



Parents & Caregivers Guide

A large graphic with a light blue background and a green border. It features two overlapping speech bubbles: a larger orange one on the left and a larger yellow one on the right. The text "Start the conversation" is written in a dark blue, handwritten-style font across both bubbles. Surrounding the bubbles are several light blue rectangular boxes with white text, each containing a resource category: "Plans", "Testimonials", "Self Reflection", "Awareness", and "Suggestions".

Start the conversation

Plans

Testimonials

Self Reflection

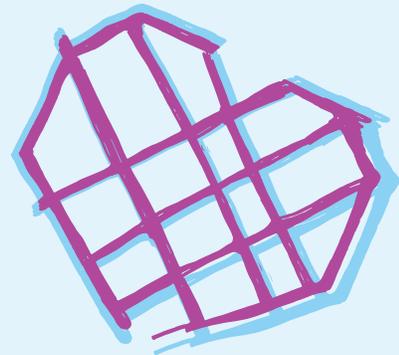
Awareness

Suggestions

If you've not yet had serious conversations with your teen about healthy and unhealthy relationships, this interactive guide can help you start. And, if you've already started these conversations, you'll find plenty of further resources to keep those conversations going.

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Frequently Asked Questions



Who is this guide for?

This guide is geared towards parents and caregivers of teens ages 13 and up; however, you may still benefit from the resources provided if you have younger (or older!) children.

What's included in this guide?

Each section will equip you with a different kind of knowledge and skills:

- 1** In *Crash Course: Modern-Day Adolescence*, you will learn about typical physical and neurological development in adolescence, and how teen behavior and relationships might be affected during this dynamic time of growth. After learning some basics about healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships, you'll also get a chance to reflect on your own experiences in relationships as a teenager. You'll continue to build this skill of self-reflection throughout the guide.
- 2** In *Lay the Groundwork*, you'll begin by assessing your current relationship with your teen and then get a chance to practice important skills towards build a positive and healthy foundation together. After making a plan for your next steps in fostering this healthy relationship with your teen, we hope you will take several weeks (or months!) to follow through before moving on to the next section.
- 3** When you're ready to *Start the Conversation*, you'll learn how to initiate conversations about healthy and unhealthy relationships with your teen, and how to ensure these conversations are effective.
- 4** Finally, in *Continue the Conversation*, you'll learn more topic-specific information, about boundaries and consent, navigating breakups, and more. At the end of the guide, you'll think through other supportive adults in you and your teen's life that the two of you can lean on through relationship challenges.

What's not included?

Although this guide covers a lot of ground, you will not find information about:

- Mental health diagnoses and treatment
- Suicide prevention, risks, and intervention
- Bullying
- In-school supports like special education or Section 504
- Sex-ed and reproductive health

This guide is not meant to be a comprehensive resource for every circumstance or situation you and your teen may come across, but rather a general collection of tips and strategies to support you in starting the conversation. This guide is also not meant to help you label or “diagnose” your teen’s relationships as healthy, unhealthy, or abusive.

Should I read the guide all at once, in order?

In general, you will complete this guide one section at a time, in order – however, there will be moments where we might direct you to jump ahead, depending on your comfort level and experience.

How long will this guide take to complete?

We encourage you to move through this guide at your own pace. There is no timetable on building a trusting relationship with your teenager and laying the groundwork for these challenging conversations – this is a lifelong process. Giving yourself at least a week to proceed through each section is a good place to start!

What if my teen needs support? What if I have more questions?

While deepening your relationship with your teen, you might uncover challenges they haven’t discussed with you before. If you’re concerned about your teen’s mental health or safety, or have questions beyond the content of this guide, please reach out to a professional resource – the appendix of resources at the end of this guide is a great place to find additional support.



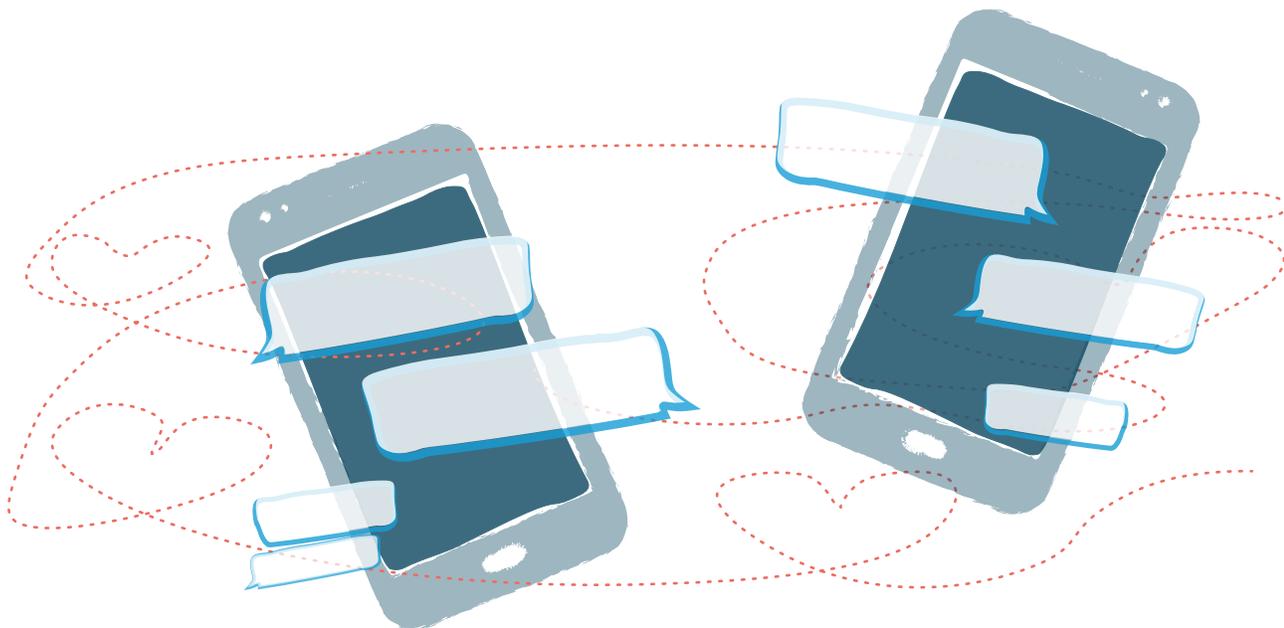
Crash Course: Modern-Day Adolescence

In this section, you will learn about typical physical and neurological development in adolescence, and how teen behavior and relationships might be affected during this dynamic time of growth. After learning some basics about healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships, you'll also get a chance to reflect on your own experiences in relationships.

It can be easy to forget what being a teenager is really like. Adolescence can be confusing, overwhelming, stressful, and anxiety-provoking – and that's only accounting for the physical changes in their brains and bodies. Now add in friendships and romantic relationships—it takes everything up a notch.

As an adult looking back, you have the benefit of hindsight and have probably learned from the choices you've made and the experiences you've had. Teenagers don't have that hindsight yet—they're still in the thick of it, so everything feels bigger and more prominent. As we get older, our teenage memories can be overshadowed by new experiences, and we might forget how big some of those "firsts" can feel.

As you know, teens today experience relationships in a different way than even ten years ago—with the explosion of social media, teens have access to each other nearly 24/7, which has both benefits and challenges. The goal isn't for your teen to resist these factors (biological, social and digital); rather, think about how you as an adult can provide support as your teen navigates their reality.



During the creation of this guide, One Love reached out to teens in our programming to share their thoughts and opinions. We've incorporated their feedback into these real voices sections in the guide.

We're so grateful to learn from them and we hope that you will be too!

realVoices

"It's definitely different being a teenager now than it was when my parents were growing up. I wish they would understand the different challenges I'm facing that they haven't experienced, but also that they would see what we have in common. It's so cool to be able to see two versions of my life – how I was as a kid and who I'm growing into – and I wish they would appreciate that more."

Eve, age 15

Reflection

What do you remember about being a teenager? What did you like the most about being a teenager? What did you like the least? What kinds of challenges, questions, and situations did you face?



Why is parenting a teenager so hard?

We know that adolescence is one of most dynamic events of human growth and development. The only stage of life in which our brains and bodies grow and change more quickly is during infancy!⁴

It may seem at times that your teen thinks and behaves like an adult, and in some ways that's certainly true – but remember that the brain does not finish maturing and developing until the age of 25.⁴⁻¹⁰

Some areas in which teens are likely to struggle, due to physical and neurological development in adolescence are:⁴⁻¹⁰

- **Memory**
- **Emotional Regulation**
- **Social Behavior**
- **Planning**
- **Impulse Control**
- **Movement Control**
- **Problem Solving**
- **Spontaneity**
- **Language**
- **Task Initiation**
- **Judgment**

The combination of an intense rate of change, still-developing cognitive skills, an amplified reward sensitivity, and heightened sensation-seeking makes adolescence a time of predisposition to risky and reckless behavior.^{5,8-11} Social norms and pop culture both lean into this characterization of teenagers as impulsive, reckless, irresponsible, rebellious, disrespectful... the list goes on. But characterizing our teens this way without backing up that understanding with what's really going on in their brains and bodies doesn't serve building positive parent-child relationships – or their own healthy relationships. We know they're also resilient, creative, curious, compassionate... that list is even longer. We should spend the time highlighting this too!

Two things can be true – these changes can be normal, and teens still need the support of a trusted adult to navigate them!

⁴Arain et al., 2013, ⁴⁻¹⁰Shulman et al., 2016; Andrews et al., 2021; Arain et al., 2013; Choudhury et al., 2006; Dumontheil, 2016; Murty et al., 2016; Spear, 2013, ^{5,8-11} Spear, 2013; UNICEF, 2017; Dumontheil, 2016; Murty et al., 2016; Shuman et al., 2016

So if these behaviors and challenges are normal... why should parents and caregivers even try to talk about it?

