

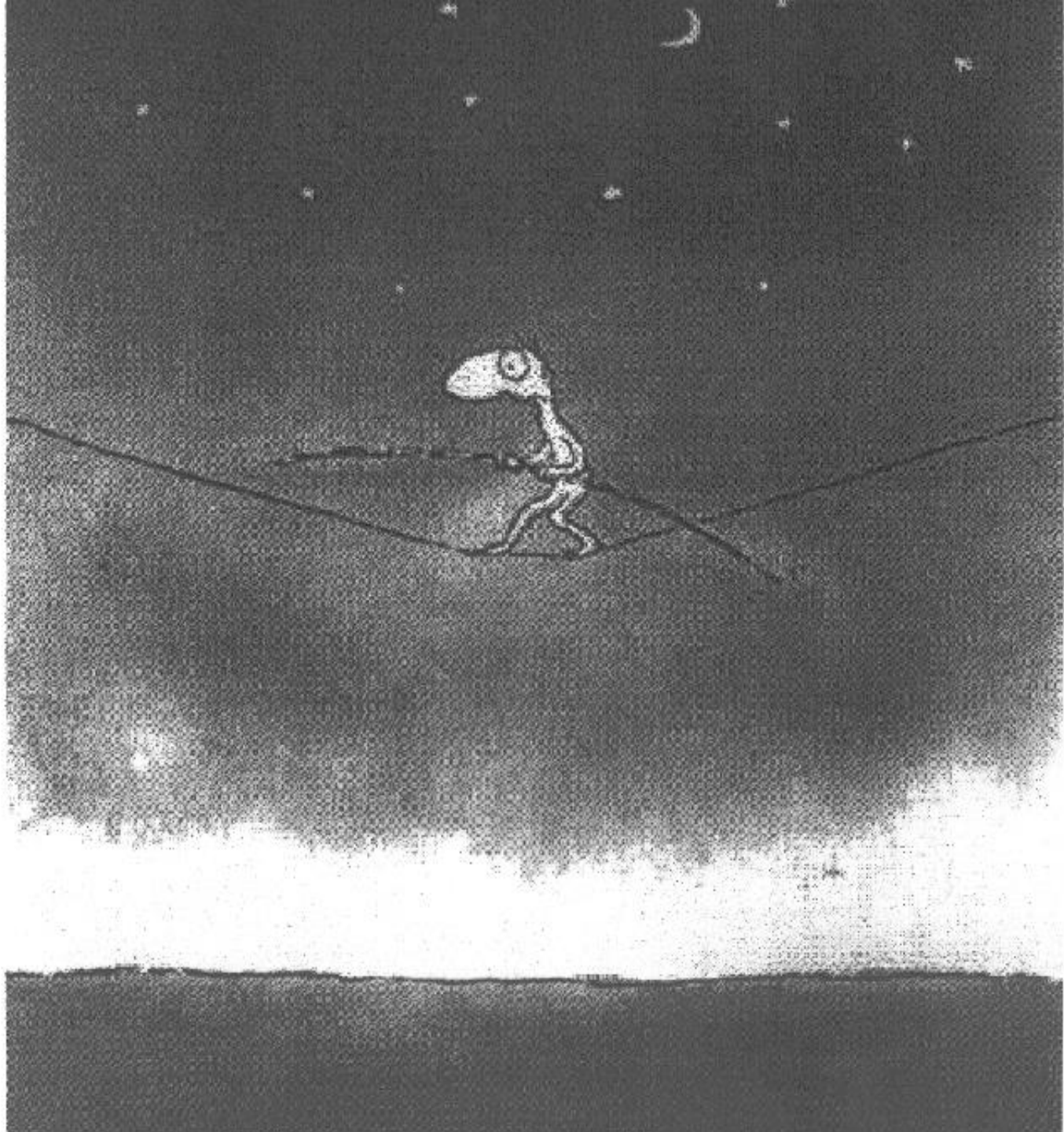
Managing the Senior Years:

*setting sights for success, managing stress and
troubleshooting when the going gets tough*



