

## FAMILY CONFLICT & FAMILY DISCORD

Issues concerning the level of influence that family discord has on adolescent development has recently come to forefront of public awareness and academic research. It is a fact that family relationships have a profound impact on the education and personal development of adolescents.

Moreover, family discord has been linked to alcohol abuse, drug abuse, depression, and delinquency. Wilderness therapy is a solution that works.

Conflict between parents and adolescents does not just impact students negatively parents are also naturally affected. Furthermore, marriage problems alone can impact parenting. Studies show that marital conflict might reduce the efficiency of parenting, which will likely produce some sort of behavioral changes children.

One of the most prominent focuses of research concerning family discord is the influence of divorce on adolescents' academic and personal development. While in some cases there is poor adjustment and other issues, in some cases divorce may actually help students escape from negative situations and/or reduce family discord.

Here are some warning signs that family conflict and/ or discord may be an issue for your adolescent:

- Recent changes in routine and/or healthy sleep habits
- Your adolescent joining a new group of friends who are not a positive influence
- A very dramatic drop in schoolwork, attendance or grades
- Failure or refusal to contribute to the family in terms of work
- Deception, lying and keeping activities a secrete
- Dramatic disregard for self-care and hygiene

- You find drugs or drug paraphernalia in their things
- Abrupt change in personality, attitude and emotional stability
- Possession of weapons
- Reckless, destructive and threatening behavior towards you or anyone else
- Violent, self-harming or suicidal statements or behavior

If conflict is ignored or not managed properly, here are some possible negative outcomes:

- stress, tension and illness
- poor relationships
- having a lot of anger that you don't express
- problems not improving
- confusion
- conflict getting worse
- separation or family breakdown
- feeling resentful
- aggression and violence

## HOW CAN WILDERNESS THERAPY HELP?

There are positive outcomes when conflict is dealt with successfully, such as:

- a sense of achievement and personal happiness
- stronger relationships and team work
- learning more about others and yourself
- relaxation
- good health
- feeling positive

We create life-changing experiences for adolescents struggling with family conflict and discord at Pacific Quest. Located on the Big Island of Hawaii, we provide a unique and powerful backdrop for healing in many areas.

Our “Sustainable Growth” model utilizes a team of highly experienced and dedicated clinicians, Horticultural Therapy, experiential education and natural metaphors to support real change. At Pacific Quest we can help students gain a greater sense of awareness about themselves and the world as they begin to make better choices and gain the tools necessary to lead healthy, productive lives, long after program completion.

Each student at Pacific Quest receives weekly individual, and group therapy by highly experienced, Masters or Ph.D. level therapists. Therapists join their students in the field twice per week at the beginning and end of each week (different than most wilderness programs where standard practice is one hour per week). Additionally, students participate in a minimum of two therapist-facilitated groups per week. Therapists communicate with parents via one-hour conference calls each week, providing comprehensive updates along with written assignments designed to further.

In addition to our sophisticated clinical model, we offer a unique, holistic approach to healing. Our medical director creates an individualized, personal “Wellness Plan” for each incoming student that teaches healthy, sustainable habits covering diet, exercise, sleep, stress reduction, hygiene and personal responsibility. A rich and varied, organic diet is introduced along with the re-establishment of healthy sleep cycles and balanced exercise. Students learn about the connection between their health and their emotions and how to cope with family conflict and discord.