



Top tips for talking to your teen about sex...

Talking to your teenager about sex is important; building good channels of communication in the early teenage years can help your teen to communicate with you as issues of increasing importance arise and may help to reduce risk-taking behaviours as they approach adulthood.

If you feel uncomfortable talking about sex, it is OK to acknowledge this with your teen maybe this is because it is something that you did not discuss much with your family; but the more you do, the more comfortable it will become.

Simple strategies to make talking about sex easier:

- ✓ Start off by talking about something that you both find more comfortable, such as feelings and emotions.
- ✓ Ask them what they think their friends know/think about sex, as this provides a way to talk about your teen's views indirectly.
- ✓ Avoid 'The Chat'. Talk about sex little and often, over everyday events like washing up or watching TV. This can help to normalise talking about sex, and ease uncomfortable feelings.
- ✓ Reading a book or a blog or listening to a podcast containing relevant content is a helpful way to stimulate discussion with your child. Your school or the library should be able to suggest some titles.
- ✓ Don't leave it too late. Start before you feel your teen is approaching readiness for sexually intimate relationships, so that you already have strong channels of communication.
- ✓ Be prepared to listen. Your teen will want to have their voice heard without feeling judged and feeling listened to will encourage them to come to you to talk about sex in the future.
- ✓ If they ask you a question that you are not sure how to answer, that is OK. Suggest that you find out the answer together and then you will both know!
- ✓ It can be tempting to tell your teen what you want them to think about issues to do with sex. This could alienate them. Instead, try asking them their views first and share yours if they ask to know what you think.

✓ Try to listen calmly, even if what they say surprises or concerns you. Try to remember that it is good that they are comfortable to discuss sex with you, and that they need to trust that you will not respond negatively.

✓ If your teen is sexually active, however upsetting you may find this, it is important to make sure they have access to and know how to correctly use contraception. This includes being confident to speak to their partner about using contraception, and what to do if their partner refuses to practice safe sex.

Make sure your child knows they can always talk to you anytime, about anything.

Make sure your child can identify five trusted adults; at least two in school.

Make sure they know how to contact organisations such as Childline and Kooth and understand their right to confidentiality when accessing services.

The Norfolk Just One Number can offer you and your child support. Call Just One Number on 0300 300 0123 or text Parentline on 07520 631590. Opening hours are 8am-6pm Monday-Friday (excluding Bank Holidays) and 9am-1 pm on Saturday.