

PEERS AGAINST VIOLENCE

**PAVE**

TIPS FOR TALKING TO YOUR

**15-18**  
YEAR OLDS

ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

## **TELL THEM WHAT YOU DID**

Although they may not seem to care about what you do, they are aware of what they see happening in your relationship. Take a quick inventory of your past and present relationships: what worked, what didn't work and what you learned. Don't be afraid to use those lessons in conversations.

## **BE OKAY WITH THEM BEING QUIET**

It's not always easy to open up about tough stuff. Give them a chance to digest what you're saying and think about their responses. If there is a lot of silence, you can say, "You were really quiet when I brought that up, why was that?"

## **FIND AN ALLY**

Consider finding another adult who is close to your teen to be a sounding board for them. This should be someone who shares your values and someone they would feel comfortable going to for help and advice. You can have a conversation about who this person could be. Remember, the important thing is that they have an adult to turn to for advice and guidance.

## **HAVE PATIENCE**

It's tempting to have "The Talk" and be done with it. However, good communication takes time and practice. You're creating a foundation of trust so you can be a safe person for them to turn to. Teens usually hear more than they are willing to admit, and much of what you say will be remembered and used later.

Learn more about  
creating healthy  
relationships:

[www.reachma.org](http://www.reachma.org)  
[info@reachma.org](mailto:info@reachma.org)  
781.891.0724

**HOTLINE**  
**800.899.4000**



Developed by REACH  
Beyond Domestic Violence

## ASK OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

These questions encourage open discussion. Make sure you listen to them and give them a chance to speak. As hard as it may be, try not to analyze, interrupt or criticize their feelings or values.

## KEEP IT LOW KEY

This doesn't have to be a weekly sit down about healthy relationships. Address things as they come up, whether it's hearing a song on the radio or chatting as you get a cup of coffee. Be supportive and nonjudgmental so they know they can come to you for help if their relationship becomes unhealthy in the future.

## REMIND THEM TO HAVE FUN

While it's important not to minimize their feelings about their relationships, it's important to remind them that dating should be fun and that respect should be the foundation of the relationship.

## PRESENT OPTIONS

You don't have to be the only person they talk to. Remind them that there are people who are there to support them if they witness dating abuse or experience it themselves.

## 'NO' IS A COMPLETE SENTENCE

Remind them that they have the right to say no to anything they're not comfortable with or ready for. If their relationship feels uncomfortable, awkward or frightening, assure them they can come to you. Stress that they have the right to make decisions for themselves, even if they are in a relationship.