

TEACHING YOUR KIDS COPING SKILLS

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I think you will agree that kids seem to have far greater pressures on them these days than we ever had to face. Society has changed drastically in the last 30 years in particular. When we were kids only one parent usually worked, we had to make our own fun and I for one had no TV at home. I never expected to be entertained because there wasn't anything going on unless I created it for myself. Ah, yes! Those were the good old days. But this is the now, the real world.

I think it is a shame that so many gadgets have kids today sitting around watching a screen. We can't really change that except to filter their intake and prepare them for the things they are likely to face as they begin to make choices in our absence.

As always, I advocate strongly the importance of strong family values. When we, as parents, create and model strong values we are training as well as showing our kids how to cope in their environment. Values are what dictate the way we will respond to challenges. Unfortunately, the media demonstrates either no values, poor values or such a fruit salad of values that kids will go with whatever impresses them the most – unless parents get in first.

The kinds of choices kids are facing now are more like the ones adults faced 30 years ago. We have to think ahead and talk to our pre-teens about issues so they are not swayed by the moment or someone else's influence. We have to realize that telling kids to simply say 'No' is not easy in the situation they find themselves in, unless they are prepared. We demonstrate maturity when we make informed decisions, when we weigh up the consequences and do the right thing, not out of fear, or because our parents said so, but because we know it is the best thing based on our knowledge and experience.

We want our kids experiences to be positive and healthy. We give our kids knowledge by talking to them about issues they are likely to face and how to deal with them such as ... coping with intimidation, injustice, failure, grief, disappointment and peer pressure. Discussing how to develop healthy relationships with the opposite sex, how to respect authority, how to manage time and money and how to be leaders instead of followers will fit them better for adult life.

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at sally@forefrontfamilies.org. We invite you to

also check out our website at www.forefrontfamilies.org and our blog site at www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com for further assistance.