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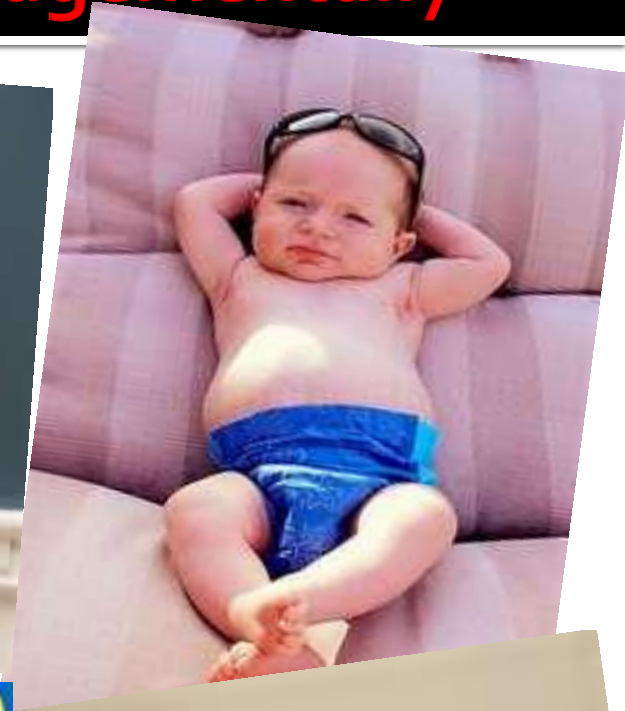


The four stages of parenting

- Hold me tight
- Put me down
- Leave me alone
- Let me go



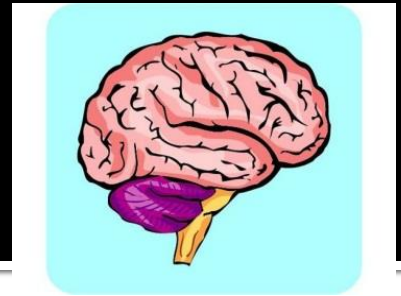
You know your teenager!.. ADAPT
to the individual & listen non-judgementally



**FOLLOW YOUR
INSTINCT**



Adolescent brain development



- Teenage years: synaptic pruning ++++ (leading to greater refinement and specialization)
- Brains are not fully **efficient** until about 18-25 years of age
- One of the last areas to develop is the **frontal area** (judgement, impulse control and prediction):
 - “teenagers’ brains are all tuned up for emotions, fighting, running away and romance, but not so well tuned up for planning, controlling impulses and forward thinking”
(Fuller, May 2008)

Prolonged transition to adulthood

- Onset of puberty is earlier
- Longer to attain independence
- Longer period of study
- Living at home longer (25% of 20-34 y. olds continue to live at home)
- Older having children

Typical interferences and setbacks

- Relationship problems
- Worry about the future. Internalized pressure
- Family stressors
- Loss of interest in school/ outcomes
- Additional interests and responsibilities (part-time job; sport; getting a license; **parties!**
...alcohol and substance use)
- Mobile phone and computer use
- Illness (acute/ chronic)
- Mental health difficulties

Mental health problems in teenagers

- One third will experience significant Mental Health problems before the age of 25 years
- 45% of young adults feel their peers are having more rewarding life experiences than them
- Of those with mental health difficulties, approx. 23% will access Mental Health help
- Most need support to seek help