It's important to understand that parent-youth relationships continue to be formative through the teenage years.^{12,13} You still have a significant influence on your teen, even if it doesn't always feel that way. During their teenage years, you can help them develop healthy relationship skills, *navigate risky behaviors like drug and alcohol abuse, and manage stressors*. The stronger a foundation your teen has when it comes to healthy and unhealthy relationship behaviors and decisions, the more likely they are to make safer choices – or ask for help when they find themselves in unsafe situations.

If you have questions about mental health concerns or drug/alcohol use, refer to the appendix at the end of this guide.

How do I know if my teen's relationships are healthy or unhealthy?

The One Love Foundation developed and uses the 10 Signs of Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships as foundational language in our educational programs. Understanding these signs is extremely useful and helpful for young people to be able to label behaviors in their own relationships as healthy or unhealthy, and to have language to understand and describe what makes certain behaviors "red flags" in relationships. However, as parents and caregivers, you are usually not privy to the intimate details of your teenagers' relationships, which makes identifying these behaviors challenging!

We've outlined some **Early Warning Signs** below that may indicate that your teen is experiencing or exhibiting unhealthy behaviors in a relationship:

While this not an exhaustive list - and these examples might certainly also be signs of other challenges happening in your teen's life! - being on the lookout for these types of behaviors is a good place to start. You know your teen best - trust your gut if something feels off!

- Your teen is withdrawn and isolated – you don't hear much about their day-to-day life.
- They are on their phone texting, calling, and messaging excessively (think: from the moment they wake up in the morning, throughout all family meals and activities, and you often catch them up late at night).
- Changes in appearance including clothes, makeup, or hairstyle.
- Isolation from other friends or family.
- Decreased interest in extracurricular activities or other interests.
- Depression or anxiety.
- Unexplained marks, bruises, or injuries. This red flag specifically may signal an abusive relationship. We'll delve more into the difference between unhealthy and abusive relationships on page 9.

Additionally, it's important to remember that an unhealthy relationship is defined by unhealthy behaviors. As a parent or caregiver, you may think about the kind of people you don't want your teen to be around, as opposed to the specific behaviors you want to protect them from. When looking at your teen's relationships, it's important to focus not on whether or not you like their partner, but on the types of behaviors you see.

^{12,13}Bundock et al 2020, Goldstein et al 2022.

One Love created the 10 Signs of Unhealthy Relationships to describe these behaviors:

INTENSITY	When someone expresses very extreme feelings and over-the-top behavior that feels overwhelming.
POSSESSIVENESS	When someone is jealous to a point where they try to control who you spend time with and what you do.
MANIPULATION	When someone tries to control your decisions, actions, or emotions.
ISOLATION	When someone keeps you away from friends, family, or other people.
SABOTAGE	When someone purposefully ruins your reputation, achievements, or success.
BELITTLING	When someone does and says things to make you feel bad about yourself.
GUILTING	When someone makes you feel responsible for their actions or makes you feel like it's your job to keep them happy.
VOLATILITY	When someone has a really strong, unpredictable reaction that makes you feel scared, confused, or intimidated.
DEFLECTING RESPONSIBILITY	When someone repeatedly makes excuses for their unhealthy behavior.
BETRAYAL	When someone is disloyal or acts in an intentionally dishonest way.



Reflection

Have you ever been in a relationship where these unhealthy behaviors are present?

Do you see any of these unhealthy signs in your current romantic relationships or friendships? What about between you and your teen?



Note: if this reflection is bringing up uncomfortable feelings that you haven't yet processed, we encourage you to pause and reach out to a mental health professional.

A lot of us have experienced unhealthy relationships—there is no shame in realizing this now, many years after the fact. This is a relatively common experience for adults who learn the 10 Signs for the first time. It's important to unpack this before sharing your own experiences with a young person to protect both yourself and your teen. Rather than telling yourself "I should have known better," focus on how you can now use this knowledge to better help the young people in your life.

What's the difference between an unhealthy and an abusive relationship?

Your teenager and their friends and/or romantic partners will absolutely engage in unhealthy behaviors at some point – 100% of us do unhealthy things from time to time. Even the best of friends can make mistakes and hurt each other's feelings. What matters most is that our teens take responsibility for their actions and strive toward healthier outcomes in the future.

All behaviors fall on a spectrum from healthy to unhealthy to abusive, and these behaviors viewed as a whole form the quality of our relationships.

An abusive relationship is defined by its unhealthy patterns, not by a single unhealthy interaction. A relationship can turn abusive when there is both a pattern of unhealthy behaviors, and when those behaviors increase in frequency and severity over time, leading to one person gaining and maintaining power over the other. As a result, the person experiencing these behaviors grows to feel a general lack of safety with their partner or friend. The combination of these behaviors is referred to as "coercive control."



What kinds of abuse do I need to be aware of, as a parent?

Researchers often describe relationship abuse in four categories: digital, emotional, financial, and physical.

Let's look examples of abusive behavior each of these categories:



Digital: requiring someone to follow or unfollow certain people on social media, or to share your passwords/allow access to private messages, texts, etc.



Emotional: insults, belittling, or manipulation can all be emotionally abusive; in addition using homo-, bi-, transphobic, or racist insults and making someone feel as though they deserve abuse because of their sexual orientation, gender expression



Financial: stealing money from you, using your credit card without permission or consistently breaking personal items that require spending money to fix, such as a phone, a special piece of jewelry, a video game console, etc.

Note: Digital, emotional and financial abuse are just as damaging and dangerous in relationships as physical abuse and can also lead to physical abuse.



Physical: any kind of physical violence towards an individual or their property (destroying a cellphone, punching holes in the wall, etc.)

Wait—what about the 10 Signs of a Healthy Relationship?

It's important to know the "green flags" too! Sometimes we are so focused on protecting our teens that we only look for and talk about the "red flags." Looking out for signs that your teen has healthy relationships in their life is just as important. Keep an eye out for the following:

- They introduce you to their friends and romantic partners
- They participate in activities and pursue interests regardless of who they are dating or friends with
- They balance their time between friends and romantic partners
- They **generally** return home from spending time with friends and/or romantic partners in a good mood
- You hear about conflicts your teen has with friends or romantic partners
- They really seem like themselves, doing the activities they've always loved and spending time with familiar friends
- They express their opinions to friends and/or romantic partners with confidence
- They make choices based on their own wants, needs, and desires – not those of their friends or romantic partner
- They show respect to themselves, their partner, family, and friends

Relationships are one of the most important parts of our lives – and are a huge part of a young person's life at this stage in their development. We get such strength, support, and joy from relationships when they are safe and healthy. Supporting your teen and keeping them safe isn't just about identifying the unhealthy behaviors in their relationships, but it's also about noticing and modeling healthy behaviors. You may think that they're not noticing what you're modeling, but they're watching and learning.



One Love's 10 Signs of a Healthy Relationship give us some ideas of how to practice these behaviors:



COMFORTABLE PACE	The relationship moves at a speed that feels enjoyable for each person.
TRUST	Confidence that your partner won't do anything to hurt you or ruin the relationship.
HONESTY	You can be truthful and candid without fearing how the other person will respond.
INDEPENDENCE	You have space to be yourself outside of the relationship.
RESPECT	You value one another's beliefs and opinions, and love one another "for who you are as a person.
EQUALITY	The relationship feels balanced and everyone puts the same effort into the success of the relationship.
KINDNESS	You are caring and empathetic to one another, and provide comfort and support.
TAKING RESPONSIBILITY	Owning your actions and words. You avoid placing blame and are able to admit when you make a mistake.
HEALTHY CONFLICT	Openly and respectfully discussing issues and confronting disagreements non-judgmentally.
FUN	You enjoy spending time together and you bring out the best in each other.

SUGGESTION
If you want

Put a check next to the two or three healthy behaviors you practice the most, and a star next to the one you want to practice more.

Your own experiences with relationships affect your perspective when it comes to your teen's friendships and romantic relationships. If you had only positive experiences, you might not pay as close attention to your teen's relationship health – and miss red flags. On the other hand, if your relationships were unhealthy or abusive, you might over-correct with your teenager instead of creating an open, safe environment to discuss their experiences.

Reflection

How do you think your personal experience of healthy, unhealthy, or abusive relationships will affect how you view your teen's relationships?



realVoices

"I am constantly seeking and accepting my parents' advice because I know they've been through similar experiences."

Callum, age 19



In this section, you'll begin by assessing your current relationship with your teen and learning some important communication and relationship skills. We hope you will take several weeks (or months!) to practice these skills and build a positive and healthy foundation with your teen.

MAKE A PLAN

Your teenager needs you to both be honest and sensitive when you're discussing your relationship experiences. Knowing you've been through similar experiences might help them open up to you and feel connected, but **if you don't share insight into the lessons learned**, they may be reluctant to take your advice.

Use this space to think about how you might answer questions about your relationship experiences – whether healthy or unhealthy.



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Lay the Groundwork

Where do I begin?

Start by honestly answering the following questions:

- 1 How would you describe your current relationship with your teen? Open, understanding, and mutually respectful? Tense, conflicted, fraught? Does it depend on the day? Do you think your teen would agree with your characterization of your relationship?**

Before diving into what can be very tricky and nuanced conversations about **relationships**, we encourage you to take your time with our relationship-building and communication tips. Teens who perceive their relationship with a parent/caregiver to be poor are more likely to receive advice negatively^{15,16} – so building a positive foundation first is paramount. If you feel like your relationship with your teen needs a lot of work, connecting them with another trusted adult so they can continue to get support while you're rebuilding your connection is a great idea. Don't take it personally if your teen gravitates towards talking to another trusted adult—it's most important that they can identify *someone*.

