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Age Appropriate & Dysfunctional Behaviors in Adolescence



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Some examples as general and relative guidelines:

AGE APPROPRIATE	DYSFUNCTIONAL
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>PRIVACY</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stays in own room for 3-4 hours • Is vague about feelings towards girlfriend or boyfriend (non-committal or ambivalent) • Keeps a diary or journal • Spends time just “thinking” or doodling <p style="text-align: center;"><u>RESPONSE TO AUTHORITY</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tests limits • Procrastination • Does literally what he or she is told to do – no more • Requests/demands a reason for parental decisions <p style="text-align: center;"><u>AMBIVALENCE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Loves” and “hates” • Is critical of and idealizes a peer at the same time • Feels on “top of the world” and feels “down” during the same afternoon • Often changes plans 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>WITHDRAWAL</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stays in room from morning until night; not talking to anyone <p style="text-align: center;"><u>SECRECY</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doesn’t account for their whereabouts; vague or farfetched explanations about marks or bruises on their body (or about having extra money) • Doesn’t allow anyone in their room • Preoccupation with drawing skulls; themes of violence or death <p style="text-align: center;"><u>LACK OF RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes anarchy • Deliberately breaks rules • Lies to avoid consequences from authority • Complete disregard for parental rules or wishes (“I don’t care what you say.”) <p style="text-align: center;"><u>INDECISIVENESS OR INFLEXIBILITY</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afraid of making mistakes • Constant worry about what others think of them • Insists on doing it their own way or being “always right” • Puts off making decisions

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