zone. Our [wilderness facet](#) will remove your teen from the pressures of their peers, pop culture, and influences of technology. Here your teen will develop lasting skills and character for a productive and successful life.

Many teens dealing with rebellion have fallen behind in school. Shepherds Hill Academy also offers a [fully accredited academy](#) with certified faculty and staff. Our 5:1 student to staff ratio ensure your child will be set up for success.

If your teen is struggling with extreme rebellion, give us a call or [contact us](#) online. Find out how Shepherds Hill Academy can offer hope and healing to your teen in crisis.

Article Resources:

- Kuhn, Sherr, February 27, 2013, Teen Rebellion: When to Seek Help, Retrieved from: <http://www.sheknows.com/parenting/articles/982367/when-to-seek-help-for-rebellious-teens>
- Pickhardt, Carl E. Ph.D., December 6, 2009, Rebel with a Cause: Rebellion in Adolescence, Retrieved from: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/surviving-your-childs-adolescence/200912/rebel-cause-rebellion-in-adolescence>