

PRE-TEENS & TEENS

YOUR CONVERSATION GUIDE

At any age it's important to help kids understand their personal boundaries and those of others. Once they hit their teen years, conversations around consent can help give your pre-teens and teens the skills and tools to understand what consent is, how to ask for it, and how to give or decline to give it.

Here are some ideas to help your teen work through consent scenarios:

Talk about pressure: Let them know it's never okay for someone to pressure them into any kind of sexual activity. Likewise, it's never okay to pressure someone else.

Example: Your teen repeatedly says "no," but the person ignores them and continues to pressure. Talk through some language to use and things to do in that situation. "You are making me uncomfortable. I don't want to do this, please stop."

Talk about verbal & non-verbal consent: People communicate non-verbally through body language. But non-verbal communication can lead to misunderstandings - let them know it's better to ask upfront.

Example: Discuss with your teen some ways they can check in with their partner. "Are we moving too fast?" "Are you okay with this?" Remind them to be aware of non-verbal signs: Is your partner pulling away? Do they seem relaxed?

Talk about being under the influence: As teens get older, they may attend parties where drugs and alcohol are being used. Make sure they know legal consent is sober consent. Someone who is intoxicated cannot give consent.

Example: "I know sometimes teens hook up when drinking & both parties seem okay with the situation. But actually, someone under the influence can't give you legal consent. Being drunk is not an excuse that will get you off the hook - you are responsible for your actions even if you are under the influence."

Talk about how changing their mind is ok: Let your teen know they can always say no, even if they originally said yes. They have the right to change their mind, & so does their partner.

Example: "Talk about some ways that you can communicate with each other if your teen doesn't feel safe. Is there a code word they can text or say on a call? Remind your teen you're always there to support them."

