

Teens: Meeting Them Where They Are

Andrea Goldschmidt, Ph.D. & E. Whitney Evans Ph.D., R.D.

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Given their desire for autonomy, teens are often characterized as being contrarians. In the presence of ongoing brain development, this desire is often blamed for unhealthy and risky decisions made by teens.

As many health behaviors, weight-related and otherwise, are established in adolescence, it represents an ideal time to intervene and promote the adoption of healthy choices.

Traditional health behavior interventions capitalize on the idea that people are motivated to change their behavior based on a desire for future health. This approach is not developmentally appropriate for teens. Instead, emerging research supports the use of tailored approaches that meet teens where they are. So, here are two approaches that meet teens where they are...

Dissonance Approach: based on the idea that when ideals don't match behaviors, behaviors often change to match ideals

- Capitalize on a teen's need for autonomy when encouraging the rejection of unhealthy ideals
- Example:
 - The Body Project (<http://www.bodyprojectsupport.org/>) encourages individuals to critique Western ideas of how women's bodies should look ("thin ideal") to help them question where the desire to be thin comes from

Behavioral Economics Approach: the adoption of healthy behaviors is more likely to occur when the healthy choice is the easy or default choice

- Make it easy for teens to make healthy decisions by physically meeting them where they are or changing their environment so that making a healthy decision is easy
- Examples:
 1. *Grab and Go* breakfast kiosks or *Second Chance* breakfast make eating breakfast in easier for teens (<http://www.newenglanddairyCouncil.org/schools/breakfast/>)
 2. Place healthy options at the front of the cafeteria line and the less healthy options placed in harder to access areas (<http://smarterlunchrooms.org/>)

These behavioral approaches do not require research experience or a formal effort. They can be used by parents, teachers and health care providers in any interaction with a teen.

Two great opportunities for students to participate in research studies at The Miriam Hospital / Brown University Medical School.



The Miriam Hospital
A Lifespan Partner

IRB approval: 6/23/2016
IRB accepted: 7/13/2016
IRB expiration: 1/27/2017



BROWN
Alpert Medical School

Brown/Lifespan Study for Children Seeks Volunteers!

This study will examine emotions and brain functioning in children, ages 10-17. We plan to enroll 75 participants in this study.

- **Volunteers must be ages 10–17**
- **Normal-weight and overweight children are needed**

What is involved?

- 2 outpatient study visits involving non-invasive procedures and testing.
- The first visit includes completing interviews and questionnaires, and the second visit involves looking at pictures while undergoing an MRI scan.
- Participants will be compensated for each visit.
- Visits take place at the Weight Control and Diabetes Research Center and Brown University.

Please Contact Andrea!

401-793-8251
andrea_goldschmidt@brown.edu



TEEN JOIN

IRB Approval: 5/24/2016
IRB Accepted: 6/3/2016
IRB Expiration: 5/23/2017

- ✓ A research study that includes a 16-week, group-based **weight-management** program for teens 13 - 17
- ✓ Held at the YMCA in Cranston, Kent County, and East Bay
- ✓ Call 401-793-8945 or visit <http://www.weightresearch.org/studies/TeenJOIN.html>



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