

Need help with my teenage son

Posted by boismom - 14 May 2009 13:42

Hello and forgive me for intruding as I am only a teen's mother and this isn't really my "space" but I don't know where else to turn and I need help and advice to help my son with this terrible addiction.

He is almost 16 and has been having trouble with this on and off for several years but lately it is getting worse. Sometimes he admits it's a "problem" that he wants to try to get over and sometimes he laughs it off and says he's just like any other kid, that 85% of boys his age watch this stuff. At one point I got him to look at this site and this forum and that seemed to sober him up for a few weeks but then I started finding the videos again. He says he can't go cold turkey and the videos are like a nicotine patch. I said there's no acceptable level of this. He also blamed me for his relapse saying I hadn't loosened up any of my restrictions on him when he was sober so why should he bother. I feel I am living with an addict and can't "loosen up" for a second.

We are locked in a daily game of cat and mouse. When he is at school or asleep I ransack his room and look at flash drives, memory sticks, and anything else he can save data on. My husband's office serves as the storage facility for all his confiscated things. Today I found video files on his non-video ipod stashed away in the "Calendar" file. They had been downloaded a few weeks ago. When I said I thought he had given up that stuff he said "Oh, those were just in case...". (huh?!?) To me, his need to have a flashdrive full of videos at any time indicates this is a pretty serious addiction. Other kids might look at this stuff when opportunity arises but he goes out of his way to hoard them. We have pretty good filters on our home computers (I think) but it seems every other kid in school has a laptop and there's wifi everywhere. His PSP internet browser is locked and he doesn't have the password, so he bought himself a new PSP which we had to confiscate. I end up taking away a lot of his electronics but I'm afraid if he has no way to amuse and distract himself he'll get worse. The compromise is to let him have it but to be constantly vigilant. This is exhausting physically and emotionally. We have considered and continue to consider finding him another place to live but don't know what institution or family would put up with this behavior.

This is not his only problem by far. He has been receiving mental health and educational interventions since he was a little kid. I'm not looking for advice and help for all of his issues, just to explain where things stand. He can be very chutzpahdik and his connection to yiddishkeit is very tentative right now. So trying to appeal to his sense of yiras shamayim or kibbud av v'em is difficult. I've tried. I've even tried to explain for a purely secular viewpoint how pernicious this addiction is but he laughs it off, "Oh, everybody does it." From his perspective all the restrictions of Torah and his family's rules are keeping him from living a "normal" life which includes watching whatever he feels like. I'd like to think his neshama still hears me deep down

but I don't know...I guess on the bright side he's not living a "double life" or acting like a hypocrite.

We are thinking about finding him another school. Right now he is in a Modern Orthodox day school type place where there is a lot of internet access. I'm afraid that switching him to a more black hat type of place with less emphasis on internet will lead him to rebel even more because he really won't fit in there and will miss his friends. And he'll find this stuff, somehow, maybe. Also, I'm not sure whether to give him back his PSP which I took away last week after finding the memory stick with bad videos on it. The PSP's ability to display video makes it very attractive as a private viewing booth. On the other hand he uses it to just have fun playing games and letting off steam after a long day at school. He has ADD and without something to distract himself he gets bored which leads to more problematic behavior, eg on the school bus. Does anyone know of a way to jigger a PSP so he can't use a memory stick?

I'm also not sure how much of this information to share with his friends' families. I know of least two occasions when he watched videos with friends, once in my very own house when he invited a friend for a sleepover. I feel like he has a sickness and it's contagious and I'm afraid for the other kids. On the other hand I don't want him to lose all his friends and become a social outcast. I know at least one of his friends has tried to encourage him away from this shtuss.

Would like some advice on these issues and just general chizuk. If you can remember to your own adolescence and what your parents did or didn't do that worked or didn't work would be appreciated. I don't know how much he can really help it and I shouldn't get angry but I still do. Also if you know of any groups or therapists in the NYC area, specifically Queens, Manhattan or the Five Towns, please let me know. I know about SA but I think that's really geared more for spouses.

Thanks again.

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Re: Need help with my teenage son
Posted by kutan - 16 Jul 2009 13:38

Battleworn,

Yes, I know what you mean about R' Brezak. its not just the parenting advise, but his whole

being, that teaches and influences. When I list to a shiur of his, I feel changed (for a little while,).