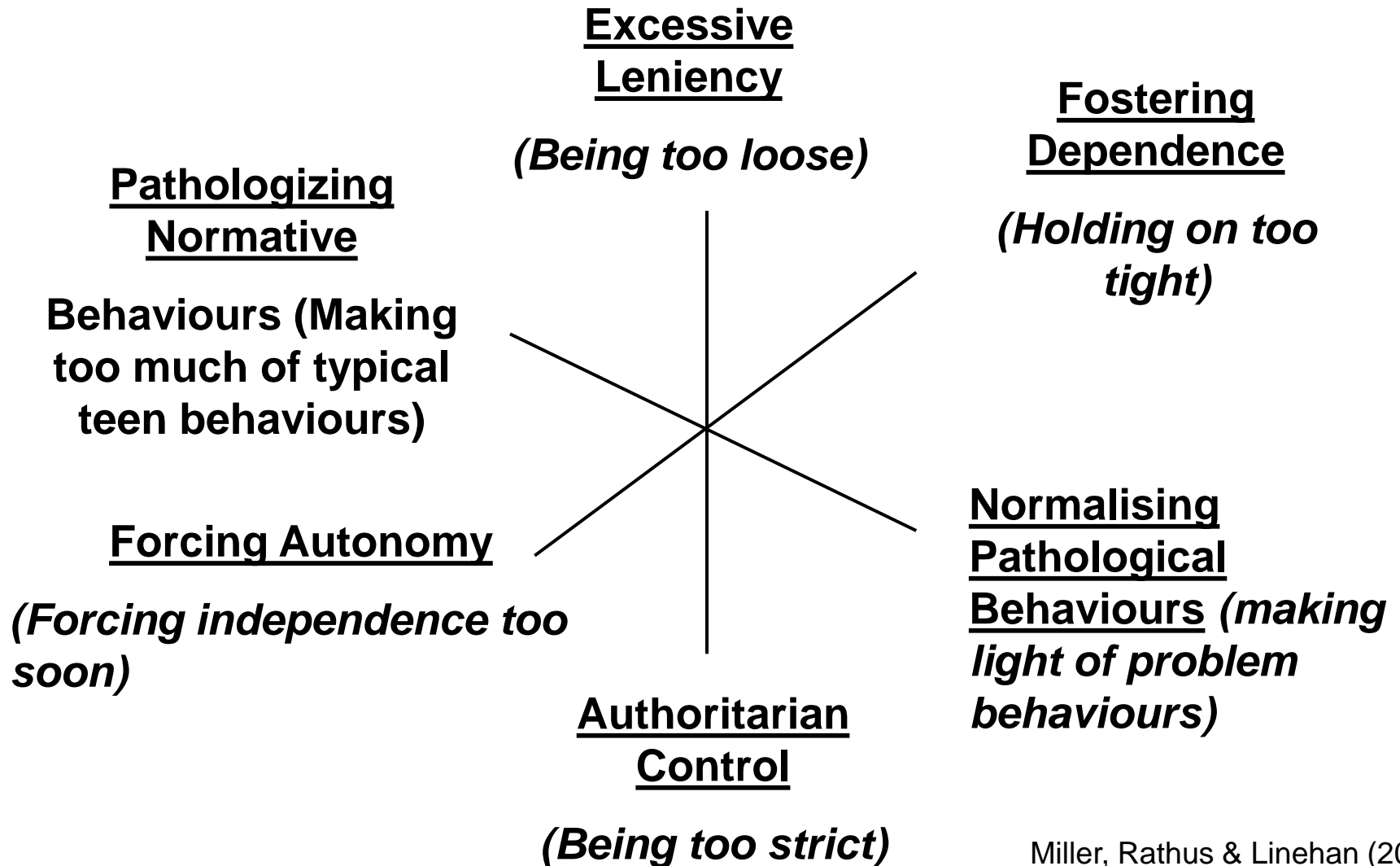
So what's different about Years 11 & 12?










- “It really matters!” “This is important”
- “As long as they do their best”
- “I want them to have options/ choices”
- “They’re wasting so much time”
- “They could miss out”
- “I don’t place pressure on them. They do it themselves”

Common dilemmas.....

- **Quests for identity and autonomy**
 - e.g. Power struggles; going out; rules; personal space needs
- **Family relationship issues**
 - e.g. Family values; sibling relationships
- **Concerns re: safety**
 - e.g. Risk taking; smoking; alcohol; substance use; sex
- **Mental health issues**
 - eg. Stress/ anxiety; low mood; anger/ irritability
- **Academic and social concerns**
 - e.g. Friends/ social relationships; school work; career choice

Parent - adolescent dilemmas



	IN THE OLD DAYS	NOW
LISTENING TO MUSIC		
WATCHING FILMS		
CHATTING WITH FRIENDS		
READING THE NEWS		
PLAYING MUSIC		

Impact of social media: FoMO

- 53% of young people connect to social media in the 15 mins before sleep
- 37% connect within 15 mins. of waking up
- 24% connect during breakfast
- Pressure for constant connection (contributes to poor sleep; relationship problems)

Three fundamental principles

- Change is gradual
- Create and use experiences
- Build on strengths

Milton Erickson

.... Predictable, stable and well-planned



... and then there's real-life



... and sometimes they have their own ideas!



...but it may be better than this...



First principles

- Communicate/ stay connected (with your teenager; with school staff; other parents)
- Know the HSC assessment timetable
- Keep a BALANCED perspective (stay attuned to your **teenager's behaviour; attitude; mood and language**). Encourage activities apart from HSC preparation



- PICK YOUR BATTLES
- TIMING IS **EVERYTHING**
- Adjust expectations

Some general suggestions...

