



Navigating Difficult Conversations

Talking with teens in your care about difficult topics or challenging situations can feel overwhelming, particularly if you are concerned about their safety or wellbeing. However, engaging in these conversations, even in times of stress or conflict with your teen, can build a foundation of trust and open dialogue.



YOUNG PEOPLE NEED TO FEEL SAFE, LOVED, AND ACCEPTED WITHOUT JUDGMENT BEFORE THEY CAN OPEN UP OR HEAR YOUR PERSPECTIVE.

Consider the following tips for challenging conversations:

- Thank your teen for talking with you
- Take a deep breath and consider taking a break if you are feeling overwhelmed
- Acknowledge your feelings of discomfort, and, if appropriate, share them with your teen
- Avoid becoming defensive, and stay open to your teen's perspective and feelings
- Model healthy communication skills by apologizing to your teen if you got upset
- Seek support from other foster parents or your caseworker
- Look for online resources about the topic of discussion
- Use a tool like our "[Is My Relationship Healthy?](#)" Worksheet to guide discussion and refocus after a disagreement
- Be kind to yourself, and forgive yourself if a conversation doesn't go as planned



RESOURCES

Our "[Is My Relationship Healthy?](#)" and "[Relationship Safety and Red Flags](#)" Worksheets are tools you can look through together with teens to help them explore whether their relationships feel safe and good to them.

[Okayso](#) gives you access to sexual health and relationship experts to get support and information whenever you need it. If you aren't sure how to approach a conversation, an Okayso expert can help answer your questions.

[Scarleteen](#) provides inclusive, comprehensive, and supportive sexuality and relationship education for teens and emerging adults.

[Talk About It Dallas](#) offers detailed information about different types of contraception and about STIs. Although the listed resources are limited to the Dallas area, the information is applicable to young people everywhere.