



April is ...
Child Abuse Prevention Month



Protecting Teens from Sexual Abuse

The following information is modified from information from the 'tips' section of the San Francisco Child Abuse Prevention Center at <http://sfcapc.org/learn/tips-for-parents>
Please use the above link to access these and other helpful tips.



When it comes to sexual abuse, protecting teens is complicated. Teenagers seek relationships outside the family for friendship, security and even advice. In addition, they may be confused or embarrassed about their own developing sexuality, which makes communication difficult and protecting them nearly impossible.

Although it may seem like you and your teen are speaking a different language, it is important to keep the lines of communication open. Your teen may need you now more than ever. Important tips for talking with your teen include:

1. LISTEN more, and talk less.

Listening helps parents to understand their teens better, work with their teens on solutions to problems, and show their teens they are concerned and interested.

2. Keep your conversations respectful.

Kids learn to speak respectfully by modeling the way you communicate. Also, teens are much more likely to listen if you treat them with respect rather than embarrassing, criticizing, or lecturing them.

3. Create times for your teen to talk to you.

Do things one-on-one. Sometimes it's easier for teens to talk when they don't have to look directly at their parents, like in the car or on a walk.

4. Reflect the feelings and respect the ideas of your teen.

You don't have to agree with your teen, but when you show your teen you understand and respect his/her feelings, he/she is more likely to open up to you.

5. Your tone of voice should show that you care and respect your teen.

Yelling will only cause your teen to shut down communication. Take a break if you want to yell.

6. Make limits and expectations clear.

Writing down expectations and creating an action plan can help. When you give your teen instructions, write them down.



7. Cool off before giving a consequence for rule-breaking or failing to meet expectations, and don't shut out your teen when you disapprove of behavior.

If you are too upset to talk in a reasonable way, tell your teen you need time.

8. Ask open-ended questions rather than questions that will get a "yes" or "no" answer or questions to which you already know the answer.

You will get much better responses.

9. Admit your mistakes.

There is no better way to set a good example.

10. Keep your sense of humor!

Abuse is something that needs to be stopped, not ignored.

Offenders should be turned in. Seek counseling for abused children to help alleviate confusion, anger and possible self esteem issues. Never blame the child for the abuse. Parents should also seek help to learn how to get through their hurt and anger and to find ways to help their child and family connections heal. In summary, it is important that your teen feel comfortable talking to you about sexual topics, know their personal boundaries and have the confidence to voice their rights. If abuse has happened, get help and turn the person in...

silence only protects the abuser!



For more information or assistance, call the Erie diocesan *Office for the Protection of Children and Youth* at 814-824-1195 or email Mrs. Karen Streett at kstreett@eriercd.org