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Overview of the Time-outs for Teens Program

Kids, What's the matter with kids today? There are widespread problems with responsibility and self-control.

Consequences of self-control problems? Without self-control, family life suffers and children are

- not successful in school,
- not likely to excel in a vocation, and
- unlikely to succeed in their own marriages.

Stages of Implementation:

1. Compose the problem list and set priorities for rationing Time-outs (two to five per day).
2. Memorize your lines for giving a time-out and for executing the primary back-up plan.
3. Implement the back-up plan if necessary.
4. Phase out the back-up plan and go back to rationing time-outs.
5. Phase out other bad habits of discipline (e.g., lecturing, yelling, resorting to various other punishments.).
6. Maintain a focus on the problems list and work through the worst of the frequent problems systematically.
7. Shift into maintenance mode once the really objectionable problems are resolved. Continue using Time-outs as the primary punishment.

Mistake # 1: Overlooking too many instances of the misbehavior. This only encourages children to procrastinate and continue to test the limits rather than to abide by the limits which are set.

Mistake # 2: Continuing to remind the child about what is expected instead of relying on punishment. Children and adolescents should be taught to do what they are told to do the first time they are told to do it. Also they need to learn to take initiative for carrying out their assigned responsibilities. **Have a clear idea of the problems you are focusing on and then punish, don't remind.**

Mistake # 3: Failing to punish misbehavior until the parent becomes angry or frustrated. The discipline process should be rational and as devoid as possible from the complications of resentment on both the part of the parent and the child.

Mistake # 4: Threatening to punish instead of punishing. This undermines the parent's credibility with the child.

Mistake # 5: Over-reacting with excessive punishments such as extensive grounding. A "One-punishment-does all" approach used as often as necessary is more reliably appropriate.

Mistake # 6: Failing to ration punishments. Operating on an initial quota of two to four time-outs per day and focusing on just the worst of the frequent offenses allows for more consistent progress. Consider that if you are not issuing Time-outs then you have stopped making progress on the problems list.

Mistake # 7: Failing to rely on the Time-outs instead of persisting with other techniques which have not worked. (e.g., lecturing, arguing, grounding, removal of other privileges.)