

Teenagers seeing the GP alone

This is a transcript of the Raising Children Network video available at http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/teen_gp_appointment_video.html. In this video demonstration with actors, a dad and his son go to the GP together. The video shows that seeing a doctor alone is good for teenagers. It helps them learn to talk about their own health. If teenagers need to talk to someone about how they're feeling, the GP is also a good place to start.

Doctor: Good morning, Jason. Good to meet you and your Dad today. Now, before we talk about why you've come to see me, there are two things that I always do as part of my everyday practice with adolescent patients. First I'd like to talk about confidentiality and second I'd like to have part of the consultation with the young person by themselves, one to one. Is that okay with the both of you?

Dad: <nods>

Jason: <nods>

Doctor: Great. So, let's talk about confidentiality. Confidentiality means that whatever we talk about is kept private. So Jason, I won't tell anyone what you tell me, okay?

Jason: <nods>

Doctor: Including your family unless you give me permission to do so. However there are some exceptions. If I thought that you were in danger of seriously harming yourself or someone else or if I thought that you were being harmed or at risk of that, then it becomes my duty to make sure that you are safe and, of course, I'll talk to you about this first before contacting anyone. How does that sound?

Dad: <nods>

Jason: <nods>

Doctor: Confidentiality also applies to getting results from blood tests, x-rays and so on. So you can call me personally to get those results or if you're okay with your Dad to ring and get them, that's okay too. The choice is yours.

Jason: Yeah, I could ring or come in.

Doctor: So, Mr Chan, before I ask you to step outside for a few minutes, is there anything that you'd like to tell me about why you and Jason have come to see me today?

Dad: Are you okay with talking to the doctor, Jason?

Jason: Yeah, I guess.

Dad: Okay.

Doctor: Okay. So tell me, how can I help you?

Jason: I'm not sure.

Doctor: I understand that speaking to somebody who you don't really know can feel uncomfortable. Would it help if I asked you some questions about what's happening in different parts of your life? That will give me a picture of what's going on for you and help us identify any concerns. Then we can focus on those concerns and see how we may be able to help you. So, who lives with you at home?

Jason: I live with Mum, Dad, sister. Generally things have been okay, it's just lately I've been having some trouble getting to sleep.

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Doctor: So, things are good between you and your friends, home life is generally okay and like a lot of young people you argue with your Dad and it's just a once in a while. Am I getting this right?

Jason: <nods>

Doctor: You enjoy school footy and gaming. The main concern seems to be your exams and your studying.

Jason: Can you talk to my Dad? He's really worried about me. I don't want him to stress.

Doctor: Sure. I'll explain briefly about sleep, your worries about exams and studying and also our plans for helping you.

Jason: Yeah, good.

Doctor: Alright. Then, I would like you to come back and see me next week, just to check in and see how things are going, yeah?

Jason: <nods>

Doctor: Okay. Let's get your dad.