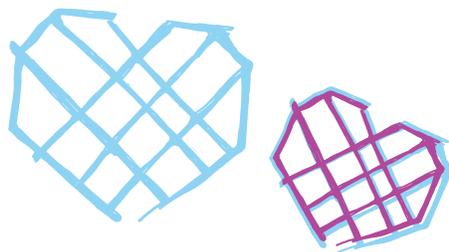
- 2 Will this be the first time you talk to your teen about healthy relationships? Or will this be a continuation of multiple conversations in the past?**

If you already started these conversations, congratulations! Feel free to read our general tips about communication and relationship-building – you can also skip ahead to our appendices with more focused tips!

- 3 Are you or your teen managing mental health concerns, facing instability in any area of life, or feeling unsafe in any capacity?**

While the information in this guide might be interesting and helpful, we highly recommend taking care of your mental health and basic needs before implementing any of the tools this guide offers. If you need any resources, check out our Appendix. You can also always call or text 988 for immediate help.

Whether you're struggling to connect with your teen, or your relationship is thriving, this guide can support you in your journey. We all have unique relationship histories, mental health, and skill sets, so what matters most is that we're investing *now* in learning how to have these important conversations with our teens.



Reflection

What was your relationship with your parents or caregivers when you were younger? Did you seek and accept their advice? Why or why not? Is there anything you wish your parents or caregivers did differently?



How can I build a positive relationship with my teen?

Building a positive, healthy, strong relationship with your teen is important to their future relationship health. Without this strong foundation, your attempts to initiate conversation about healthy and unhealthy relationships will be less effective. Young adults with positive parental relationships tend to share more about their lives with their parents/caregivers and are more receptive to their advice.^{15,16}

Believe it or not, most teens value the input and advice of their parents and caregivers! Young people seek out support from trusted adults for the same reason parents and caregivers ask each other for help: to help solve issues, to get a fresh perspective, to vent, and to feel validated, listened to, and comforted.¹⁷

Teens look for the same kind of comfort and respect that adults seek in their relationships. They want to share their thoughts and feelings without fear of judgment.^{12,17} They want support to distinguish right from wrong without fear of overreaction, punishment, or being yelled at or talked down to.^{18,19} And they aren't likely to put their trust in anyone who makes them feel ashamed or embarrassed when they ask for help.²⁰

Here are some tips to consider as you're working towards building a positive foundation with your teen:

- Spend time together. Tech-free dinners, game nights, or volunteering as a family are great bonding activities.
- Give respect. Avoid teasing, negative language, or put-downs.

^{15, 16} Poulin et al 2012, Wang et al 2021, ¹⁷ Fernet et al 2021, ^{12, 17} Bundock et al 2020, fernet et al 2021, ^{18, 19} black & preble 2016, preble et al 2018, ²⁰ Padilla Medina et al 2022

- Show you care.
- Apologize. When in conflict, be direct, fair, and respectful.^{21,22}
- Model self-care.
- Find common interests.
- Provide opportunities for ownership and responsibility.

Having less intense conversations with your teenager can help build your confidence to tackle more challenging subjects. Try some of the following topics:

- Favorite television shows, musical artists, movies, or books. Share yours and show an interest in your teen's interests!
- School and academics – both struggles and successes.
- Future planning and goals.
- Your family's spiritual or religious beliefs.
- Funny or interesting social media posts or videos.

Above all, practice active listening.¹³ Give your full attention when listening to your teen – this means setting aside other distractions like work or chores, and putting phones away!

SUGGESTION

If you want

Put a check mark next to the tips listed above that you are already doing and a star next to the ones you want to focus on.

Remember earlier when we talked about changes in your teen's behavior? This is a great opportunity to start a conversation! Sometimes these changes are a part of growing up, but sometimes they're an indicator of an unhealthy relationship influencing their behavior. When in doubt, ask and give your teen an opportunity to share, don't just assume the worst.

realVoices

"My relationship with my parents is good. Even though we disagree on a few things. I enjoy spending time with them."

Mika, age 16

"The best thing I have learned from my parents is to become the best me and to do what's best for me."

Nia, age 17



realVoices

"I love how I see my parents come back together after having disagreements and they never forget to have time for each other despite having a lot to deal with."

Pranesh, age 15

"Some adults aren't very good when it comes to keeping people's business quiet. This leads to trust issues between adults and teens at times."

Jake, age 14

MAKE A PLAN

Look back at the tips you starred on pages 14-15 as ones you want to work on—what does that look like? For example:

Spending time together → I will schedule a family movie night for next Friday to see the new Marvel movie

Show you care → leave a note and healthy snack in my teen's backpack the night before a big game

It's okay to be nervous—for some of us, these tips may feel strange or outside of our comfort zone. If you try it and it doesn't work, pick another one!



Start the Conversation

In this section, you'll learn how to initiate conversations about healthy and unhealthy relationships with your teen, and how to ensure these conversations are effective.

Welcome back! After spending some time taking stock of your relationship with your teen and focusing on building that healthy relationship foundation, take a few moments to reflect.



**Has your relationship grown, changed, or improved since you began working to strengthen your relationship with your teen?
What worked well? What hasn't worked well?**

<p>My relationship has improved! What next?</p> <p>That's great!</p> 	<p>Not really, what should I do?</p> <p>PAUSE – We strongly believe (and have the research to back it up!) that having a positive foundation with your teen is a key component of being able to have successful conversations about healthy and unhealthy relationships. If you tried a variety of strategies over the past several months and feel that your relationship with your teen is still negative, challenging, or contentious, we highly recommend seeking out further resources before proceeding with the rest of this guide.</p>
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**How are you feeling about starting conversations with your teen about healthy and unhealthy relationships? Is there anything holding you back? Do you feel ready for these conversations?
Do you think your teen feels ready?**

<p>I think we're both ready!</p> <p>Congratulations!</p> 	<p>I don't feel ready...</p> <p>PAUSE-- If you and/or your teen are navigating other challenging life circumstances, this may not be the right time to start having conversations about healthy and unhealthy relationships. You may need to tackle other immediate concerns first – and that's okay!</p> <p>On the other hand, if you are concerned about one of your teen's friendships or relationships, especially if you think your teen might be in danger, it is worth initiating the conversation now – even if you're feeling a bit hesitant.</p>
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We recognize that concerns like safety, housing, medical needs, and mental health intersect with your teen’s relationship health. Although this guide doesn’t directly address these other concerns, you can always refer to the resources appendix for further support and guidance.

How do I know when to initiate conversations about healthy and unhealthy relationships?

While you’ve been focusing on laying the foundation of a positive relationship with your teen, you’ve likely learned a lot about how to have effective conversations on a variety of topics. Have you noticed that, when given the space to share their thoughts and feelings, your teen might ask questions or bring up topics that weren’t part of the original conversation?

When teens initiate conversations or bring up questions or concerns on their own, they’re much more likely to implement the advice you give. So, it’s best to follow their lead whenever you can. Be an active listener so you can be present and open to whatever your teen wants to discuss.

But what does this look like?

Even with all the tips in the world, initiating conversation with your teenager – especially about topics like healthy and unhealthy relationships – can still feel overwhelming. Check out the suggestions below and suggestions below for some more concrete examples!

- I heard that _____ [insert behavior, observation..?].
What was that like for you?
- If I’d been in that situation, I would have felt _____. How about you?
- Wow, I just really appreciate how your aunt does _____.
- That reminds me of _____ [a personal experience you’ve had with a(n) healthy/unhealthy relationship].
- Phew, that episode was intense. Have any of your friends ever gone through something like that?
- How are things going with _____?

How do I make sure the conversations I have with my teen are effective?

Here are some tips:

- Use observational language – when you’re with your teen and their friends, tune in to what you notice, overhear, or observe. Neutral language like, “I noticed...” can be really helpful to bring up difficult topics.
- Use media – TV, movies, and music can provide really rich examples of relationships to discuss with your teen.
- Model healthy behaviors and address unhealthy behaviors in your own relationships. Whether or not you and your teen are having conversations about these things, they notice the example you set.



- Keep the conversation low-pressure and low-key – humor can be a great tool!
- Check in with yourself. Regulating your emotions and centering before starting a difficult conversation can have a significant impact on the trajectory of the conversation. As much as possible, start conversations on equal footing – research has shown that teens appreciate and respond to being approached with respect more than simply being told what to do. This might feel strange at first, especially if it’s different from how your parents raised you, or from societal expectations of how parents should treat their kids, but it’s worth a shot, especially if you’re struggling to maintain a positive relationship with your teen!
- Ask open-ended questions – create a judgment-free zone for your teen to share how they’re feeling.
- Remember that there is a difference between an excuse and a reason – and it’s important to recognize that your teen might not always understand they’re behaving in an unhealthy way.
- Know your resources – sometimes the support your teen needs is beyond what you can provide, and that’s okay! Check out our resource appendix at the end of this guide for more ideas and options.

Keep in mind that what works for your friends and their teens might not work for you, and visa versa. It’s important to try a few different strategies to discover what works best!

realVoices

“A good conversation I’ve had recently is with my mom about finding out someone I liked had a girl-friend. She gave me great advice about how to navigate our friendship moving forward.”

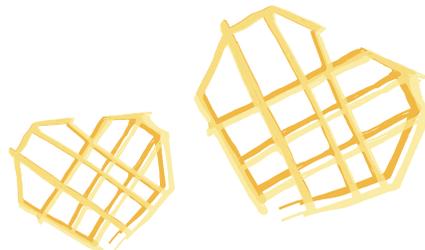
Zainab, age 15

“My parents know me very well and listen to my experiences. I like that they keep what I tell them to themselves and understand what a teenager needs to hear.”

