

The drama calmer

How to turn teen divas into healthy adults

Friends Jo, Gab and Livvie, all aged 17, have fun acting up. Picture: ALEX COPPEL



SUSIE O'BRIEN

DIVA drama-queen teens can become well-adjusted young women with the right help from their parents — and a fair bit of patience.

Skip the Drama, a new book by clinical psychologist Dr Sarah Hughes, offers advice on managing arguments over excessive phone usage, selfish demands and a general lack of respect from teenage girls.

She said girls more than boys tended to be emotionally sensitive at that age.

"There are some boys who are demonstrating this sort of behaviour but it's particular to many girls, thanks to their temperaments and raging hormones," Dr Hughes said.

"But be aware that what comes out as teen dramatics can be something more.

"When it's recurring the same way time after time or there seems to be clear patterns or triggers, then something more serious might be going on.

"In such cases, it might be stress-related, perhaps about the amount of homework they've got to do or anxiety over the anticipation of social gatherings," Dr Hughes said.

She said high school years could be "brutal" for girls.

"Years 7 and 8 can be the

TEEN TIPS

- Don't give in to selfish requests because it may inadvertently reinforce selfish behaviour
- Don't rely on lectures to get good behaviour
- Provide rewards, and if they don't work, make sure there are consequences
- Attach conditions when you say "yes" to demands because they help them consider the effect of their behaviour
- It's easy to mistake depression for angst, so be aware of warning signs

Source: *Skip the Drama* (Exisle Publishing)

hardest. There's still the mean girls and it's much worse these days, thanks to social media. Now the school day doesn't end — it's 24/7."

Dr Hughes suggests parents focus on building skills.

"It's good to offer alternatives on how to behave so

girls can build their sense of personal responsibility and time management," she said.

"This can be more helpful than going into lecture mode and raging about their inconsiderate behaviour. If you give an alternative, then they will learn there are

consequences for their actions. It might still be a meltdown, but it might be a more productive meltdown."

But parents can undermine their own messages.

"If you say you're not going to do their washing unless it's in the laundry, then go ahead and do it anyway, then they're not going to learn," Dr Hughes said.

Another new book, *Shine from Within: A Teenager's Guide to Life*, by Amanda Rootsey, offers girls a motivational boost.

"Every teenager deserves to be validated, accepted and to have strong self-esteem to ensure they build positive, healthy relationships with their peers, family and friends," the former model and cancer survivor says.

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COPS GET HEAVY ON METAL

DAVID HURLEY

POLICE will today launch a crackdown on the scrap-metal industry in a bid to catch the criminals behind car thefts across the state.

Investigators from the vehicle crime squad will this morning kick off "Operation Anvil", which will see police visit more than 150 businesses in the scrap-metal and auto-wrecking industries across Victoria.

It comes after the *Herald Sun* revealed in July that police had been gathering surveillance on gangs stealing vehicles for scrap metal.

Today's operation is the first since changes to the Second Hand Dealers and Pawnbrokers Act 1989 came into effect on May 30.

Detective Senior Sergeant Belinda Jones said police knew the majority of people within the industry were obeying the law.

"Vehicle theft is a high-volume crime with nearly 18,000 offences recorded in Victoria in the past year.

"Our intelligence has shown that cash-based transactions for scrap metal can be used to conceal unlawful dealings and can be used by thieves as a means to dispose of stolen vehicles."

The new legislation gives police the power to enter premises to inspect goods without a warrant if they have a reasonable belief that it is dealing in scrap metal.

The operation will run until October 1.

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COLD START FOR TOP CAUSE

THOUSANDS of Victorian families didn't let yesterday's gloomy weather dampen spirits at the YMCA's annual Father's Day Fun Run.

In just three years, the event has solidified itself as Melbourne's premier Father's Day tradition promoting healthy living, while raising funds towards YMCA programs that help Aussie youth with their mental health and wellbeing.

Among the sea of participants at the all-ages event was a handful of local talent, including Melbourne Lord Mayor Sally Capp, 2018 Victorian of the Year Sunny Sandeep, and event ambassadors, actor Andrew Morley and Dr Luke Martin.

The run and walking events were followed by a variety of family-friendly festivities at the event village, which included slime making, live music, a petting zoo and bubble soccer.

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Melbourne's Father's Day fun runners. Picture: MARTIN KEEP

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