



TALKING TO YOUR TEEN ABOUT TOUGH ISSUES

The natural changes that happen during the teen years can be hard for you and your teen. In many families, there may be disagreements as teens want more privacy and independence. Parents might feel that their teens are moody and disrespectful.

Teens make decisions about things like sex, smoking, alcohol and drugs. As an adult, you continue to make decisions about these things, too. As the parent of a teen, you have the opportunity and responsibility to help them learn how to make healthy decisions. Teens want information and a close relationship with their parents. Even though it can be hard, it is important to talk openly and often with your teen about these issues.

Tips for talking with your teen:

Talk:	Don't be afraid to talk about tough subjects like sex and drugs. Even if your child is only 10 or 11 years old, you can talk about puberty, peer pressure, and staying healthy. This will let your teen know that it is ok to talk with you about these issues.
Listen:	It is important to listen and be open to your teen's opinions. Try not to interrupt while they are telling you their point of view.
Be honest:	Give truthful answers when your teen asks for information. Don't worry if you don't have all the answers.
Share your ideas and opinions:	Teens want to hear about your values and beliefs.
Respect their opinions:	Teens become more mature and independent, and letting them make their own choices is an important part of growing up. Ask them for their ideas and opinions. Make sure to let them know you are always there to help, even if you do not agree with all of their decisions or behaviors.
Stay calm:	Try to stay calm if they come to you with a problem that is upsetting, so they will not be afraid to talk to you.
Keep talking:	Bring up subjects over and over again. Don't be afraid to bring up important topics that you have already talked about. Use movies, TV shows or news stories about teen health as a way to start discussions.
	Don't be afraid to ask for help!