Alphonso, age 17

“I don’t really ask my parents for advice. I don’t like how they’ve responded in the past. I wish they would give me positive advice even when their personal opinion on the topic is negative.”

Leah, age 19



²¹Meltzer et al 2018, Williford et al 2023

MAKE A PLAN

Which of these tips or sentence stems would you be most likely to implement as you begin broaching the topic of healthy and unhealthy relationships? Why? Can you think of an example of when you'd use it?

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What if I mess this up?

You may make mistakes or encounter awkward moments – don't let that deter you!

The good news is that these early conversations are just the start. Change takes time. Your teen learns the same thing in a One Love workshop – expect that these conversations will continue and evolve over time.

More good news—you aren't your teen's only support. Teachers, counselors, coaches, friends, and other family members are all there to bolster your efforts.

These conversations can be hard – and repetitive. Have compassion and be patient with yourself and your teen.

Remember: Leaning on your personal support team can really support this process! Take a minute to identify your 3Ps—peers, parents/trusted adults, and professionals. As adults, we still have trusted adults too!



Continue the Conversation

Reflection

How did your first attempts at talking with your teen about their relationships go? What did you learn? What went well? What didn't go well?



What do I talk about now/next?

Now that you're feeling more comfortable approaching the subject of healthy and unhealthy relationships with your teen, this section gives you more guidance on specific topics, details, and questions to dig into such as:

- Boundaries and consent
- Navigating endings
- Helping friends

Keep in mind that different conversations will take different amounts of time – some might be quick five-minute chats in the car, and others might be deep, hour-long discussions. Ultimately, all the conversations you have with your teen will build on each other, so do not worry too much about the length of each one.

What do I need to know as a parent/caregiver about boundaries and consent?

Setting boundaries and making rules as a parent or caregiver is common practice. However, it is important to make a distinction between boundaries and rules, and not use those terms interchangeably. Boundary-setting is a process that involves discussion, mutual participation and understanding, and ongoing communication and re-evaluation. Rules, on the other hand, are norms that are intended to manage someone else's behavior.

When you are a parent or caregiver, you may create rules for your household that everyone is expected to follow. These are similar to norms or expectations that a teacher may establish in a classroom. When establishing a curfew, or limits on screen time, that's a rule, because it's something you communicate to manage someone else's behavior. Rules should still be communicated in a healthy way! If you do have rules, make sure to call them that (as opposed to boundaries)—it's



important be precise. Parents can set rules, teachers can set rules, partners and friends can't. Partners and friends can and should set boundaries.

It's also important to understand that boundaries and consent aren't only about sex! Boundaries and consent are applicable to a wide range of things – communication frequency, physical touch, sharing— to name a few. If you wait to broach these topics because you think your teen isn't having sexual relationships, then you're missing some powerful opportunities to build your teen's self-awareness and confidence in defining their boundaries and learning about consent. Boundaries may shift and change as relationships evolve, and sometimes they are non-negotiable, but either way – giving or getting consent is much more nuanced than a simple yes or no answer, and you want your teen to be ready when they are faced with complex choices.

Rules and boundaries can be powerful ways to strengthen your relationship with your teen and they can also pose challenges. Making rules to manage your teen's behavior in their personal relationships can often backfire - for example, if you think your teen is hanging out with their romantic partner too often and you set a rule that they can only go on dates once a week, your teen may try to sneak around and see their partner anyway. This hiding of their relationship means they might not feel like they can tell you if something bad happens, because they aren't supposed to be seeing each other - and this secrecy leads to unsafe situations and can mask unhealthy or abusive relationship behaviors.

What does my teen need to know about boundaries?

Think about framing boundaries in terms of what makes your teen feel comfortable, as opposed to rules they need to follow or are asking someone to follow. For example, pop culture and the media often show possessive behavior (like dictating what you wear, who you spend time with, or what accounts you follow on social media) as an act of love. Instead, reinforce that **setting boundaries is about your actions, your body, and your environment – not about controlling someone else's actions, body, or environment.** Your teen should know that no one else can set boundaries that control their relationship behavior. They set their own boundaries, communicate them, and should expect others to respect them - and they should offer that same respect to others' boundaries, too.

Some kinds of relationship boundaries you can explore with your teen include:



Communication: how often to talk with their partner, how late they can talk during the school week, preferred type of communication (text vs. DM vs. Facetime), how acceptable is double or triple texting



Time: how many times a week to hang out, any time blocked off for activities/family time/etc.



Social Media: sharing social media or phone passwords, sharing photos or personal stories on social media



Physical Intimacy: comfort with different levels of physical intimacy, PDA



Financial: how to split expenses for dates/activities, how much they're comfortable spending on activities together, how much to spend on gifts for holidays/birthdays



FRIES

THE 5 KEY ASPECTS OF CONSENT:
FREELY GIVEN • REVERSIBLE • INFORMED
ENTHUSIASTIC • SPECIFIC

Developed by Planned Parenthood

What does my teen need to know about consent?

This can be an emotional topic. If your teen is trying to establish a boundary, or push back against a boundary that was crossed without permission, they might feel anxious or guilty. On the other hand, if your teen is being held accountable to a boundary, they might feel embarrassed or frustrated. Normalize these feelings and let them know their reactions are valid – and that, ultimately, they deserve to have their boundaries respected and should give the same respect to their friends and/or romantic partners.

Practicing consent goes hand in hand with respect, but that doesn't mean it's an intuitive process. At One Love, we like using the **FRIES** model to teach consent. Consent should be: **F**reely given, **R**eversible, **I**nformed, **E**nthusiastic, and **S**pecific.

Freely Given: Consent should be given without force, manipulation or pressure, and when not under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Reversible: Anyone can change their mind at about whether or not they consent to something.

Informed: You should have the full picture of what you are consenting to – otherwise, it's not consent.

Enthusiastic: You should feel genuinely interested in or curious about doing something, not begrudged.

Being enthusiastic looks different for different people—it's not necessarily about being excited or jumping for joy – it could look like curiosity. What is important is that it is authentic to the person and how they engage in activity.

Specific: Agreeing to one activity does not mean you also agree to similar activities or the same activity with a different person or in a different situation.

We highly recommend using the media to start conversations about consent! TV shows don't often show the full conversation or interaction leading up to moments of consent, but you can practice spotting each element of FRIES on screen.



MAKE A PLAN

Write down two ways you can integrate boundaries and consent into conversation with your teen. In particular, consider how you would explain what consent means in your own words.

For example:

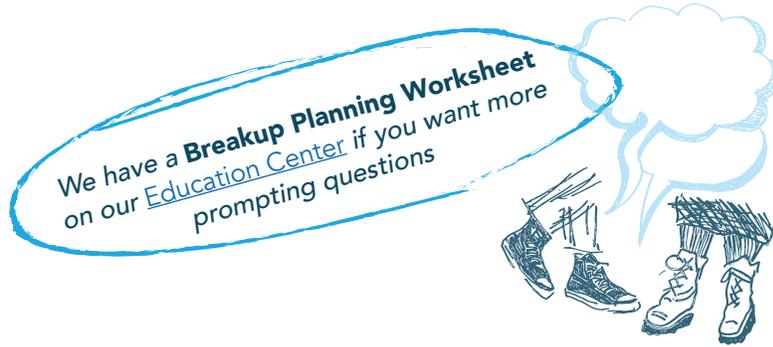
I will talk about communication boundaries the next time my teen complains that their best friend texted them too much over the weekend.

I will remind my teen about the FRIES model the next time he goes on a date with his boyfriend.

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How can I help support my teen through the end of a relationship?

Whether your teen is ending a friendship or a romantic relationship – or if they are on the receiving end of a breakup - it can be difficult and emotional to navigate. Maybe you've been rooting for the relationship the entire time, and the breakup has caught you by surprise. Maybe you've been hoping for the relationship to end since it began! Or, maybe you didn't even know there was a relationship! Anyway, as a parent or caregiver you never want to see your teen in pain, so watching your teen experience a breakup is challenging.



If you sense a breakup **before** the relationship ends, talk to your teen before they end the relationship. You can help them identify friends and trusted adults to support them during the breakup. Make a basic plan for how they want to end the relationship – think when, where, and how. Together, think through the boundaries they want to maintain post-relationship – will they

- Unfollow this person on social media or do they want to block them?
- Feel comfortable hanging out with this person in groups? One-on-one?

If the relationship that your teen is ending is an unhealthy or abusive one, consider reaching out to a professional for extra support. The most dangerous time in an unhealthy or abusive relationship is during and post-breakup, because a partner can feel as if they are losing control. A professional can help create a safety plan, which is a personalized strategy for breaking up that involves looping in other people like friends, family members, school resources, or other trained professionals. Check out the Appendix for a list of our trusted partners.

Even if you feel very strongly about your teen’s relationship being unhealthy, telling them to “just break up with her” or “just stop being friends with them” is likely going to have the opposite effect. This kind of directive or pressure can also cause your teen to leave you out of the loop about that particular relationship. They will likely feel judged or like the only advice you will offer is to “just end it.” At the end of the day, your teen will make their own decision, regardless of what you say!

The best way to ensure their safety (both physical and emotional) is by being a safe person who is there to listen first, not just tell them what to do.