- Do **NOT** panic (whatever the issue!)
- Be **PATIENT** (“evolution not revolution”)
- Be predictable/ consistent **AND flexible**
- Adapt to the **INDIVIDUAL** teenager (avoid comparisons)
- Model managing **UNCERTAINTY**
- Practice forgiveness (try having some **FUN!!!**)



Also consider....

- Allowing quiet (down-time) periods
- Increasing tolerance and practical help during high stress periods (e.g. Trials)
- Supporting academic demands by reading texts and discussing content, watching HSC films, reading essay drafts, etc..... IF YOUR TEENAGER REQUESTS IS OK WITH THIS!

It sometimes feels like.....



Try to see....the *vulnerability* behind the behaviour



uncertainty
uncertainty



Is it "can't" or "won't" ?



- I don't know if she's "*anxious or depressed*" or if she's just being "*stubborn/ lazy/ procrastinating*"
- I can never decide whether to be firm and MAKE him try to do it, or keep GIVING IN and just stay being supportive



**I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO
WITH HOW I'M FEELING**

Basic requirements

- Adequate sleep
- Healthy food
- Exercise
- Routines
- Limits regarding risk taking (safety)
- VALIDATION... **Emotional availability**



KEEP...

HOPE and HUMOUR

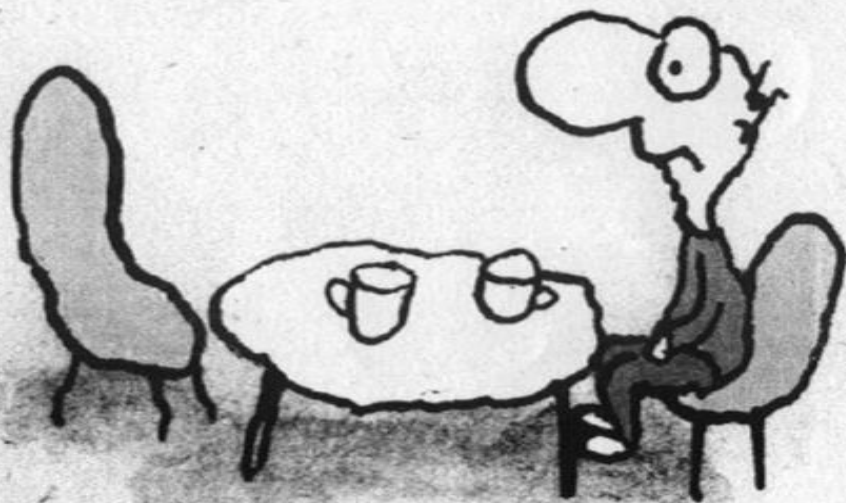
alive in the relationship



A FEW "DON'T S"

- Become aggressive or lose control
- Attack the person rather than the behaviour
- Send "compliment sandwiches"
- Try not to "nag"
- Make your affection / time / interest contingent on demonstration of good behaviour or good marks
- Bring up the past (repeatedly)/ forecast future failure

.. welcome to the first day
of the rest of your life and to
get started we'll make a list
of all the silly things
you did yesterday...



When should I worry?

- **Sad ++** **Irritable ++** **Angry ++** **Worried ++**
- **Falling grades ++**
- **Overly focused on weight/ physical appearance**
- **Persistent change in sleep and/or appetite**
- **Socially isolated/ withdrawn**
- **Frequent conflicts/ arguing ++**
- **Increased risk-taking/ alcohol/ substance use**



When they seem troubled....AVOID...

- Seeking to “blame” someone or something
- Thinking that they’re faking it
 - (minimizing)
- Making ‘fun’ of their emotional difficulties

Where to seek help if needed?

- **G.P.**
- **School Counsellor**
- **Child and Youth Mental Health Service (CYMHS) (NSW Dept. Health)**
 - Hornsby Kuring-gai: **9485 6155**
 - North Shore: **9462 9222**
- **Private therapists/ Psychiatrists**
 - **APS: 1800 333 497**
- **The internet – parenting/ MH advice web-sites**
- **In a crisis – Emergency Dept. (Hospitals)**

.... and make sure you look after yourself !.....
so you can be available to look after your teenager.



THANK YOU and

BEST WISHES FOR THE FUTURE !