

- **BIRTH CONTROL.** Teens are often misinformed about the consequences of sex. If birth control is hard for you to talk about, you can say so and provide your son or daughter with pamphlets or books.
- **TROUBLE.** A single run-in with the law or other acting-out behavior can be a one time test of adolescent bravado. Over-reacting can shut down communication. However, emphatic and consistent disapproval can work best to put an end to any unhealthy or illegal activity. Again, don't be afraid to reach out for professional help when needed.

they need you and love you

Most parents and teenagers work their way through the adolescent years without professional help. When love and trust are the basis of your relationship, this passage time can become a lot easier. Parent groups, teachers, other relatives and friends can also be there to lend support. Honest, open communication is the key to this as well as all healthy relationships.

If communication has broken down and you are struggling, let Aspirus Employee Assistance Services help you.

Help is available

Aspirus Employee Assistance Services has counselors available to help you and your family. You can call the confidential helpline 24 hours a day at:

715.848.4357 ~ 800.236.4457
TDD# 715.845.4928

Remember,
Aspirus Employee
Assistance Services
is confidential.



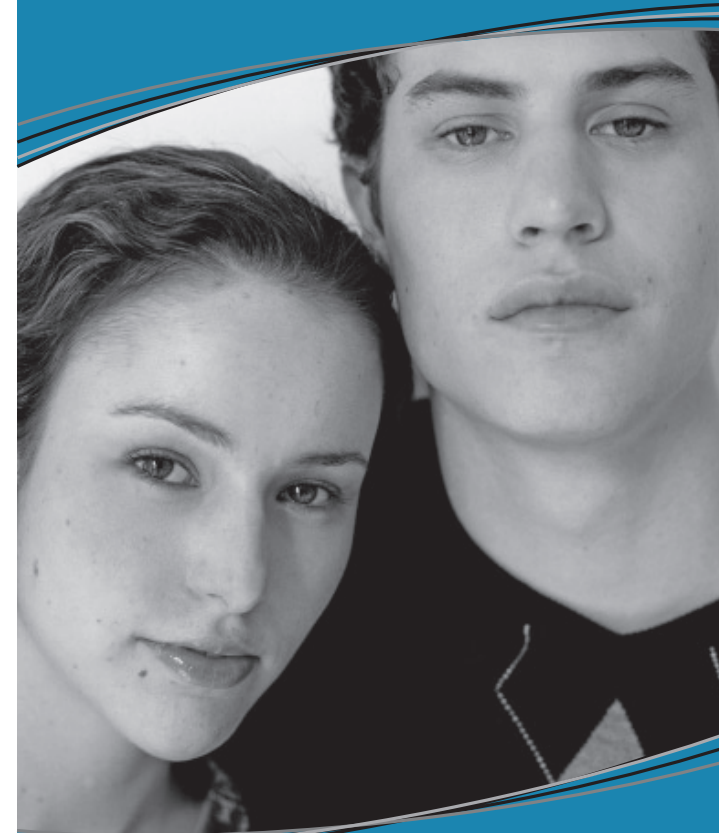
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Communicating with your Teen



tips for making the passage from
adolescence to adulthood easier



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Adolescence can be a challenging time for both parent and teen. Through trial and error, our sons and daughters seek their independence. They are learning how to let go. We are learning to allow them to do that. Mutual trust, respect for personal privacy, and open, honest communication can make the passage from adolescence to adulthood easier.

hard choices made easier

When to take a stand, when to argue, and when to let go are hard choices for parents. A program for providing the best environment you can for your teen might include:

- An attitude of specific expectations. You should agree on reasonable rules for living together.
- An ability to let go when the situation is not harmful. Experience can be the best teacher.
- Positive reinforcement whenever possible. Teens, in trying to prove themselves, need all the support you can give.
- A stable point of reference. Consistent, fair treatment and logical consequences provide the best framework for getting along.
- Recognition of your own limits. Alcohol or other drug abuse, or other self-destructive behavior, can be beyond your ability to help. Seek professional help as soon as it is needed.

keeping the doors open

Even though your teen is busy breaking away from the family in order to establish their own independence, some structured time for activities will keep the door open for communication to happen. Special family times, including doing chores together, can offer a natural opportunity for conversation. Checking in without prying, teasing, shaming or blaming, lets a teen know you're interested.

You can listen and sympathize when he or she approaches you. You can sincerely praise whenever possible. Teens are typically secretive and independent and when you offer them your respect and trust, you're saying you are willing to help them grow into healthy adulthood.

what teens want to tell you

Teens worry about a lot of things, just like adults do. Some of the things that cause them concern are:

- **NORMAL BODY CHANGES.** You can reassure them they are normal and avoid jokes about their bodies, voices, etc.
- **ALCOHOL.** Be a good role model. Talk about drinking and driving. Perhaps together, you can get more information about SADD or MADD.



- **DRUGS.** Get as much information as you can for yourself. If you suspect drug use, offer support for wise choices as well as disapproval for unwise ones.
- **SOCIAL STATUS.** If your teenager is shy or insecure, perhaps you can encourage them to join a club or other activity group where making friends is easier because of a shared interest.
- **ROMANCE.** Teen love is serious. Breakups are devastating. Your sympathy as well as just listening without offering advice can help diffuse anger and depression.
- **SEX.** Plenty of love at home can make it less urgent to find love through sexual encounters. You can talk about how fear of pregnancy or disease can change relationships. Both of you may be embarrassed at first, if you're too direct. Related issues however can open the door to a more specific discussion.