

COLAISTE DE LACY



A GUIDE FOR PARENTS:

OPENING THE CONVERSATION ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY WITH YOUR TEENAGER



As your teen grows, they begin to explore and question the world around them, including topics of relationships and sexuality.

These conversations can sometimes feel challenging or uncomfortable, but they are crucial for your teen's healthy development.

This guide aims to support you in initiating open, honest, and age-appropriate discussions with your teen, ensuring they feel supported and informed.

Why is it important to talk about SPHE/RSE at home?



Builds trust: Engaging in these conversations shows your teen that they can trust you with their questions and concerns.



Promotes safety: Educating your teen on relationships and sexuality empowers them to make informed decisions and recognise unhealthy situations.



Supports healthy development: Discussing these topics openly can contribute to your teen's positive self-esteem and body image.

How to Start the Conversation...

Find the right moment: Look for natural opportunities to bring up the topic, such as watching TV or discussing a relevant news story.

Be open and honest: Answer their questions truthfully, keeping in mind what is appropriate for their age and development.

Encourage questions: Let them know it's okay to ask questions and that you're there to provide answers.

Tips for Successful Communication



Listen More Than You Speak:
Give them the space to share
their thoughts and feelings
without judgment.

Use Age-Appropriate Language: Tailor your language to match your teen's age and level of understanding.



Set Aside Your Discomfort:
Your openness will signal to your teen that these topics are not taboo and should be discussed openly.



**Do not
forget**

**These conversations are not a one-time talk
but an ongoing dialogue that evolves
as your teenager grows.**

By working on an environment of openness and support, you are laying the foundation for your teen to navigate relationships and sexuality with confidence and respect.

We encourage you to take the first step in this important aspect of your teen's development.

Your effort can make a significant difference in their understanding and approach to relationships and sexuality.

Some 'starters' to consider using when talking with your younger teen

"As you're getting older, you might start to notice changes in your body. It's completely natural, and I'm here if you have any questions."

"Sometimes we have feelings for other people, like crushes. Have you ever felt like that? It's okay to talk about it."

"I noticed that the characters in the movie we watched were talking about relationships. What did you think about that?"

"How you feel about yourself is really important. Remember, being healthy is not about looking a certain way but feeling good about yourself."

"Friendships and relationships should make you feel good about yourself. If someone makes you feel uncomfortable or unhappy, it's important to talk about it."

"It's great to be curious and want to learn about these things. What's something you're wondering about?"

Some 'starters' to consider using when talking with your older teen

'Being in a relationship can bring up a lot of emotions. It's okay to feel uncertain or overwhelmed sometimes. Would you agree?'

'I was listening to the radio this morning and a GP was talking about the term 'safer sex'. Have you learned about this in school?'

'What are some values you think are important in a relationship? How do you think people should treat each other in relationships?'

'Have you and your friends talked about consent and what it means in a relationship?'

'Do you ever feel pressured by friends or media to act a certain way in relationships? How do you handle that pressure?'

'What do you think are the best ways to communicate in a relationship, especially when there's a disagreement?'