Sit-Down Time - tips for discussion on the use of digital devices with young people

Everything starts with a framework - take these things into account before the discussion.

- [ ] Make sure you talk when you're well rested and not hungry.
- [ ] Agree on a time for the discussion in advance so the young person can also prepare for it mentally.
- [ ] Choose a place where you won't be bothered. Put down distractions like phones.
- [ ] Go into the discussion as calmly as possible. This also creates a sense for the young person

What should you take into account during the conversation?

- [ ] Remember that even though you are the adult, you do not need to have an answer to everything, but you can promise the teenager that you will talk about things more in the future.
- [ ] Remember that if you start feeling irritated during the conversation, you can ask for a

Useful lines for the conversation

1. Bring up your concern. Explain how you feel about the way your child uses digital devices and how you think it is affecting their life. Remember to avoid guilt-tripping! Explain it from your point of view.

"It seems to me that you have been really tired lately.
I'm worried about you.
I feel like you're on your phone a lot."

2. **Ask what the young person thinks about your concern.**

"What do you think about this?"

3. **Summarise your and your teenager's points of view and ask the teenager to propose a solution**

Summarise what you and the young person have talked about. Ask for your teenager's opinion on how the situation could be resolve

4. **Suggest a solution.**

Once you have heard the young person's suggestion, share how you would solve the issue. You should first suggest things you can do as a parent or that you also participate in. In this way, the young person sees that this is a shared issue.

For example, instead of just talking about how the young person can change their phone use habits, you can first suggest ways to change how the whole family uses their phones.

"I think we can all get better at
how we use phones at home.
Us adults do not need phones
before bedtime either.
I suggest we try
that we all put our phones in the hallway
by ten in the evening."

5. **Come up with a reward that you both get if things go well**

"Let's try this first until the weekend.
If it works well,
what's something fun we could do together?"

6. **Don't get stuck in your own ideas**

The young person may not be keen on your suggestion. Listen to them and try to understand where they are coming from. Can you find a compromise?

7. **Agree on how you will monitor the situation**

Well done, now you've agreed on how to proceed! At the same time, agree when you will chat again to see what has worked and what has not. This will keep things clear. You can put a list of the agreed things on

8. **Don't be discouraged if things don't work out**

It is pretty normal that the plan does not immediately work as it is. It is kind of like trying out a new recipe: the first cake you bake is rarely that tasty.

If the plan is not working, discuss what has not worked and take time to think about how to improve it.

9. **Remember that you as the parent ultimately make the decision on the use of digital devices**

Sometimes a solution you came up with together does not work, or maybe you are struggling to come to an agreement. Remember that you as the parent have the final say. This does not need to be a coercive measure, but you can bring it up in a friendly but firm manner.

For example:

"I feel like we've tried
lots of things. Because nothing
has changed, now we will
do x. ”

The decision may provoke resistance or even rage. It is difficult to give up the privileges you already have. Prepare for resistance and think about how to justify your decision.

"I know this might feel really hard.
But I'm your parent
and it is my job to make sure
that you're doing well.
Our daily life is not going well,
which is why we will now do things this way.
Remember that I love you
even though this feels difficult.”

Even in this case, it is a good idea to agree on a time to talk about the situation. It is also worth pointing out that the rules can always be changed if things improve.

Discussions about phone use can be difficult. Give yourself a pat on the back for trying to improve things in the family. Thank yourself even if it seems that things are not progressing. You know what they say: two steps forward, one step back!

Wondering how to create a framework?
Check out Sit-Down Time - digital well-being agreement of the family