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Parental Guidelines for Facilitating Change in the Socially Challenged

1. Develop P.M.A. (Positive Mental Attitude)

With this there is a good chance that progress and growth can be achieved.
Without it the status quo is likely to exist.

2. Acknowledge the fact that a problem/social disability exists.

Identify the degree to which it currently affects the individual and the family.

3. Realize that it is unlikely the socially disabled person will grow out of the problem stage.

He or she must learn the way out.

4. Establish short and long term goals.

5. Become aware that the socially disabled persons usually have an avoidant and dependent personality.

They will avoid social interaction and many responsibilities. Unless they have obtained a true level of independent living, there is a high rate of dependence on parents or other family members.

6. Therefore, understand the fact that parents play an important role.

If this reality is denied there is a good chance that the socially disabled individual's problem can be permanent.

7. Develop a strategy or game plan.

Realize your first objective is to help the socially disabled individual change his/her attitude. If the attitude changes, it is possible for the behavior to change. Take responsibility for creating communication with your child. Very often the child does not take you seriously! It is imperative that you get his/her attention. If at this point your child acknowledges the problem and wants help, it is a positive sign. If not, understand that part of improving the situation means dealing with resistance.

8. Understand your role as ENABLER.

A negative balance (problem) has maintained itself for a substantial length of time. Often it is your role as a parent that has allowed this to be learned and to exist over time.

9. Make a list of the ways that your child is dependent on you.

For example: Think of financial, emotional and practical issues. This list becomes the beginning of your power to manipulate back when and if you are faced with a lack of reason.

10. Both parents should be perceived as being on the same team.

When you disagree, do it behind closed doors. The socially disabled individual has learned to manipulate (consciously and unconsciously). Much of this manipulation is based on the differences parents have in handling the situation.

11. Understand that your child has defense mechanisms.

Usually when confronted with communication he/she becomes uncomfortable. This may result in a temper tantrum; i.e. acting out, aggression, making threats, withdrawal. This will not go away over night. Often things get worse before they get better. You must learn to deal with this. If you do not, the socially disabled individual will have control.

12. In order to handle the temper tantrum you must be able to:

Define what the bottom line is. What wouldn't you tolerate in the way of negative behavior? What are the CONSEQUENCES that your child will have to face with his/her behavior? Without consequences, the negative behavior will remain the same.

13. Learn what "tough love" means.

Realize that it can be modified to each individual situation. Understand that growth occurs by confronting fears and anxiety. It's o.k to have anxiety it's not o.k to let the anxiety control you.

14. With gradual steps, positive stress or pressure must be put on the socially disabled individual to break the negative balance.

Responsibilities must be given. If they are not met, there must be consequences.

15. Identify what the socially disabled individual does not know how to do in the way of responsibilities.

A method of teaching what is not known must be created.

16. If there is confusion related to the learning ability of the socially disabled individual, consider appropriate testing.

17. Identify where to get appropriate help.

Learn how to shop for the right therapist if therapy is indicated. Identify appropriate community resources that offer social opportunities.