

HOW TO TALK WITH YOUR PARENTS ABOUT SEX



Being a teen is not easy

Let's face it. Teens have to deal with many tough issues, including:

- Trying to do well in school
- Resisting peer pressure
- Making decisions about sex and sexuality
- Underage drinking and experimentation with illegal substances
- Trying to fit in

The good news is, there are many people in your life who can answer your questions and help you make decisions that are good for you. Parents, family members, teachers, school counselors, and other trusted adults are all people who care and want to help.

For some issues, particularly the ones related to sex and sexuality, it can feel a little scary to ask questions. This brochure will help you to feel more comfortable and confident about talking to your parents and other important adults in your life about sexuality.

Getting started

Some teens are afraid to talk to their parents or other adults about sex and sexuality. They fear that their parents will react negatively and/or assume that they are having sex. But you would be surprised at how willing your parents and other adults in your life are to talk about these issues. While parents and other adults may sometimes be uncomfortable talking about sexuality issues, they care about you and want to help you!

One thing to do before you get started is to think about and maybe even write down the questions you want to ask. Here are some questions that other teens have asked their parents:

- What was it like for you growing up as a teen?
- When will my body begin changing?
- What do you think is the right age to begin dating?
- How do you know when you are in love?
- What is the right age to have sex?
- How do you feel about teens having sex?

Another way to begin is to ask your parents what their parents taught them about sexuality. These questions can start conversations about a lot of different topics and help you to understand your parents' point of view on dating, relationships, and sexuality.

Remember, many parents did not receive much sexuality education themselves, so talking about sexuality may be hard for them. You may feel uncomfortable at first, but it will get easier!

When is the right time to talk?

Every day you are given opportunities to talk to your parents about sexuality issues. During these "askable moments" you can use something related to sexuality, such as a TV show, movie, radio program, song, magazine, or newspaper story to start asking questions. This way it feels more natural.

Of course, you'll want to talk when adults are most willing to listen, so you may want to avoid times when they are talking on the telephone, entertaining guests, or feeling tired or upset. Let your parents know that you have important things to talk about and ask them to set aside some time to talk with you.

Although it may be hard to get started, once you do, you'll see that you and your parents will begin to build a stronger relationship with better communication.

Who should I talk to?

Your parents are the best people to talk to about sexuality issues. If your parents are not available, you can also speak with other trusted adults – older siblings, family members, teachers, school counselors, and clergy, for example.

There are also other places where you can get good information in an anonymous and safe way – they are listed below. But remember, your parents and other adults you trust are probably the best people to help you get through this important and exciting time in your life.

Resources

PLANNED PARENTHOOD OF NEW YORK CITY www.ppnyc.org

A website with information about sexual and reproductive health and relationships.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD'S "FACTS OF LIFE" LINE 212-965-7015

A 24-hour hotline offering pre-recorded messages in English and Spanish on more than 100 topics concerning sexuality and reproductive health.

SEX, ETC. www.sexetc.org

A sexuality and health newsletter and website written by teens for teens.

For more information, contact:

PLANNED PARENTHOOD OF NEW YORK CITY

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www.ppnyc.org

ABOUT PLANNED PARENTHOOD OF NEW YORK CITY: At Planned Parenthood of New York City, we have more than 90 years of experience providing quality reproductive health care in a safe, supportive environment. We offer services to women, men, and teens throughout New York City, regardless of age, income, or immigration status. When you talk to us, it's always confidential. To make an appointment at any one of our three health centers in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx, call 212-965-7000 or 800-230-PLAN.

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