

Sex, relationships and teenagers



TOP TEN TIPS
for parents and families

Parenting teenagers

Being a parent is not easy.

The teenage years can be particularly difficult, talking to your children about sex and relationships is far from easy, where do you start? Here are some **TIPS** which you may find helpful. Remember you are not alone, contact details of our partners' helplines are at the end of this booklet.

Spend time with them

Spend more time doing everyday things with them. Research shows



that this will make them far less likely to take risks with drink, drugs and sex - this is

the biggest thing you can do to support your teenager in sex and relationship issues.

Be truthful and honest

Don't try to hide any embarrassment or shock you may feel (they'll pick up on it anyway). Explain



how you feel and why. They may feel the same! If you don't know the answer to a question, say so - find out and let them know when you have, or perhaps you can find out together. Let your teenager know how you think and feel.

Reassurance

Reassure your teenager that they can come to talk with you whenever they



want or need to, tell them that you are always happy for them to ask you any questions. Remember - young people need facts, and guidance to help them make decisions, but they also need to be able to share their feelings and worries.

Your teenager's knowledge

Check out your teenager's knowledge and do ask them if they want to talk, for example, after a TV programme or film.

Talk to them about what they do and don't want in a relationship.

Reassure them

that sex should always be a choice and never a requirement.



Your relationship



Your relationship

with your

partner

is really

important

to your

teenager's

emotional and behavioural

well-being. Even if you are

not together your relationship

is still significant to them. Try

not to argue in front of them.

Information

An easy way to bring up the subject of sex is to leave appropriate books and leaflets about sexual health services around the house. You could use the leaflets as a way of raising the issue.



Share stories

Sharing stories from your teenage years, may help them understand where you are coming from as well as taking some of the pressure off them - but remember, the world has moved on since you were a teenager and young people today face a range of new challenging issues that you may never have had to deal with.



Teenage relationships

Peer pressure can lead young people to feel that they are the only person they know not having sex. Talk to your teenager and reassure them that this is not the case. Talk to them about the importance of waiting until they are in a positive, loving relationship.



Differing views

If they ask your opinion, explain it to them but let them know that



other people may have a different opinion. Take the time to explain the reasons for

certain beliefs or traditional practices. Although you might want them to share your view you should encourage them to make up their own minds.

Treat all questions seriously

Remember that how you answer questions will affect how comfortable they feel approaching you in the future to talk about sex - just because they ask a question about sex doesn't mean they are sexually active.



Where to find help:

Contact

0808 808 3555

Offers information, advice and support to parents and carers of children with any special need or disability.

www.contact.org.uk

Enquire

0345 123 2303

Practical advice and information about education and additional support for learning in Scotland.

www.enquire.org.uk

Families Outside

0800 254 0088

Support and information helpline offers help and support to prisoners' families.

www.familiesoutside.org.uk

Lone Parent Helpline

0808 801 0323

The Lone Parent Helpline provides support and advice on anything from dealing with a break-up, moving into work or sorting out maintenance, benefit or tax credit issues.

www.opfs.org.uk

Parenting across Scotland

You can access free parent resources, support networks and parent helplines on a range of topics.

www.parentingacrossscotland.org

ParentLine Scotland

0800 028 2233

For any parent or carer in Scotland who needs information, support or guidance or simply someone to talk to.

www.children1st.org.uk/help-for-families/parentline-scotland/

Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs

08080 10 10 11

Provides support and advice to anyone concerned about someone else's alcohol or drug use.

www.sfad.org.uk

Sleep Scotland

0800 138 6565

Sleep Scotland's free sleep support line provides on-the-spot guidance to parents and guardians struggling with their children's and teenagers' sleep problems.

www.sleepscotland.org

Young Minds

0808 802 5544 parents' helpline

Information on child and adolescent mental health. Services for parents and professionals.

www.youngminds.org.uk



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