Stick to neutral language that acknowledges their feelings, normalizes their experiences, and allows them to determine how much (or how little) to share:

instead of saying this...	... say that
“I can’t believe the way Tyler is treating you in this breakup. I told you he wasn’t a good boyfriend.”	“I know breaking up with Tyler has been really hard. All you can do is focus on doing what’s best for you right now. How can you take care of yourself right now? Is there anything I can do to help?”
“I don’t want you to hang out with Aisha anymore - she’s really not a good friend or a good influence on you.”	“It’s totally okay to step back from your friendship with Aisha if you need to – but that doesn’t mean it’s easy! Make sure you’re taking care of yourself, okay?”
“Why are you worried about how Camilo is feeling? You just need to rip the band-aid off and end things with him.”	“It really does suck to feel rejected – it’s so hard! It’s something that everyone goes through. I’m really proud of you for telling Camilo how you were feeling about them, and being so honest.”

MAKE A PLAN

Of course, you might not always know ahead of time that a breakup is on the horizon - or what the outcome will be. Whether that's because your teen is broken up with suddenly, or because your teen decides not to break up with their partner and continue working on the relationship, this unpredictability means you need to weave the topic of navigating endings into your conversations about healthy and unhealthy relationships.

Brainstorm two ways you can talk about ending relationships safely in a conversation with your teen.

For example:

I will remind my teen that you can break up with someone for any reason the next time we watch an episode of The Bachelorette together.

I will ask my teen about the importance of making a break-up plan when she updates me about her best friend's difficult break-up.

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What if one of my teen's friends needs help with an unhealthy relationship?

Over the course of this guide, you've learned a lot about what it takes to be a good support to your teen. All of these skills are equally important for your teen to use when supporting friends in unhealthy relationships. Remind your teen to listen to their friend without judgment and to ask open-ended questions. Encourage them to set their own boundaries around the time and support they offer to their friend.

Depending on your relationship with your teen and their friends, this friend may view you as a trusted adult, and may come to you directly for advice or support. Acknowledge how powerful and meaningful it is that they trust you, and treat them as you would your own teen—with kindness, care, and respect.



In the same way that you would honor your own teen’s privacy, be mindful of what and how you share about what their friends may share with you in confidence. If they are coming to you for advice or guidance about a relationship, there might be a reason. Whenever possible, ask their permission before sharing information about their relationship with others. There is always an exception if you’re worried about their physical safety!

You may not have a strong relationship with your teen’s friend, and that’s okay too. You can still coach and support your teen to be a kind and caring support system. Make sure they know they can always count on your help, as well as any number of national and local resources.

If you’re concerned about another teen’s safety, please reach out to a professional resource for guidance and support.

MAKE A PLAN

Take a look at the resources in the appendix. Identify three places you could reach out to for help if you or your teen want to support someone else in an unhealthy relationship.

1

2

3

I’ve read everything and talked to my teen... now what?

The work you’ve done with your teen will set them up to be able to distinguish the difference between healthy and unhealthy behaviors in friendships and romantic relationships. This is worth celebrating – and it’s also just the start. Every relationship is different, and your teen is likely going to have many more over the course of the next few years. They will continue to need your guidance and support as they navigate ever more complicated and nuanced situations. Just like we’ve only scratched the surface in this guide, there’s always more conversations to come with your teen – both of you have lots of learning and experiencing to do.

If your teen is struggling with an unhealthy relationship, they may be continuing to face unhealthy relationship behaviors from others and engaging in unhealthy behaviors themselves – these conversations are a long game. Be creative with your strategies and do not give up! You never know what strategy will make a difference, which angle you need to take, or which conversation will be the one that sticks.

So you're saying this is just going to keep going on forever? I already feel stressed/exhausted/overwhelmed! What do I do if I need more support?

Don't forget to continue leaning on *your* trusted adults and resources as you continue having challenging and important conversations with your teen. Helping your teen navigate healthy and unhealthy relationships is a lifelong process, and you will continue to need support as they grow, change, and have new experiences.

Don't forget to check out the resilience practices at the end of this guide!

Consider sharing this guide with some of the other trusted adults in your teen's life – grandparents, family friends, neighbors, coaches, etc. Sometimes, hearing something from your parents is easy to dismiss – but hearing it from someone else might really make it sink in.

MAKE A PLAN

Think about the other adults in your teen's life who they trust, look up to, and seek out for support. Identify three adults you want to share this guide with and encourage them to have conversations about healthy and unhealthy relationships with your teen.

1

2

3

We also encourage you to continue coming back to this guide, the resources in the appendix, and our full library of One Love films as you and your teen continue to have conversations about healthy and unhealthy relationships. Our One Love community consists of students, parents, and educators – we would love you to join us for further trainings, workshops, or community events, so please stay in touch!



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APPENDIX ONE: DEEP DIVE INTO THE 10 SIGNS

What are some examples of healthy relationship behaviors?

While you read through the 10 Signs of a Healthy Relationship, think about how you experience and model these behaviors in your own relationships – romantic relationships, friendships, and your relationship with your teen. We provided a few examples to help!

A note: These are not hard and fast rules—similar behaviors may be healthy in some relationships and unhealthy in others. What’s important is that both people feel safe and cared for in the scenario.

Comfortable Pace	
<p>The relationship moves at a speed that feels enjoyable for each person. It’s normal to want to spend a lot of time with someone when you first meet them, but it’s important that you’re both on the same page with how the relationship is moving. In a healthy relationship, you’re not rushed or pressured in a way that makes you feel overwhelmed.</p>	
<p>Some examples of Comfortable Pace you might notice in your teen’s relationships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Spending time together and making time for their own needs and interests → Your teen giving their sibling space after they have an argument to rebuild or heal → A friend respecting your teen’s timeline in the coming out process 	<p>Other examples of Comfortable Pace that might be happening behind the scenes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Asking for consent before/during physical intimacy → Meeting up in public places or in group settings for the first few dates before spending time alone

Trust	
<p>Confidence that your partner won’t do anything to hurt you or ruin the relationship. In a healthy relationship, you don’t have to question the other person’s intentions or whether they have your back. They respect your privacy and would never put you through a “test” to prove your loyalty.</p>	
<p>Some examples of Trust you might notice in your teen’s relationships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Feeling comfortable that having their location shared is for emergencies, not to micromanage, “spy,” or “catch” them → Asking for advice without fear of judgment 	<p>Some examples of Trust that might be happening behind the scenes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Confiding in their partner without fear that the information will be spread → Not worrying that text messages will be screenshotted and shared without permission

Honesty

You can be truthful and candid without fearing how the other person will respond. In a healthy relationship, you should feel like you can share the full truth about your life and feelings with each other – you will never have to hide things. They may not like what you have to say, but will respond to disappointing news in a considerate way.

Some examples of **Honesty** you might notice in your teen's relationships:

- Sharing their opinions about another friend's new relationship while still being kind
- Speaking up about date night activities or social outings that feel uncomfortable and finding ways to meet in the middle.

Some examples of **Honesty** that might be happening behind the scenes:

- Letting a new partner know that they don't feel chemistry instead of leading them on or ghosting them
- Sharing their plans to hang out with a different group of friends instead of hiding it

Independence

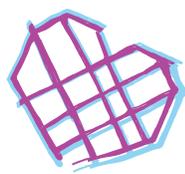
You have space to be yourself outside of the relationship. The other person should be supportive of your hobbies and your relationships with other friends, family and coworkers. The other person does not need to know or be involved in every part of your life. Having independence means being free to do you and giving your partner that same freedom.

Some examples of **Independence** you might notice in your teen's relationships:

- Maintaining separate friend groups, while still spending quality time together
- Posting photos online both with and without their partner
- Choosing a college on their own, not based on where a friend or partner is choosing to attend

Some examples of **Independence** that might be happening behind the scenes:

- Signing up for different electives to pursue their own interests
- Not knowing what their partner is doing all the time, and being comfortable with it
- Choosing not to work on a group project together to help them focus



Having independence means being free to do you and giving your partner that same freedom



Respect

You value one another's beliefs and opinions, and love one another for who you are as a person. You feel comfortable setting boundaries and are confident that the other person will respect those boundaries. They cheer for you when you achieve something, support your hard work and dreams, and appreciate you.

Some examples of **Respect** you might notice in your teen's relationships:

- Asking before posting or tagging photos of someone online
- Avoiding the use of stereotypes based on identity (race, age, gender identity, etc.)—jokes are only funny if everyone is in on them!
- Using a friend's correct gender pronouns and name.

Some examples of **Respect** that might be happening behind the scenes:

- Your teen and their partner regularly discuss and respond to each other's boundaries
- Handling rejection in a healthy way; not sending hurtful messages in response

Equality

The relationship feels balanced and everyone puts the same effort into the success of the relationship. You don't let one person's preferences and opinions dominate, and instead, you hear each other out and make compromises when you don't want the same thing. You feel like your needs, wishes and interests are just as important as the other person's. Sometimes you might put in more (money, time, emotional support) than your partner, and vice versa, but the outcome always feels equitable and even.

Some examples of **Equality** you might notice in your teen's relationships:

- Taking turns choosing weekend activity plans, or what movies to watch
- Splitting costs in a way that feels comfortable for everyone—for example, if one person always drives, the other may pitch in for gas.
- Balancing time with each other's families

Some examples of **Equality** that might be happening behind the scenes:

- One person doesn't feel like they always have to text first to start the conversation
- Agreeing on how to handle gifts together so both people can feel appreciated



You value one another's beliefs and opinions, and love one another for who you are as a person

Kindness

You are caring and empathetic to one another, and provide comfort and support. In a healthy relationship, the other person will do things that they know will make you happy. Kindness should be a two-way street—it's given and returned in your relationship. You show compassion for the other person and the things they care about.

