



talk with your teen about personal space in the following areas: (1) for you as a parent; (2) for him or her as a child or family member; and (3) for the home in general.

First of all, talk with your teen about your own personal space. Maybe you do not want your teen to dig in your dresser, or in your purse or wallet. Perhaps you have times when you do not wish to be disturbed or interrupted by a phone call or other intrusion. Carefully explain such boundaries and guide your child in being respectful of them. Also, define potential consequences for not respecting personal space, and also possible exceptions, such as in the case of a particular emergency.

Next, explore the expectations for personal space that your teens hold. Make sure your teens have a personal space where they can relax, have friends, be alone and have a place to call their own. Talking with your teens about the rules of your personal spaces will be important. You might want to talk with your teens about what they can do in their personal space so they are safe and obey any house rules you have developed. You and your teens should clearly discuss and understand when personal space can be examined by parents, such as in the case of problems or concerns related to illegal, unsafe or high-risk activity that could be harmful to oneself, family members or others.

Parents and teens also should discuss personal space in the home, such as the different places in your home and who is allowed or not allowed in those spaces. For example, parents may not wish a child's friends to spend time in certain parts of the home. Personal spaces can help to create boundaries and respect in your home. Knowing what spaces he or she can be in, what rules are set in those spaces and how to treat things in those spaces are important for your teen. Creating a personal space with rules and boundaries encourages your teen to be respectful to the places and people in your home.

*Here is a list of some rooms that could be in your home. For each room, answer the following questions.*

	Who is allowed in this room?	When are people allowed in this room?	What are the rules of this room?	What happens if these rules are broken?
Living Room				
Teen's Bedroom				
Garage				
Dining Room				
Sibling Bedroom				
Basement				
Kitchen				
Family Room				
Guest Bedroom				
Caregiver Bedroom				
Attic				
Office				

## House Rules and Respect

Creating some house rules with your teen once you are reconnected with each other will be important. If you are not yet living with your teen, discussing what rules you would like to have in your home still is possible. Rules allow teens to understand what is expected of them, and also rules let you know what your teen expects from you. Sitting down with your teen and coming up with things you both think are important to live by is possible. Here is a list of ideas to help you create house rules.

Discuss and plan specific house rules and actions in the following areas:

- **Curfews** – Should your teen be home by a certain time on school nights? What about weekends? Does your teen hope you can be home by a certain time at night as well? Also, talk about what happens if someone is running late - should he or she call? What happens if someone misses curfew?
- **Chores at Home** – What chores in the home should each family member do? How often should they do these chores? A list of chores, or a schedule of chores with a check-off list, can help keep everyone on track.
- **TV, Movies, Radio** – What television shows or movies are OK to watch? Can everyone watch the same movies or shows, and what ratings are OK? How much time a day will TV watching be allowed? What kind of music is allowed in the house? Consider talking about violence, profanity or inappropriate language and how you will deal with it.

- **Computer and Phone Usage** – What times can a teen be on the Internet or the phone with a friend? How long can the teen be on the computer? What other things do teens need to complete first before they are allowed computer or phone privileges?
- **Treatment of Others** – How are you and your teen going to treat each other and your family with respect? How do you want to talk with each other? If you disagree on something, how will you handle those situations?

Once the house rules are completed, talk about what should happen when rules are broken. What type of consequences will be set? Sometimes caregivers like to give a couple of warnings before any type of consequence. After warnings, you can decide what consequences may follow, such as grounding, house cleaning, no TV or computer privileges, no phone calls or other actions. If possible, try to make the consequence relate to the broken rule. For example, if your teen doesn't complete the chore of doing dishes and he or she already has had two warnings, a good consequence would be for your teen to do the dishes for the next two days after dinner. In setting up consequences, you always should avoid violent or harmful consequences, and they also should be reasonable.

## Respect While Waiting to Reconnect

If you haven't reconnected with your teen, thinking about how to live with respect in your home still is possible. How will you talk with your teen about these things? Here are some things you can do to start talking about respect, even if your teen hasn't come home yet.

1. Make a list of 10 things you respect about your teen and send the list to him or her in the mail. You still can do this if your teen is at home. Just tape the list to the teen's bedroom door instead.
2. Write a story about a time when you remember your teen acting respectfully. Call and tell your teen the story, and then send a copy of the story to him or her. If your teen already is home, tell him or her the story over dinner.
3. Prepare a list of ideas for chores, house rules and personal space. Ask your teen to make a list as well. Send the lists to each other, and then talk on the phone about the lists. If you and your teen already have been reconnected, you still can prepare the lists, and this might give each person some things to think through before developing concrete plans.

Personal spaces can help to create boundaries and respect in your home



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## Conclusion

If these suggestions are not working for your family, seek additional help through other resources. Valuable resources include your support systems, such as family, friends, neighbors and community professionals. Helpful information always is available in books, newsletters and classes, and through family counseling or therapy. Counseling can provide families with additional tools to overcome difficult times.

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## Helpful Phone Numbers

**North Dakota Helpline**  
211 or (800) 472-2911

**Badlands Human Service Center**  
(888) 277-7525

Or call your local office of the NDSU Extension Service to find phone numbers for agencies that can assist you. Regional Parent Resource Centers also have information available to help provide phone numbers of other agencies to assist you.

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## Helpful Resources for Parents

Teaching Guide: Respecting Others for grades 5-9. This Web site offers ideas on how to treat people respectfully. This Web site offers discussion questions you could have with your teen. To read, go to [www.goodcharacter.com/BCBC/RespectingOthers.html](http://www.goodcharacter.com/BCBC/RespectingOthers.html).

Resolving Conflict Constructively and Respectfully. This Web site offers ideas on how to handle problems with respect. To read, go to <http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/5000/5218.html>.

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## References

Molgaard, V. (1996) Stress taking charge: Managing conflict with teens. Retrieved from [www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1660G.pdf](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1660G.pdf) on Nov. 14, 2005.

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