

### WHEN YOUR TEEN WANTS TO TALK:

- Stop what you are doing
- Look at your teen
- Give your full attention
- Listen to what is said
- Comment on what you think you heard

### WHEN YOU ARE ANGRY:

- Stop and do nothing but breathe
- Identify the thoughts that are making you angry ("I am angry because I need \_\_\_\_.")
- Connect to your needs behind those thoughts
- Express your feelings and unmet needs appropriately

### EXPLORE, DO & PLAY TOGETHER:

- Cook a meal/bake cookies, having meals
- Watch a movie
- Go for a walk/hike or a bicycle ride
- Go bowling/fishing/swimming
- Take a class
- Volunteer
- Solve a problem/puzzle, play a game
- Plan a birthday party/family vacation/future
- Plant a garden
- Have a picnic or a campfire
- Go to a museum, zoo, sport event/concert or to the beach/lake
- Make t-shirts/sweatshirts or a pillow/quilt out of old T-shirts/blankets
- Make a scrapbook, journal, video or time capsule
- Stargaze or find shapes in the clouds
- Develop a new healthy habit
- Build or add to a family website
- Have a garage sale
- Read/write a book/letter

# my family talks

explore & connect  
communicate & share  
understand & respect  
love & empathy

### YOU ARE HAVING A RESPECTFUL CONVERSATION WITH YOUR TEEN WHEN YOU ARE:

- Able to have a conversation with your teen even about a tough issue
- Able to actively listen and your teen is responding
- Able to use a tone that says "I care about saying this to you and you are an important person to me." in any situation
- Able to back off if your teen wants to keep something private
- Able to allow your teen to have a different point of view than your own and do not continue to try and 'win' the conversation as if it were a debate

Feelings of worth can flourish only in an atmosphere where individual differences are appreciated, mistakes are tolerated, communication is open, and rules are flexible – the kind of atmosphere that is found in a nurturing family.

- Virginia Satir -

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# Strengthen Your Family's Bonds

FINDING WAYS TO STAY CONNECTED.

Explore, do and play together

Communicate, share and support one another

Understand and respect individuality

Empathy is a respectful understanding of what others are experiencing. It is listening with the whole being - fully present and wanting to connect with the core essence humanity of the other person. Empathy can only occur when we have successfully shed all preconceived ideas and judgments.

As a parent, when you communicate with empathy, you will find yourself speaking more factually, calmly, and reasonably, and your teen will be able to hear what you have to say instead of feeling the need to defend or flee. When you release the need to control, direct, convince, or manipulate, you open up a compassionate communication channel that fosters a safe environment for sharing.

## effective compassionate communication



### NON-VERBAL CUES

- Use eye contact
- Use upbeat tone of voice
- Use positive gestures
- Use touches
- Smile as much as possible

### WHEN A NEGATIVE MESSAGE IS RECEIVED

- Sense your own feelings and needs and come from the "I" place: "I realize I feel \_\_\_ when you \_\_\_."
- Sense the other's feelings and needs: "Are you feeling \_\_\_ because you would like \_\_\_?"

### OBSERVATIONS

When I see \_\_\_

### FEELINGS

I feel \_\_\_

### NEEDS

because I need \_\_\_

### REQUESTS

Would you be willing \_\_\_?

### DO SAY:

- Would you like to share more about that?
- Do you want to talk about it?
- What do you think?
- That's a good question.
- Do you know what that means?
- I don't know, but I'll find out.
- I'm interested in what you are saying.
- That sounds important to you.

### DON'T SAY:

- Why are you asking me that?
- You don't need to know about that..
- If you say that again, I'll...
- That's none of your business.
- I don't care what your friends are doing!
- We'll talk about that when you need to know.
- You are too young to understand.
- That's just for boys/girls.
- Don't come to me if you mess up.

### PARENTS' CHECKLIST

- Say "good morning" and "good night" everyday
- Say "I love you" often
- Hug and kiss your teen
- Have conversations even just for a minute
- Plan/do activities/chores together
- Schedule in family time
- Ask for your teen's opinions
- Know what's important to your teen
- Involve in your teen's interest
- Give your teen your full attention
- Spend more time listening than talking
- Practise effective compassionate communication
- Share your morals/values, thoughts & fears
- Be approachable
- Admit when you are wrong
- Admit that you don't have all the answers
- Admit that you don't know everything
- Allow your teen to make decisions/mistakes
- Help your teen learn to make good decisions
- Guide your teen
- Support your teen
- Encourage and praise your teen
- Accept your teen's different opinion
- Practise fair and firm discipline
- Delegate appropriately
- Celebrate successes and commiserate failures
- Promote positive habits and attitudes
- Focus on what you can control
- Set goals that can be accomplished
- Decide what's important/what's not
- Convey your expectations clearly
- Keep your emotions in check
- Respect your teen's privacy
- Take time out for yourself

RESPECT YOUR TEEN'S INDIVIDUALITY – EQUAL TREATMENT IS NOT THE SAME AS FAIR TREATMENT