

# Parental Cooperation

## Parental cooperation: 5 things to keep in mind after your teen's counseling session.

1. *Check your expectations.* Personal growth is a journey. It has taken time for your teen to arrive in their current difficulty. It will take time for corrective measures to bring them into a place of sustainable health and wellness. When your teen fails to live up to expectations and becomes discouraged, offer a listening ear, not a condemning finger. Allow whatever has happened in the past to stay there. While your teen will be working through spiritual and systemic problems that are partly rooted in past experiences, parents should resist the urge to revisit arguments and conflict in the past. Instead, approach any setback from the perspective of the teen's identity in Christ and the believer's authority and power in Christ. Look for the lie that is triggering the negative attitude or behavior. Resist the temptation to control.
2. *Handle with care.* Emotions can be uncertain when your teen leaves a freedom appointment. Although it is common for feelings of relief, joy and hope to manifest at the end of a FA, the FA involves drawing out discussion over root issues that are difficult to understand and emotionally charged. The natural inclination for a parent is to get in the car and ask, "So, how did it go?" An innocent question like this can put a teen in a bind. The session may be so fresh in their minds that they don't know how to rightly answer the question. Or the encounter with God may have taken the teen to a deeper level with God that has left them awestruck. Or maybe they consider a parent's innocent question to be intrusive and disrespectful of confidentiality. The better way to interact with a teen immediately after a FA is to express your hope that the appointment went well and convey your willingness to talk or to let them collect their thoughts in silence on the drive home. You might say something like, "Hi honey. I hope your time with (name of encourager) went well today. I'd love to listen to anything you want to share, but I recognize that you might just appreciate time to yourself on the way home in order to collect your thoughts. Can you let me know what you prefer?" Maybe they are ready to talk about something other than the session. Maybe they want to talk about the session. Maybe they would appreciate some background worship music and no obligation to converse. Whatever the case may be, you are conveying respect and welcoming a conversation.
3. *Small pieces may cause choking.* Please keep in mind that a FA is an intensive intervention that may require days and multiple conversations to mentally unpack. Even though freedom from Jesus is an instantaneous proposition, perspective takes time to develop. Resolution seldom comes in one session. Small pieces to the internal puzzle need to be handled carefully

and patiently. Parents who keep this principle in mind are more apt to provide support and encouragement.

4. While respecting confidentiality, you will be briefed on the FA by the Encourager. At that point it will be advantageous to schedule a follow up meeting that will include time for both you and your teen/teen to interact with the Encourager. This debrief time will hopefully provide additional perspective and help set the trajectory for spiritual health and wellness. on your teen's progress and given tips to compliment the work being done in the counseling sessions. Your teen will also be inviting you into sessions to discuss new principles that are to be implemented for positive change. With the client's permission, the counselor will be apprising parents on each and every resolution strategy discussed and collaborated.
5. *Maintenance for new teens with new attitudes.* Parents often ask, "How do I keep my teen on track?" Post FA days can be challenging. The resolutions they make will be tested. Pray. Pray for yourself that God would give you wisdom and empathy as a parent. Pray that your teen is strengthened in their resolve to see positive change. Review the freedom principles learned in the FA as explained in "Restored". Make it a point to review the "Who I am in Christ Statements" in creative and conversational ways. Do this frequently apart from conflict or crisis.
6. *Be open to change.* Often, the FA exposes family system deficiencies that contribute to undesirable behavior and attitudes. It is important to realize that good people, who love one another and are committed to one another, can sometimes overlook basic family patterns that inhibit the fullest potential of the family unit and the individuals who make up the family unit. Resist the temptation to be defensive if the Encourager wishes to address the basic dynamics and patterns of the immediate family. These types of discussions are not meant to undermine parental authority or question parenting capability. Tweaking a family system can provide a breakthrough that is positive for everyone.
7. Utilize helpful teen resources such as our smartphone apps, devotional etc. These can all be found on the Generation Freedom website.  
([www.generationfreedom.org](http://www.generationfreedom.org))