

TLC for Teens and the Elderly

It can be difficult to know what a teen or an older person considers tender loving care and what they consider embarrassing or intrusive. Clinical psychologist Danielle Goodwin of Lehigh Valley Hospital and Health Network offers this advice for staying connected to loved ones in these age groups.

Teens

Friendships are critically important to teens as they form their own identities and become more independent from parents. The best way to give TLC to your teen is to focus on warmth and active listening skills. Teens want to feel understood by others. If they're being heard and understood by their parents, they feel cared-for.

Teens tend to rely on friends for psychological support and help. Close friendships involve intense feelings and are open and honest. Your teen's most valuable friends have the ability to listen and offer advice. Their loyalty is unquestioned, and they can be a reliable source of support in an emotional crisis.

In short, friends serve as a source of "therapy" for adolescents. When their friends still like them after they've shared a sensitive issue, it boosts their confidence and self-esteem and helps them get through a challenging life transition. By listening to and helping one another, adolescent friends are also learning to understand themselves.

Elderly

Guidance, support and patience are particularly important with this age group. Older adults want someone they can confide in, and talk to about themselves or their problems.

Elderly men and women often face physical limitations. You can help them gain a sense of personal control by assisting them in meeting their own physical needs. Studies show that older people who are given greater responsibility for daily decisions are more active and happy than those who let staff care for them.

For widows, providing TLC can mean helping with practical matters such as legal, medical and financial support.

TLC in the hospital can come in the form of volunteers who will sit and talk, or nurses and others who help older patients provide for their own needs to the best of their ability.

In hospice (end-of-life) care, the focus is on physical and psychological comfort. Family members interact with professional staff and volunteers to create a positive environment, providing support and attention to the ill person so she can talk openly about her condition, her wishes and her values.

Suggested Reading

TLC for Teenagers and Their Parents: Inspirational Quotes, Poetry, Touching Stories by Yvonne Kamerling

The Attachment Connection: Parenting a Secure & Confident Child Using the Science of Attachment Theory by Ruth P. Newton, Ph.D.



LEHIGH VALLEY HOSPITAL
Cedar Crest & I-78, Allentown
17th & Chew Streets, Allentown

LEHIGH VALLEY HOSPITAL—
MUHLENBERG
Route 22 & Schoenersville Road
Bethlehem

lvh.org
610-402-CARE

For more information
or for a physician referral,
call 610-402-CARE