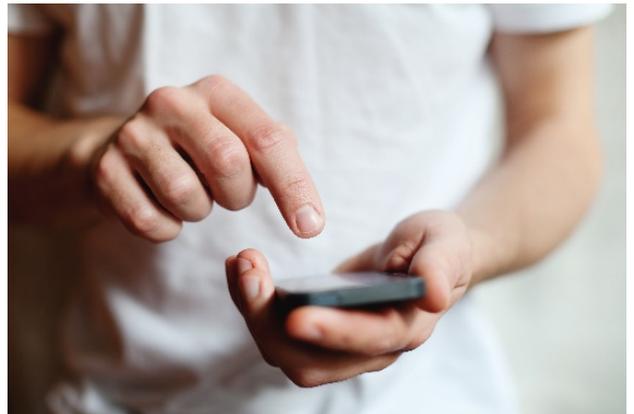


**The Bulletin**  
**February 2017**

**How to Give Your Teen a Way Out of Uncomfortable Situations**

**It's called the "X-Plan"...and it's genius.**

As parents, we send our teenagers out into a world full of temptations and uncertainty hoping that they will return home safe to us. They are exposed to all sorts of danger, but we hope that we have taught them to resist the offers and make good decisions. Even when their good conscience kicks in and they feel uncomfortable in situations, they may not be able to resist the social pressures in fear of being ridiculed.



Bert Fulks is a West Virginia dad who regularly works with teenagers struggling with addiction. Recently, he asked a room full of recovering teens if they'd ever found themselves in uncomfortable situations, and couldn't find a way to get out. "They all raised their hands. Every single one of them," the Independent Journal Review reports. He decided then and there to break the cycle of peer pressure for his own family and developed the "X-Plan". This plan is a family commitment that helps kids know that they can escape an uncomfortable situation without parental judgement. Here's how it works:

- **When found in an uncomfortable situation, the teen texts a simple "X" to a parent or older sibling.**
- **Receiver of the "X" calls the teen and uses an agreed-upon script (e.g. something happened and he has to leave).**
- **Teen has an "out" by telling his friends that something happened at home and he is leaving.**
- **Parents pass no judgments and ask no questions unless someone is unsafe.**

This escape-without-embarrassment-for-leaving gives the teen protection while learning about his or her world. Fulks stresses that the most important part of the X-Plan is that the family member who comes to the rescue cannot ask any questions or pass judgment. "This can be a hard thing for some parents (admit it, some of us are complete control-freaks); but I promise it might not only save them, but it will go a long way in building trust between you and your kid."

The X-Plan is in actuality one of the most loving things you can give to your teen, offering with it a sense of security and confidence. Try this today with your family!