



Let's Change the Talk

My mom gave me a book that talked about sex and she told me to read it so I understood. That was it.

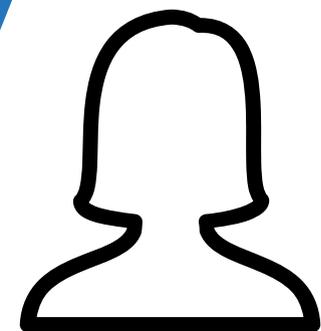
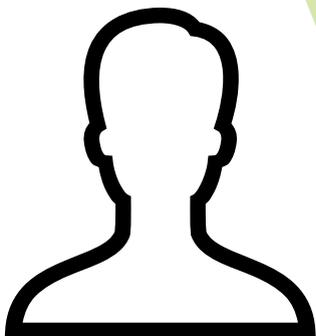
My parents went beyond the basic information about puberty and sex and talked to me about what really matters.

My mom made sure to tell me about all the options for safety. We talked about always using condoms and birth control because you can never be too safe.

My dad told me not to have sex or he will chop off my penis.

I remember that the first couple of conversations were formal, telling me about waiting to be with someone I loved and making sure I was protected. Now, our talks are more casual and more two-sided than just me listening.

My parents never said a word to me about sex, puberty, or relationships.



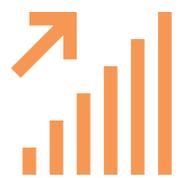
Which adolescent do you think is better equipped to engage in healthy relationships?

Studies have shown that adolescents desire thoughtful and open conversations with their parental figures about sexual intimacy. These conversations should discuss relationships, dating, sexual safety, and intimacy in general.

Why Should You Talk to Your Kid About Sex?



National Facts



Adolescents, compared to other age groups who are sexually active, have the highest rate of STDs.

50%

Of adolescents between 15-19 years old have had sex at least once.



The USA has the highest rate of adolescent pregnancies in the developed world.

Having the Conversation

- It's **NORMAL** to be nervous talking to your child about sex-related topics. You can even tell them that you know this conversation may be awkward but you care about their sexual health and relationships.
- Be genuine in your conversation.
- Know that it is never "too early" for you to talk to them about healthy and safe relationship.
- Think about what values are important to you and your family. Explain how those values matter when it comes to making sex-related decisions. If you tell them to wait until they are in a mature, loving, and responsible relationship - tell them **WHY**.
- Reinforce your child's ability to make decisions while providing medically accurate information on which he/she can base those decisions.
- Use a combination of stories, examples, and facts to inform them about sexual safety and consequences of engaging in unprotected sex.
- Make it a two-way conversation so they feel open to ask questions or explain their feelings and thoughts.
- **DON'T** just make it a one time conversation, make it an ongoing conversation.

Parent-Child

Communication Facts



Adolescents did not find parents' threats or warnings to be effective.



Adolescents prefer thoughtful, open, and caring conversations.



It's more about talks than just "the talk."



Adolescents believed sexual safety was an important topic in conversations.

"I know I could look information about sex up online, but coming from my mom or dad would just mean they care about me."

--16 year old teenager

Sources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC]. (2013). Incidence, prevalence, and cost of sexually transmitted infections in the United States.

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