Some examples of **Kindness** you might notice in your teen's relationships:

- Showing compassion to their sibling when they stain a shirt they borrowed
- Staying late to help a friend or partner study for a big exam
- Communicating their love and acceptance for a friend going through a transition in gender expression or identity.

Some examples of **Kindness** that might be happening behind the scenes:

- Decorating a friend or partner's locker for their birthday
- Practicing active listening when spending time with your teen – they aren't on their phone or distracted

Taking Responsibility

Owning your actions and words. You avoid placing blame and can admit when you make a mistake. You genuinely apologize when you've done something wrong and continually try to make positive changes to better the relationship and yourself. You can take ownership for the impact your words or behavior had, even if it wasn't your intention.

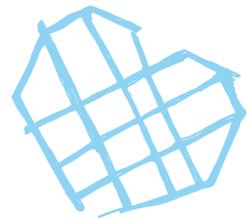
Some examples of **Taking Responsibility** you might notice in your teen's relationships:

- Apologizing for leaving a friend out of a group event, even if it was unintentional
- Recognizing that they let their temper get out of control without blaming the other person for "making them" respond that way

Some examples of **Taking Responsibility** that might be happening behind the scenes:

- Owning their role in a miscommunication over text or DM
- Listening respectfully when a partner shares that their feelings are hurt

You can take ownership for the impact your words or behavior had, even if it wasn't your intention.



Healthy Conflict

Openly and respectfully discussing issues and confronting disagreements non-judgmentally. Conflict is a normal and expected part of any relationship. Everyone has disagreements, and that's OK! Healthy conflict is recognizing the root issue and addressing it respectfully before it escalates into something bigger. No one should belittle or yell during an argument.

Some examples of **Healthy Conflict** you might notice in your teen's relationships:

- Expressing that they need a break from an emotional conversation
- Bringing up an issue the first time it bothers them, rather than letting it build up and cause resentment

Some examples of **Healthy Conflict** that might be happening behind the scenes:

- Remaining kind and respectful while disagreeing about who's family to spend time with over the weekend
- Listening to the other person while they express their opinion without interrupting to respond

Fun

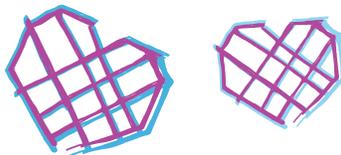
You enjoy spending time together and you bring out the best in each other. A healthy relationship should feel easy and make you happy. You can let loose, laugh together, and be yourselves — the relationship doesn't bring your mood down but cheers you up. No relationship is fun 100% of the time, but the good times should outweigh the bad.

Some examples of **Fun** you might notice in your teen's relationships:

- Smiling and laughing while texting or talking on the phone with their friend or partner
- Doing activities that your teen and their partner both enjoy

Some examples of **Fun** that might be happening behind the scenes:

- Sending funny TikToks or Reels that remind them of their friend or partner
- Planning a surprise to celebrate a big test or project being done



A healthy relationship should feel easy and make you happy.

What are some examples of unhealthy relationship behaviors?

Intensity

When someone expresses very extreme feelings and over-the-top behavior that feels overwhelming.

Some examples of **Intensity** you might notice in your teen's relationships:

- Calling multiple times a day or texting constantly, especially late or during dinner
- Calling a new friend their "best friend" just a few days after meeting

Some examples of **Intensity** that might be happening behind the scenes:

- Sudden changes in plans—a new partner expects them drop everything to come to a basketball game last minute
- A quick profile picture change: Insisting that they change their profile pictures to include each other after dating for only a week

Possessiveness

When someone is jealous to a point where they try to control who you spend time with and what you do.

Some examples of **Possessiveness** you might notice in your teen's relationships:

- Your teen's friend tagging along with them to every hangout, family event, or club meeting – even if they weren't invited
- Being on their phone a lot, trying to keep up with their partner's frequent texts asking where they are and who they're with

Some examples of **Possessiveness** that might be happening behind the scenes:

- Quitting the school play—it turns out that her boyfriend told her to do it because she'll be dancing with another male student as part of her big number
- Reluctantly sharing their location—his new boyfriend demanded he share as a sign of "trust", but didn't share it back



Manipulation

When someone tries to control your decisions, actions, or emotions.

Some examples of **Manipulation** you might notice in your teen's relationships:

- Demanding they share passwords for social media accounts, insisting "what do you have to hide?"
- Intentionally not inviting someone to a birthday party, and then posting pictures to showcase who was there to make them feel left out

Some examples of **Manipulation** that might be happening behind the scenes:

- "It's no big deal"—dismissing someone's feelings after violating a boundary, leading to them feeling like that boundary doesn't matter
- Checking his phone, but not reading or sending any messages—his girlfriend is giving him the silent treatment to get him to agree to go on the school trip

Isolation

When someone keeps you away from friends, family, or other people.

Some examples of **Isolation** you might notice in your teen's relationships:

- You used to see your teen hanging out with lots of friends, but they never seem to hang out with anyone else now that they have a new girlfriend
- Looking to their partner before committing to join family dinner

Some examples of **Isolation** that might be happening behind the scenes:

- Change in social media behavior-- demanding that they block specific people on social media
- Making excuses not to do things they used to love—their partner may be insisting they quit a team or activity

Sabotage

When someone purposefully ruins your reputation, achievements, or success.

Some examples of **Sabotage** you might notice in your teen's relationships:

- Starting rumors online about a friend
- Logging in to someone else's social media accounts or email to delete messages
- Outing someone (sharing their LGBTQ+ identity) to their family before they're ready

Some examples of **Sabotage** that might be happening behind the scenes:

- Change in academic performance—your son's girlfriend is convincing him that he shouldn't study for a test because it isn't "cool"
- Secretly screenshotting and sharing messages without permission to embarrass someone



Belittling

When someone does and says things to make you feel bad about yourself.

Some examples of **Belittling** you might notice in your teen's relationships:

- Telling him that he isn't smart enough to get into his dream school, and that he should go to community college with her instead.
- Leaving comments on several Instagram photos pointing out flaws in her makeup, outfits, and hair.

Some examples of **Belittling** that might be happening behind the scenes:

- Sudden change in appearance—your daughter used wear her favorite tee-shirt all the time, but stops after her friends make fun of it
- Self-deprecation—someone who experiences a lot of belittling from a friend or partner may start to belittle themselves preemptively to try to make it hurt less

Guilt

When someone makes you feel responsible for their actions or makes you feel like it's your job to keep them happy.

Some examples of **Guilt** you might notice in your teen's relationships:

- A friend using their personal struggles or mental health to make your daughter feel bad when she is feeling happy and healthy
- Leaving comments on your son's social media that make him feel "less bisexual" for dating a woman in the past

Some examples of **Guilt** that might be happening behind the scenes:

- Unwanted pressure—sending someone explicit photos with the expectation that they'll send them back
- Sudden fear for their partner's safety—someone may threaten self-harm as a way to prevent a breakup

Volatility

When someone's strong, unpredictable reaction makes you feel scared, confused, or intimidated.

Some examples of **Volatility** you might notice in your teen's relationships:

- Bursting into tears, or expressing extreme despair, when confronted about negative or unhealthy behaviors
- Cautiously answering the phone—your son seems "walk on eggshells" around his girlfriend.

Some examples of **Volatility** that might be happening behind the scenes:

- Flinching—your daughter's boyfriend reacts violently by throwing and breaking things during their arguments
- Giving someone the silent treatment immediately following a heated argument



Deflecting Responsibility

When someone repeatedly makes excuses for their unhealthy behavior.

Some examples of **Deflecting Responsibility** you might notice in your teen's relationships:

- Saying things like "It's not my fault she's upset!" or "I'm doing the best I can!" instead of apologizing and taking accountability to change her behavior
- Including "but" in every apology, attempting to make excuses for their actions

Some examples of **Deflecting Responsibility** that might be happening behind the scenes:

- Justifying erratic behavior due to having "a bad day"
- Overly apologetic—their partner has made them believe that everything is their fault, so they start apologizing for things they didn't do out of habit

Betrayal

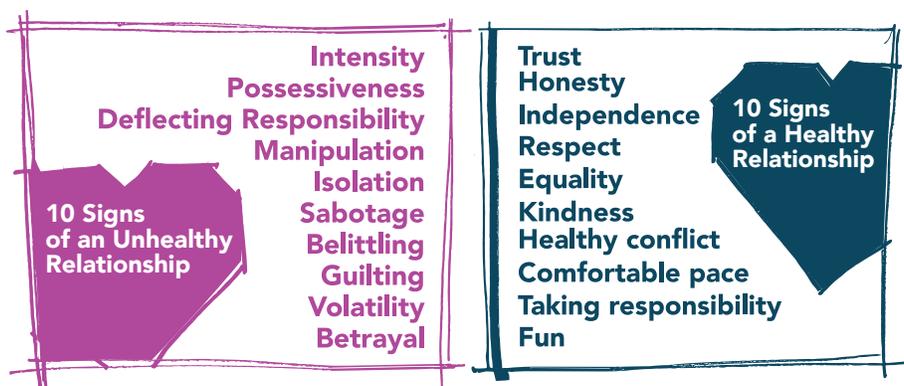
When someone is disloyal or acts in an intentionally dishonest way.

Some examples of **Betrayal** you might notice in your teen's relationships:

- Sharing a private story about a friend with another friend without permission.
- Trying out for the same role in the school play as their best friend—without telling them

Some examples of **Betrayal** that might be happening behind the scenes:

- Hiding their phone—messaging their ex while in a new relationship
- Change in spending habits—using someone's credit or debit card without permission can lead them to suddenly being unable to afford to eat at restaurants they used to go to



APPENDIX TWO:
CONVERSATION STARTERS

How can I bring up the 10 Signs of a Healthy and Unhealthy Relationship with my teen?

