



Continue to Engage Teens In Safety Conversations

Safety talks aren't just for little kids. But when it comes to sexual abuse, protecting teens can be complicated. Teenagers seek out relationships outside the family for friendship, security, and even advice. In addition, they may be confused or embarrassed about their own development, which makes communication difficult and protecting them nearly impossible.

Realize teens are learning about relationships, but often their sources may not be the best places to get the facts. Sources include their friends, the Internet, or firsthand experiences. Let your child know that he or she can come to you if he or she has questions without fear of judgment or consequences.

Help them build up their self-esteem. Often, low self-esteem is a key factor in risky teen behavior. Teens who do not feel good about themselves or who are at odds with their family may turn to other adults for support. This type of behavior is extremely dangerous and it is exactly what abusers are looking for. They approach teens and take advantage of their low self-esteem, give gifts like liquor or drugs, further isolate them from the family, and attempt to become their "friend".

- Encourage your teen to get involved in a hobby, sport, work, or art
- Teach your teen how to earn money legitimately
- Teach your teen how to take care of himself or herself
- Empower your teen to be in control of his or her own life
- Give your teen responsibility
- Communicate how much you value his or her independence, accomplishments, and ability to be responsible, while letting him or her know you are supportive and available

For more information on keeping kids safe, call (701) 323-5626.



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