



HOW do I talk about these things with my teen?

Lay the groundwork for good conversations...

- Feeling Safe
 - Teens are looking for any threat (tone, words, etc.)
 - Remember that you can also perceive a threat to your self-worth, authority, and/or your values
- Care for Each Other; LUV Listen
 - Listen with energy, focus, and curiosity
 - Listen – Let them talk. If you are talking more than 20% of the time, you are not listening.
 - Understand – Repeat back what they said in your own words.
 - Validate – Validate the feelings even if you disagree; show empathy.
- Silence has value. So does pausing and breathing.

Practice. Practice. Practice...



Sample Conversations*

Setting Expectations/The First Conversation

1. **Facts** are the starting point (*I've been reading/hearing about . . .*)
2. **Their** impression of the facts (*What are you seeing/hearing?*)
3. **Their** thoughts (*What do you think about that?*)
4. **Your** expectations (*I want to share with you my thoughts/expectations about this . . .*)
5. **Agreed** upon action (*Let's make clear how were going to handle this as a family . . .*)

When You Know or Suspect Something

1. **Facts** are the starting point (*I found/saw/heard. . .*)
2. **Their** impression (*Help me understand what's going on.*)
3. **Your** impression (*This scares me. I'm worried.*)
4. **Repeat**, keeping it safe (*What do you think should happen? How can I help you? Do you want this? . . . This = to be using, the potential consequences, this identity, strain on relationships, feeling, etc.*)
5. **Agreed** upon action (*Where are we going from here?*)

After the Fact

1. **Facts** are the starting point (*I'm glad you got home safely last night*)
2. **Their** impression (*Help me understand what happened.*)
3. **Your** impression (*I'm worried about the behavior.*)
4. **Repeat**, keeping it safe (*What do you think should happen now?*)
5. **Agreed** upon action (*So we, agree, the consequences are . . . X*)

Coaching Tough Conversations

1. **Facts** are the starting point (*Kids around you may be using.*)
2. **Their** impression (*What situations might you need to get out of?*)
3. **Your** impression (*I want to ensure that you have the skills you need to make the right decisions/stay safe/get out of tricky situations.*)
4. **Repeat**, keeping it safe (*What would you do if . . . you're at a party where other kids are using/someone offers you X/your driver has been drinking?*)
5. **Agreed** upon action (*Let's do role plays periodically so you can practice the skills to stay safe.*)

Peer-to-Peer – Adult | Youth

1. **Facts** are the starting point (*I've been reading/hearing about . . .*)
2. **Their** thoughts (*What have you seen/heard?*)
3. **Your** impression of the facts (*That's scary. I'm concerned. I was surprised.*)
4. **Repeat**, keeping it safe (*We may have different perspectives, what does that mean for our kids and hanging out together?*)
5. **Agreed** upon action (*If my kid is using, I want to know . . .*)

**scripts developed in partnership with Core Skills LLC*