

# TIPS FOR TALKING TO TEENS: 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 is 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.

## References:

Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence. “Talking to Your Kids.” 2014. <http://www.icadvinc.org/prevention/for-parents/talking-to-your-kids/>. Retrieved 13 May 2014.

Liz Claiborne Women’s Work. A Parent’s Handbook: How to Talk to Your Children about Developing Healthy Relationships. 1998. [http://www.aboutourkids.org/files/pages/assets/Liz\\_Claiborne\\_Handbook.pdf](http://www.aboutourkids.org/files/pages/assets/Liz_Claiborne_Handbook.pdf). Retrieved 13 May 2014

National Health Information Center. “Talk with Your Teen about Healthy Relationships.” healthfinder.gov. <http://healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/parenting/healthy-communication-and-relationships/talk-with-your-teen-about-healthy-relationships>. Retrieved 14 May 2014.

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**Other Recommended Resources for Adults and Girls:**

Association for Social Health  
[www.iwannaknow.org](http://www.iwannaknow.org)

Advocates For Youth  
[www.advocatesforyouth.org](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org)

American Sexual Health Association  
[www.ashastd.org](http://www.ashastd.org)

Love is Respect  
[www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org)

Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS)  
[www.siecus.org](http://www.siecus.org)

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy  
[www.thenationalcampaign.org](http://www.thenationalcampaign.org)

The Network for Family life Education  
[www.sexetc.org](http://www.sexetc.org)