He is a real anav (almost as much as R' Guard (private joke)), and it rubs off.

at least
If all Yiddishe totties would be involved in GUI, and all Yiddishe mommies in Project Kavey, the world would already have reached its tikun.

kutan

PS, Yechida, your words are very valuable. please PM the message to boismom if you can, as I think she is not checking the site actively.

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Re: Need help with my teenage son
Posted by the.guard - 16 Jul 2009 13:57

Hey Kután, no one comes CLOSE to me in Anava... :D

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Re: Need help with my teenage son
Posted by kutan - 16 Jul 2009 14:32

[guardureyes wrote on 16 Jul 2009 13:57:](#)

Hey Kután, no one comes CLOSE to me in Anava... :D

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I'm working on catching up. Watch out!

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Re: Need help with my teenage son
Posted by yechidah - 16 Jul 2009 18:27

Reb Kutan

thank you for your suggestion but I don't think I'm able to.I do hope she visits back here some time soon.Of course she needs outside help with her son but there is something very powerful in many of our chevra that had similiar experiences that really care about her son and want to see him pull out of this and lead a happy and healthy life.

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Re: Need help with my teenage son
Posted by kutan - 16 Jul 2009 18:38

Yechida,

Thanks for the PM. Wasn't aware...

Yes you are right about this place being magical. As R' Brezak often says about the power of a tzibur:

1+1 = 3 !!!!

kutan

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Re: Need help with my teenage son
Posted by YeshivaGuy - 25 Jan 2021 15:13

[Ilan wrote on 22 May 2009 12:20:](#)

Hi Mrs Mother.

I am certainly no psychologist and I did not read every single post but I did read your first letter. I am not a parent so you can take my advice for what it is worth or just simply discard it. I am not sure I have a right to give advice as I struggle with these issues. To me, you seem to behave towards your son as a commander behaves towards a soldier in basic training. I believe that the best thing you can do for your son is to love him regardless of his addiction or difficult tendencies. My brother is not an addict but he struggled at school socially, his father (my father) often would tell him to leave the house. It came to the point where my brother was not even welcome in his own house. What has happened to that relationship - Well its over. My mother loves all her children equally and no matter what we did wrong, she still loved us. I think for your sake that one thing you cannot compromise on is your love for your son. I believe that you are doing so by invading his privacy. Perhaps you are not the best person to solve his addiction and you cannot do it with a "whip". A psychologist or an upstanding friend or Rabbi is probably more appropriate. Showing tough love by kicking him out the house is not an appropriate response. He is not on drugs or alcohol that he would behave violently towards you. I remember one of my siblings was looking at porn. I did not see it personally but my fathers computer technician noticed it when browsing through the history... My mom was concerned that his privacy was violated. Maybe that was not the correct response, but she loved him and was concerned for his honour. When your son looks at you he must see that you love him. If he sees his mother as a commanding officer he would rebel even more and look, checking through his things is not working so why carry on? I feel that there is a tendency on this forum to say that "you are right" or "I empathise with you" etc but in this case I believe that looking through your son's flash drive is not the correct thing to do!!! And perhaps you are the wrong person to help him off his addiction.

Beautiful

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Re: Need help with my teenage son
Posted by eyes - 26 Jan 2021 18:38

Hi Yeshiva Guy thanks for bringing this to the forefront.

My son who is 3 is always touching himself.

Any advise

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Re: Need help with my teenage son
Posted by YeshivaGuy - 26 Jan 2021 19:04

Me? Advice? I'm just a buchar here, I'm focusing on first not touching myself before I worry

prob best to speak to a fellow parent or a mechanech.

Hatzlocha!

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Re: Need help with my teenage son
Posted by Gme - 03 Feb 2021 06:07

Hi eyes,

I am not a parent so I cannot give much advice from a personal aspect here, however, I do follow someone online named Rachel Tuchman who is a licensed therapist and I really enjoy her content. She has given a talk about this that she posted on her youtube channel. I would recommend watching that and maybe reaching out to her.

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about my future kids bezras Hashem

Re: Need help with my teenage son
Posted by Gme - 03 Feb 2021 06:08

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Re: Need help with my teenage son
Posted by Gme - 03 Feb 2021 06:09

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