Every situation and every teen is going to be different – but here are some examples that might help you get started.

Example	Why This Works
<i>Hey, I overheard you and Jamie working through a disagreement during carpool this morning. It seemed like a great example of healthy conflict.</i>	Sometimes, asking your teenager direct questions can feel like an attack – even when you’re talking about something positive! These kind of offhand observations shows your teen you’re paying attention, but takes the pressure off their response.
<i>Wow, I really feel like the main characters acted super volatile towards each other in that episode. What do you think?</i>	Leaning on an experience you shared with your teenager can give you common ground to build on, and in-the-moment feedback brings immediacy to the conversation.
<i>I’m really sorry for running late to pick you up this afternoon. It’s really important for me that I take responsibility when I mess up. How can I fix this?</i>	Make the ten healthy signs real – not just theoretical.
<i>That reminds me of that movie we watched the other week, when those friends went off and did their own thing for the summer, then came back and reconnected. I think that kind of independence is so important in friendships – what do you think?</i>	Talking about something low stakes, like a movie or an episode of TV, can be easier than bringing up real-life relationships.
<i>Are you around tomorrow afternoon? I just saw this video about the difference between unhealthy and abusive relationships and wanted to share it with you.</i>	Some kids really take to this direct approach! Teenagers are good at detecting when you’re authentic or when you’re trying to couch your message in something else. Being straightforward helps to build trust and respect in your relationship with your teen.

If you notice something in your teen’s friendships or relationships that worries you, it’s better to bring it up than to say nothing at all. Short, simple conversations about healthy and unhealthy relationships can make a substantial impact in your teen’s life.

APPENDIX THREE: FURTHER RESOURCES

Crisis Hotlines

As you have conversations with your teen, you may realize they need professional support right now. These resources are staffed 24/7 with advocates who can support them (and you!)

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

- The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices.
- Tips/resources for young people related to suicide prevention and mental health support.
<https://988lifeline.org/help-yourself/youth/>

Love is Respect

- Love is Respect is the national resource to disrupt and prevent unhealthy relationships and intimate partner violence by empowering young people through inclusive and equitable education, support, and resources.
<https://www.loveisrespect.org/> or text **LOVEIS** to **22522**

National Domestic Violence Hotline

- The National Domestic Violence Hotline is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, and provides tools and support to survivors of domestic violence.
<https://www.thehotline.org/> call **800-799-7233** or text **BEGIN** to **88788**

Safe Place

- Safe Place is a national youth outreach and prevention program for young people under 18 in need of immediate help and safety. Young people can text the word “safe” and their current location (city/state/zip) to 4HELP (443567).
<https://www.nationalsafeplace.org/txt-4-help>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

- SAMHSA runs a National Helpline, a free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a-year treatment referral and information services (in English and Spanish) for individuals and families facing mental and/or substance use disorders.
<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline> or call **1-800-662-HELP**

The Trevor Project

- The Trevor Project has a 24/7 hotline to support LGBTQ+ youth.
<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help/>

Trans Lifeline

- Trans Lifeline's Hotline is a peer support phone service run by trans people for trans and questioning peers.
<https://translifeline.org/hotline/>

Mental Health/Suicide Prevention/Substance Use

Meeting your teen's mental health needs is a huge step towards supporting their healthy relationships – and serious mental health challenges can be a big barrier to healthy relationships. These resources offer guidance and support if your teen has any acute mental health needs, is dealing with substance use issues, or is in crisis.

American Psychological Association (APA)

Talking to Teens: Suicide Prevention

- APA is the leading scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States, with more than 157,000 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants, and students as its members. APA's mission is to promote the advancement, communication, and application of psychological science and knowledge to benefit society and improve lives.
- Tools and resources to help prevent youth suicide.
<https://www.apa.org/topics/suicide/prevention-teens>

Asian Mental Health Collective

- AMHC aspires to make mental health easily available, approachable, and accessible to Asian communities worldwide.
<https://www.asianmhc.org/>

Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

Connecting Conversations

- Tips for supporting communication between parents/caregivers and their children/teens.
<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/back-to-school/connecting-conversations.html>

healthychildren.org

Suicide Prevention: 12 Things Parents Can Do

- Healthychildren.org is the American Academy of Pediatrics parenting website.
- Tips for parents and caregivers, as well as videos and other resources.

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/emotional-problems/Pages/ten-things-parents-can-do-to-prevent-suicide.aspx>

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

Resources for Kids, Teens, and Young Adults

- NAMI is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. This page is a compilation of information and resources intended to help young people get the mental health support they need.

<https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Kids-Teens-and-Young-Adults>

National Association for School Psychologists

Preventing Youth Suicide: Tips for Parents & Educators

- The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) represents and supports the profession of school psychology by advancing effective practices to improve students' learning, behavior and mental health and maintaining essential standards for ethics and practice.
- This page is a collection of risk/resilience factors and warning signs of youth suicide, as well concrete tips for parents/caregivers.

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-safety-and-crisis/mental-health-resources/preventing-youth-suicide/preventing-youth-suicide-tips-for-parents-and-educators>

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)

Digital Shareables on Child and Adolescent Mental Health

- NIMH is the lead federal agency for research on mental illnesses. The mission of NIMH is to transform the understanding and treatment of mental illnesses through basic and clinical research, paving the way for prevention, recovery, and cure. This page is a collection of information and materials about children's mental health and early diagnosis and treatment based on the latest research.

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/get-involved/digital-shareables/shareable-resources-on-child-and-adolescent-mental-health>



National Queer and Trans Therapists of Color Network (NQTTCN)

- NQTTCN is a healing justice organization actively working to transform mental health for queer and trans Black, Indigenous and People of Color.

<https://nqttcn.com/en/>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Behavioral Health Resources for Youth

- SAMHSA's mission is to lead public health and service delivery efforts that promote mental health, prevent substance misuse, and provide treatments and supports to foster recovery while ensuring equitable access and better outcomes. Their "Talk. They Hear You." campaign has the goal of helping parents, caregivers, educators, and community members get informed, be prepared, and take action to prevent underage drinking and other substance use.
- SAMHSA also runs a National Helpline, a free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a-year treatment referral and information services (in English and Spanish) for individuals and families facing mental and/or substance use disorders.

<https://www.samhsa.gov/talk-they-hear-you>

1-800-662-HELP

Teen Talk App

- Teen Talk App provides a free, anonymous, safe space for teens to request support from trained peers and learn from others with similar experiences.

<https://www.teentalkapp.org/>

The Trevor Project

- The Trevor Project's mission is to end suicide among LGBTQ young people.

<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>

Supporting LGBTQIA+ Teens

LGBTQIA+ young people have unique relationship needs, strengths, and challenges. These resources for both teens and parents/caregivers provide invaluable support and information.

Family Acceptance Project

- The Family Acceptance Project is a research, intervention, education, and policy initiative to prevent health and mental health risks and to promote well-being for LGBTQ children and youth, including suicide, homelessness, drug use, and HIV – in the context of their families, cultures, and faith communities.

<https://familyproject.sfsu.edu/>



Gender Spectrum

- Gender Spectrum's mission is to create a gender-inclusive world for all children and youth. The organization helps families, organizations, and institutions increase their understanding of gender.

<https://www.genderspectrum.org/>

HealthyChildren.org

- Healthychildren.org is the American Academy of Pediatrics parenting website.

Coming Out: Information for Parents of LGBTQ Teens

- Tips for engaging, communicating with, and supporting teens through their coming out process.

https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/dating-sex/Pages/Four-Stages-of-Coming-Out.aspx?_gl=1*1ocu69q*_ga*MTAzMjE3MzkzOC4xNzA2NjUwODM1*_ga_FD9D3XZVQQ*MTcwNjY1MDgzNC4xLjAuMTcwNjY1MDgzNC4wLjAuMA

Gender-Diverse and Transgender Children

- Tips, resources, and key terminology provided by a board-certified pediatrician and a parent to gender-diverse teenagers.

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/gradeschool/Pages/gender-diverse-transgender-children.aspx>

Parenting a Gender-Diverse Child: Hard Questions Answered

- FAQ for parents by a board-certified pediatrician.

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/gradeschool/Pages/parenting-a-gender-diverse-child-hard-questions-answered.aspx>

imi

- imi offers a series of guides, designed with and for LGBTQ+ teens, to help explore and affirm their identity. It's free, backed by science, and helps teens learn practical methods to cope with sexual and gender minority stress in ways that are helpful, relevant, inclusive, and joyful.

<https://imi.guide/>

LGBT National Help Center

- The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) National Help Center provides vital peer support, community connections, and resource information through helplines and online chatrooms for LGBT youth and adults.

<https://lgbthotline.org/youthchatrooms/>

PFLAG

- PFLAG is the nation's largest organization dedicated to supporting, education, and advocating for LGBTQ+ people and those who love them.

<https://pflag.org/>

Q Chat Space

- Q Chat Space aims to help LGBTQ+ and questioning teens ages 13-19 find community and connect with peers in a supportive environment that encourages them to feel pride in their identity and buoys their mental well-being, all of which is too often missing from their lives. These goals are achieved through providing live, chat-based discussion groups, facilitated by experienced staff and volunteers from youth programs at LGBTQ+ centers across the United States.

<https://www.qchatspace.org/>

Supporting BIPOC Teens

Your teen's racial and cultural identity may greatly impact their beliefs, values, and behaviors related to healthy relationships. Check out these resources for more specific support regarding their unique needs.

MANA

- MANA is a national grassroots membership organization, whose mission is to empower Latinas through leadership development, community service, and advocacy.

