

TIPS FOR TALKING TO TEENS ABOUT HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

BE A ROLE MODEL: Think about your own values, feelings, expectations of relationships first. Your own relationships model how kids treat each other. If you treat kids, friends, family with respect and support, they will follow because teens learn by observing those around them.

ACKNOWLEDGE TEEN RELATIONSHIPS MATTER: Show warmth and support. Listen to hear their perspective on the importance of their friendships and romantic relationships.

TALK AND LISTEN TO YOUNG PEOPLE: Start early. Talk often. Have positive adult-teen communication. Engage them in discussions rather than lecturing and ask what they value in relationships.

TELL THE TRUTH — GOOD AND BAD: Discuss/Define healthy and unhealthy relationships in both peer and romantic relationships. Support the positive expectations; explain that manipulation and violence are never acceptable.

TALK ABOUT DATING: Ask how they would like to be treated. Provide examples of what is and is not acceptable from both parties involved.

ENCOURAGE OPEN COMMUNICATION: It is okay to have “special moments” in a relationship, but secrecy can lead to isolation and can be the first sign of manipulation. Encourage teens to rely on support from peers, parents, and caring adults.

HELP YOUNG PEOPLE STAY HEALTHY: Help them develop problem-solving skills, negotiation skills, and assertive (not aggressive) skills. Be a resource for them and have outside resources available to them.

Other Recommended Resources for Adults and Girls:

Association for Social Health www.iwannaknow.org

Advocates For Youth www.advocatesforyouth.org

American Sexual Health Association www.ashastd.org

Love is Respect www.loveisrespect.org

Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) www.siecus.org

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy www.thenationalcampaign.org

The Network for Family Life Education www.sexetc.org