

# NEGOTIATING A CURFEW: AN EXERCISE FOR TEENS



for  
Women

*With teenagers, the skill of negotiation becomes important for parents. Setting a time for curfew on a school night is an example of how to negotiate something between the two of you.*

**1. Parent says what she wants to happen**

Start by suggesting what you see as a reasonable curfew.

**2. Teenager shares his reaction without saying yes or no to the request or suggestion**

Ask your teenager to suggest a curfew time.

**3. Each person then says any problems with the other's suggestions**

If he accepts your suggestion, you are done. If he suggests a later curfew than you did:

- repeat his suggestion to show you listened
- do not say "no" or "yes" to his suggestion
- express your concerns with his curfew suggestion (e.g., not sure that would work because he has a hard time getting up for school on time)
- ask what his thoughts are

**4. Both teen and parent think of solutions to the problems raised**

If still no agreement, then brainstorm solutions. For example, maybe a compromise can work: e.g., earlier than his suggestion and later than yours; slightly later curfew on weekends but keep earlier curfew on school nights; earlier curfew but later bedtime; accept later curfew on the condition that it be changed to earlier time if he has difficulty getting up or is tired at school.

**5. If agreement, negotiation is over.**

**If no agreement, try to find a compromise**

Encourage selection of an option both of you can live with.

**6. If no compromise possible, then state differing positions as objectively and respectfully as possible and set a time to discuss the issue again in the near future**

If you just cannot agree on the curfew, agree to keep the same curfew as before and set specific time for talking about it again (e.g., on the weekend, after supper the next night).