<https://www.hermana.org/>

Pretty Brown Girl

- Pretty Brown Girl's mission is to empower Black and Brown girls while encouraging self-acceptance by cultivating social, emotional & intellectual well-being.

<https://prettybrowngirl.com/>

We R Native

- We R Native is a comprehensive health resource for Native youth, by Native youth, providing content and stories about the topics that matter most to them. We R Native strives to promote holistic health and positive growth in both local communities and the nation at large.

<https://www.wernative.org/>



The Aakoma Project

- AAKOMA believes in meeting the mental health needs of Youth of Color by raising consciousness among individuals, providing accessible tools for ongoing management, and changing systems to receive youth and provide better care.

<https://aakomaproject.org/>

Sexual Health/Education

Sex may or may not be a part of your teen’s romantic relationships right now – but educating yourself as a parent/caregiver about sexual health can help prepare you for any current or future challenges or concerns.

American Sexual Health Association (ASHA)

- ASHA empowers individuals, families, and communities to achieve sexually healthy lives through education and advocacy.

<https://www.ashasexualhealth.org/>

Center for Young Women’s Health

- The Center for Young Women’s Health is an award-winning website for young women and members of gender minorities around the world. This site includes answers to common health questions and health guides on a variety of topics.

<https://youngwomenshealth.org/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Reproductive Health: Teen Pregnancy

- This web page was designed by teens, for teens, and includes resources about sexual health and healthy relationships.

<https://www.cdc.gov/teenpregnancy/teens/>

Go Ask Alice!

- The Go Ask Alice! site is supported by a team of Columbia University health promotion specialists, health care providers, and other health professionals, along with a staff of information and research specialists and writers. Users can search previously answered questions or ask a specific question related to Alcohol & Other Drugs, Emotional health, Nutrition/ Physical Activity, General Health, Relationships, or Sexual & Reproductive Health.

<https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/>

HealthyChildren.org

Dating & Sex

- A list of articles written by pediatricians about sexual health, healthy relationships, and more.

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/dating-sex>

iwannaknow.org

- iwannaknow.org offers information on sexual health for teens and young adults, including facts, support, and resources about sexual health, sexually transmitted infections, and healthy relationships.

<https://www.iwannaknow.org/>

Planned Parenthood

For Teens

- Resources for young people about sexual health, STDs, puberty, healthy relationships, and more.

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/teens>

SafeTeens.org

- SafeTeens.org provides resources for young people and their parents about Sex, Pregnancy, & STD's, Relationships, Health & Wellness, and LGBTQ+ issues.

<https://safeteens.org/>

Scarleteen

- Scarleteen contains nearly 12,000 web pages of original comprehensive sexuality, health, and relationships articles; guides, factsheets, and in-depth advice answers; extensive external resource lists; and a regularly updated blog. Scarleteen also has message boards and a text/SMS service for direct support and can make user referrals to other healthcare services.

<https://www.scarleteen.com/>

Sex, etc.

- Sexetc.org provides comprehensive sex ed information to teens, including videos, a glossary of almost 400 terms, and first-person stories written by teen staff writers.

<https://sexetc.org/>



Young Men's Health

- Young Men's Health is produced by the Division of Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine at Boston Children's Hospital. The purpose of the website is to provide carefully researched health information to teenage boys and young men.

<https://youngmenshealthsite.org/>

Relationship Violence

We never want our teens to face relationship violence or abuse, but preparing ourselves as parents/caregivers means we'll be ready to support our teens even in the worst-case scenarios.

Centers for Disease Control

Teen Dating Violence

- A series of FAQs about Teen Dating Violence along with statistics, tips for prevention, and additional resources.

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/teendatingviolence/fastfact.html>

Futures Without Violence

How to Talk to Teens About Dating Violence

- Futures Without Violence provides programming, policies, and campaigns that empower individuals and organizations working to end violence against women and children around the world. This article includes a variety of tips, warning signs, and resources for parents related to teen dating violence.

<https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/talk-teens-teen-dating-violence/>

National Center for Victims of Crime

- The National Center for Victims of Crime is a nonprofit organization that advocates for victims' rights, trains professionals who work with victims, and serves as a trusted source of information on victims' issues.

<https://victimsofcrime.org/>

National Sexual Violence Resource Center

Teen Dating Violence Prevention Resources

- Statistics and resources for parents, caregivers, and youth about teen dating violence.

<https://www.nsvrc.org/blogs/teen-dating-violence-prevention-resources-2023-update>



Safe Place

- Safe Place is a national youth outreach and prevention program for young people under the age of 18 in need of immediate help and safety. Young people can text the word “safe” and their current location (city/state/zip) to 4HELP (443567).

<https://www.nationalsafeplace.org/>

Teen Dating Violence Month

- The month of February is “National Teen Dating Violence Prevention and Awareness Week.” This site offers resources for youth, adults, and communities interested in learning more about teen dating violence.

<https://www.teendvmonth.org/resources/>

U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs

Teen Dating Violence: Special Feature

- A list of statistics, basic information, warning signs, resources, and research about teen dating violence.

<https://ojp.gov/feature/teen-dating-violence/overview>

Bullying

One Love’s resources don’t directly address bullying, but there are many awesome resources and organizations that can help you support your teen if they are facing bullying at school, online, or elsewhere in their lives.

American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

Bullying Resource Center

- The mission of AACAP is to promote the healthy development of children, adolescents, and families through advocacy, education, and research, and to meet the professional needs of child and adolescent psychiatrists throughout their careers. Their bullying resource center covers key facts about bullying, frequently asked questions, book recommendations, and tips for seeking help.

https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Resource_Centers/Bullying_Resource_Center/Home.aspx

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Bullying

- Videos, FAQs, statistics, and prevention tips for parents, caregivers, and youth.

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/bullyingresearch/fastfact.html>

National Association of People Against Bullying

- NAPAB provides direct anti-bullying services, education, and support to students, families, and school administrators. They facilitate a crisis line (1-800-273-TALK) and sponsor Cool 2 B Kind Anti-Bullying Clubs in schools.

<https://www.napab.org/>

PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center

- PACER provides innovative resources for students, parents, educators, and others, and recognizes bullying as a serious community issue that impacts education, physical and emotional health, and the safety and well-being of students.

<https://www.pacer.org/bullying/>

STOMP Out Bullying

- STOMP Out Bullying is a nonprofit organization working to reduce and prevent bullying, cyberbullying and other digital abuse; educate against homophobia, LGBTQ+ discrimination, racism, and hatred; and deter violence in schools, online, and in communities across the country.

<https://www.stompoutbullying.org/>

StopBullying.gov

- StopBullying.Gov provides information from various government agencies on what bullying is, what cyberbullying is, who is at risk, and how you can prevent and respond to bullying.

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/>

Teen Truth

- Teen Truth leads assemblies, leadership summits, and mentorship programs in schools to support teen mental health. This page provides tips for promoting anti-bullying programs in schools.

<https://teentruth.net/best-ways-promote-anti-bullying-school/>

APPENDIX FOUR:

RESILIENCE PRACTICES

What is a resilience practice?

A resilience practice is an activity that helps you calm your nervous system and regulate your emotions when you're feeling angry, anxious, sad, or scared. Resilience practices can help you stay calm, present, and engaged – whether in conversation with your teen, or in your own personal reflection and learning.

Some examples of resilience practices include^{24,25}:

- Mindfulness practices like deep breathing or progressive muscle relaxation.
- Get outside – take a walk, or just a few breaths of fresh air.
- Move your body in a way that feels good to you, like dancing, strength-training, or running.
- Get in touch with your senses – splash cold water on your face, or hold a warm cup of coffee or tea.
- Write down an inspiring song lyric or quote to revisit during other challenging experiences.
- Practice gratitude by writing down three things you're grateful for.

Why should I use resilience practices?

Reflecting on your own relationships or discussing relationships with your teen can be difficult. These conversations can bring up all kinds of emotions and memories, and we can't always predict what our teens are going to say and how we're going to react. Using resilience practices can help us regulate our emotions so we can stay present in challenging conversations.

When do I use resilience practices?

We highly recommend you use resilience practices...

- Before and/or after completing self-reflection questions.
- Before and/or after you have a conversation with your teen about a healthy/unhealthy relationship.
- Whenever you are feeling challenged, uncomfortable, or upset – whether that's during your completion of this guide or during a conversation with your teen. It's likely you might also face feelings of rejection or embarrassment – teenagers usually don't willingly talk to their parents about this topic!

How can I teach resilience practices to my teen?

Modeling is a great place to start! Whenever you find yourself needing to use a resilience practice, name it out loud to your teen. Try something like, "You know what? I'm feeling really upset right



now. I'm going to go get some air." Then, after using the practice, you can talk through how it was helpful:

"Okay - I can feel that my heartbeat has slowed down, and my head feels clearer. I'm ready to come back to this conversation."

You can also check in with your teen if you've noticed them successfully (or unsuccessfully!) trying to regulate their own emotions:

"You really managed to keep your cool when your little sister was yelling at you this morning – how'd you manage that?"

or

"I could tell you were trying really hard to stay calm in that meeting with the principal, but just couldn't quite keep it together. I wonder if you'd be open to hearing some ideas about what to try next time?"

realVoices

"I see my parents going for walks, meditating, doing retail therapy, or just lying down for an hour or two. This is just such a normal part of their lives that it's helped me prioritize my own self-care!"

Chloe, age 15

What if I try using resilience practices but I still feel overwhelmed/stressed/frustrated?

Then it's time to assemble your team!

When we talk to young people about getting support from others, we call it the 3P's: Peers, Parents/Trusted Adults, and Professionals.

Even adults need the 3P's to make it through challenging moments and difficult conversations!

