ForeWord Reviews

FAMILY & RELATIONSHIPS

Unglued and Tattooed: How to Save Your Teen from Raves, Ritalin, Goths, Body Carving, GHB, Sex, and 12 Other Emerging Threats
Sara Trollinger
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"Dinnertime comments such as 'Getting chubby, aren't we?' will not win you a Parent of the Year award," says the author, founder of the nationally acclaimed House of Hope center for troubled teens in South Florida. She estimates that half of the girls coming to House of Hope have eating disorders, one of the threats she covers in her book.

Trollinger, a twenty-five-year teaching veteran and outspoken Christian, offers several soothing answers to troubles some parents may not even be aware of. She gives tips on how to spot the problems (baggy clothes on teenage girls are one example of the onset of an eating disorder) and how to deal with them (helping a teen take a stand right from the start will stop her friends from offering her drinks all along).

Raves may not be something parents understand, but we should all be aware of what goes on at them and be able to talk to our teens about them. These parties, which feature drugs and dancing, often don't even begin until midnight. In order to broach the subject with your teenager, Trollinger offers "Discussion Starters" including "Have you ever heard of rave clubs?" and "Did you see anyone OD'ing on drugs?" In the chapter about suggestive dressing, "Watch Out for Those Daisy Dukes," Trollinger says a girl who insists on wearing revealing clothing is often hungering for a father's love. Setting aside one night each week for supper together, even if it's just fast food, can open the doors.

Trollinger continually stresses communicating with your teenagers, which, she says, is more listening than talking. You need to be there, over dinner or washing the car or going for a drive, and your teenager has to be able to say anything and everything, as long as it's respectful.

Each chapter details a different "emerging threat" and ends with discussion starters. There are comments from former House of Hope residents, including Jessica's take on whether parents can influence how their kids dress: "In principle, you can tell them what to wear, but whether they listen to you is another matter."

Trollinger says it can be frustrating dealing with teens but the better armed we are with

knowledge, the better we are able to communicate.

The thrust of the book is to keep the lines of communication open, talk with teenagers and, most importantly, listen to teenagers.