

Positive Parenting

Teen-Parent Communication

How to Make it a Positive Experience:

Positive communication can be very difficult for parents and their teenagers. At this stage in their development, teenagers begin pulling away from their parents as they become independent. It is also a frustrating time for teens because of hormonal changes, peer pressure and other stressors in their lives. At times, parents find it almost impossible to talk to their teens, but it can be done. Parents can use certain strategies that may help open the lines of communication. A parent needs to take the time to build the relationship and gain the trust of their teenager.

Twelve Ways to be Positive:

1. Be aware of a good time to talk.
(in the car, bedtime, suppertime)
2. Spend some time alone together on an activity you both enjoy.
(fishing, going for ice cream, eating at a restaurant, walking, cycling)
3. On a regular basis let your teen know that he or she is a valuable person.
4. Be aware of your teen's moods or feelings even though he or she doesn't use words to express him or herself.
5. Give your teenager the words when he or she is unable to express him or herself due to anger, hurt feelings or frustration. e.g. You look like you're feeling upset or angry.
6. Listen to everything they have to say without cutting them off.
7. Never criticize your teen's comments even if they're negative. Echo back their feelings. e.g. Teen – "I hate my little brother."
Parent – "You sound frustrated with Tyler. What's happened?"

8. Try not to give uninvited advice as it can cause them to pull away from you. Instead you may want to ask them how they want to handle the problem or situation.
9. Avoid sarcasm or put downs.
10. Only correct your teen privately, never in front of someone else.
11. If you are feeling upset with your teen, wait and discuss the problem at a later time.
12. Model good communication techniques.
(eye contact, turn taking, being polite, good body language)

Conversation Starters/ Positive Phrases/ Words from the Heart:

- I will always help you.
- You are a valuable person.
- I love you!
- Oh, am I ever glad that you ...
- I was wrong when I ...
- I'm sorry I ...
- I understand you.
- I am proud of you.
- I trust you.
- I need you to ...
- I feel ...
- What's your opinion regarding...?

Tip: Concentrate on the *positive*
rather than the negative.