



Q&A with Sean Grover, psychotherapist and author

Sean Grover (www.SeanGrover.com) will be speaking to Bronx Science parents at our PA meeting on Monday, Nov. 13. To give you an idea of who he is and what he'll be talking about, read on!

Tell us about yourself and what you do.

I am an author and psychotherapist who has worked with parents, children and teenagers for more than 25 years. Before working privately, I designed, coordinated and managed school-based programs for struggling youth in elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools. Today I have one of the largest private group therapy practices in the United States.

What is the one question you are asked the most?

The question parents most often ask me is, "What happened to my kid?" The transformation during adolescence can be so dramatic and extreme, parents feel overwhelmed. It's common for parents to enter a grieving period, and long for the younger child. It's also most difficult for parents if it is their first time raising a teen.

Educating yourself about adolescence is a great first step, or setting up a consultation with a specialist to get advice. Remember, anxiety is contagious. The more parents stress about their kids, the more they worry and express their anxiety, the more they pass that anxiety on to their child.

What do teens say is their #1 worry or problem?

A recent study shows anxiety is the number one reason that teens seek therapy. I think social media has a lot to do with that. Research has concluded that social media and cell phone use, for some kids, can be as addictive as drugs and alcohol, and is linked to lower test scores, poor sleeping habits, and increases in cortisol, the "stress" hormone. These days I spend a lot of time helping parents set up guidelines for technology use at home.

Tell us about one of your success stories.

Success stories in my work share similar ingredients: parents who are willing to change their own behaviors, work on their relationship with each other, and develop healthier ways of relating as a family. These choices are the express lane to true and lasting change.

The least effective way of influencing a teenager's behavior is advice, criticism, and comparison. Parents often deposit their teenager in therapy for him or her to be "fixed," without considering that the parents' own behaviors may be a big part of the problem. Some parents also make the mistake of trying to control their teenager by increasing punishments and restrictions, which often produces more conflict in their relationship and greater defiance.

What do you hope parents will take away from your presentation at BxSci?

My goal is for parents to leave feeling strengthened and encouraged. Parenting can be a very lonely business. It stirs up all kinds of feelings and insecurities. It can fill you with self-doubt, plunge you into despair, or make you act in ways you regret. Make no mistake, it's hard work, but when you do it right the rewards last a lifetime. Nothing is more rewarding than having a healthy relationship with your kid.

You won't want to miss our Nov. 13 meeting! Sean will raffle off a signed copy of his book and a free consultation. In the meantime, you can read one of his most popular articles here:

<http://psychcentral.com/lib/5-things-every-teen-needs/>

You can also read Sean's blog here: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/when-kids-call-the-shots>