

# TIPS FOR TALKING TO YOUR STUDENT ABOUT SEX & HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

OFFICE OF WELLNESS PROMOTION

Research tells us that those who have regular conversations with their parents and families about sex and relationships are more likely to be healthy and safe, and are less likely to take risks with their sexual health. It's never too late to start the discussion about sex with your student. The most crucial point is to make it clear to your student that they can come to you with questions or support without fear, shame, or judgement.



# **Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)**

According to research, 50% of sexually active youth will contract an STI before the age of 25. Some are curable, such as chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis. Others are incurable, but are treatable, like genital herpes, Hepatitis B, HIV, and human papillomavirus (HPV).

If your student decides to have sex, stress the necessity of using condoms, which prevent STIs and unplanned pregnancy, and dental dams as protection from oral sex. You should also discuss what your student should do if a partner tries to pressure them into not using protection.

Overall, help your student understand that they are in control of the kinds of intimacy they want to experience.

## **Local Resources**

Teaching your student where to find resources to help their journey is just as important as talking to them about sex and relationships. There are plenty of on-campus resources such as the Student Health Center, The Center for Trans and Queer Advocacy, and the Office of Wellness Promotion. Your student should also feel comfortable discussing their sexual health with their primary care physician.

For students assigned female at birth, they can also choose to meet with their OB-GYN about different birth control methods like the pill, injection, or intrauterine device (IUD). No birth control method is 100% effective, but combining birth control with condom usage can serve as extra protection.

Be open to discussing gender and sexuality with your student as well, as some people are gay, bisexual, transgender, or non-binary, and encourage them to participate in groups that are open and welcoming to everyone.

## **Boundaries & Communication**

In a healthy relationship, there should be mutual respect for each other and their privacy. Arguments happen in even the healthiest of relationships, but they're handled openly and honestly. Teach your student to also recognize red flags and signs of abuse, such as:

- Extreme jealousy
- Intense mood swings
- An explosive temper
- Constant put-downs
- Physically inflicting pain

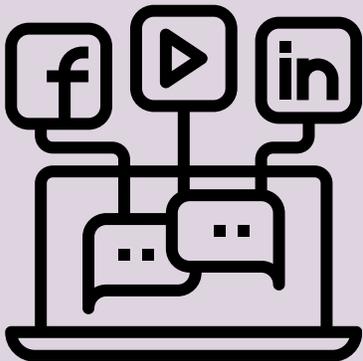


# It's Okay to Not Know Everything

As a parent, you ultimately want your student to be safe, healthy, and happy. If your student asks you a question you can't answer, seek out the answer together! Feel free to discuss with your student about your own experiences: maybe your parents never discussed sex or your school only taught abstinence-only sex education. Ultimately, teaching your student about the importance of sexual health and relationships will be one of the best things you can teach them.

## Resource:

Harveston, Kate. How to Talk with Your Student About Sexual Health and Healthy Relationships. Retrieved from <https://www.collegiateparent.com/wellness/talk-about-healthy-relationships/>



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