

STEPS TO SAFETY

Communication


Understanding the different styles of communication is a valuable skill for your teen to develop. Knowing their own communication style is essential. Knowing the styles others use to communicate can help your teen to better gauge the safety of the relationship they have with that person. It is important for your teen to be able to communicate effectively with peers and adults. It can be easy and comfortable for them to talk with some people. However, sometimes your teen may feel nervous or uncomfortable interacting with other people. There are many factors that can impact your teen's interactions with others.

The communication skills your teen possesses is also important in helping your teen stay safe. They must be able to communicate their wants and needs effectively. Help your teen identify some of the skills they have or skills they may need to develop in their verbal interactions with both peers and adults. These skills can help your teen feel in control and keep them safe.

Helping Your Teen Understand Communication Styles and Helping Your Teen Develop Communication Skills

Step 1


Review each of the communication styles with your teen:

 **Passive Communication** is when you accept what others are saying and doing without speaking up to try to change things. You avoid stating your thoughts, feelings, or opinions.

- Do not speak up or tend to speak softly
- Do not make eye contact
- May physically move away from conversations
- Feel anxious about saying anything


 **Aggressive Communication** is when you state your thoughts, feelings, and ideas without regard for others.

- Attempt to take control of others
- Say things that embarrass or humiliate others
- Say things that blame or criticize others
- Say things that are threatening
- Speak in a loud and demanding voice

 **Passive-Aggressive Communication** is when you appear to be passive; however, the subtle and indirect communication is meant to control others.

- Mumbling instead of stating something directly
- Using sarcasm
- Saying that nothing is wrong, but facial expressions or body language indicate that there is a problem
- Saying things that seem cooperative but doing something disruptive behind the scenes

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 **Assertive Communication** is when you stand up for yourself and state your thoughts, feelings, and opinions while being considerate of the feelings of others and not violating their rights.

- Stating what you want or need clearly
- Communicating in a way that is respectful to others
- Making good eye contact
- Using a calm and clear voice
- Making connections when talking to others
- Standing up for your rights

Step 2

Ask your teen what they think their style might be. Why do they think that is their style? Has it been a style that has been effective for them? Why or why not?

Step 3

Help your teen to understand that if they have a communication style that has been ineffective for them, they need to change it. Stress to your teen that an ineffective style of communication leaves them vulnerable and unable to have their needs and wants met.


Step 4

Using the Communication Skills Survey with your teen, discuss where their comfort level is in each of the situations in the survey.

Step 5

Work to develop the areas where your teen is less proficient and less comfortable. Structure verbal dialogues with them so they get the opportunity to sharpen their verbal skills and build their confidence to communicate effectively.

Step 6

 Look for opportunities to practice “what if” situations with your teen in effectively communicating with others. “What if someone asks you to do something you know is wrong, but you are uncomfortable communicating that to them? What would you do? What could you say?” Help them refine responses for areas of weakness so that your teen has a “script” in mind for how to respond. Soon, your teen will come to rely on their own skills to communicate what they want and need.

With your teen, observe the verbal interactions of others in various situations. Help your teen to see how effectively those situations were resolved based solely on the communication style and skills used.

IDENTIFY THE COMMUNICATION STYLE

Directions:

Using the descriptions of the communication styles in “Steps to Communication,” work together with your teen and discuss the words and actions to determine the communication style being used. Your teen should write Passive, Aggressive, Passive-Aggressive, or Assertive after each scenario. This activity can help your teen gain insight into the communication styles of others. This insight will increase their awareness of communication styles and how communication styles can be manipulative.

✦ Miles goes through the lunch line. When he pays for his lunch he realizes he did not get back enough change. He just hangs his head and walks to his lunch table.

✦ Riley yells at Terry, “Where is my biology book? I warned you about what would happen if you didn’t return it!”

✦ Hillary says, “I really don’t like scary movies. You all can go if you want to, but I’m not going. Give me a call after the movie and maybe we can hang out.”

✦ Sara rolls her eyes and says, “Wow, you guys are TOOOO COOOOOL. I wish I could insult people like you do.”

✦ Miles says, “Why don’t we ask Ryan to meet us at the football game? He just moved here from Connecticut. He sits by me in algebra and seems pretty cool.”

✦ Steven shouts, “Can someone please tell me why Kiley is sitting here? Why doesn’t she go sit with her new boyfriend?”

✦ After Steven’s comments, Kiley gets up and walks away.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS SURVEY

Directions:

This is a survey to help your teen assess their personal communication skills. Some people are comfortable communicating in some situations and uncomfortable in other situations. There is no right or wrong answer. This is just to help your teen gauge when they are or are not comfortable communicating. Discuss each statement with your teen. Below each statement, ask your teen to mark to what extent they agree or disagree.

It is important for your teen to understand their own communication skills, as they need these skills to protect themselves. Discuss with your teen how and why they chose the answers that they did. While there are no right or wrong answers, there can be patterns in their communication skills that may leave them vulnerable. Help them to develop the communication skills that will empower them.

1. I am comfortable looking at a person when he or she is talking to me.

Agree Somewhat Agree Neutral Somewhat Disagree Disagree

2. I can tell someone if I disagree with him or her.

Agree Somewhat Agree Neutral Somewhat Disagree Disagree

3. I can tell someone "no" when he or she asks me to do something I think is wrong.

Agree Somewhat Agree Neutral Somewhat Disagree Disagree

4. I can tell my friends how I feel.

Agree Somewhat Agree Neutral Somewhat Disagree Disagree

5. I can ask for help if something is upsetting me.

Agree Somewhat Agree Neutral Somewhat Disagree Disagree

6. I can seek out help for someone else if he or she is in trouble.

Agree Somewhat Agree Neutral Somewhat Disagree Disagree

STEPS TO SAFETY

Healthy Relationships

For a relationship to be healthy, there should be a balance of power. When one person takes control or manipulates the other person, the relationship may not be healthy. Help your teen understand the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships. Their knowledge of these characteristics will enable your teen to recognize characteristics of an unsafe situation. Encourage discussion with your teen to reassure them that you are always available to help them with their relationships.

Healthy Relationships

- ✈ Thoughts are rational, positive, productive, supportive, or optimistic
- ✈ Feelings may include being happy, content, respected, encouraged, joyous, loved, safe, and cared for
- ✈ Actions are productive, result in growth, are your choice, and are not motivated by fear

Unhealthy Relationships

- ✈ Thoughts are irrational, destructive, and negative
- ✈ Feelings may include sadness, isolation, depression, fatigue, fear, shame, and guilt
- ✈ Actions are controlled by others, stagnate, are destructive, and may be motivated by fear

It is important for your teen to remember that relationships should be about equality, not control. If your teen finds themselves or notices someone else in an unhealthy relationship, they should seek help from a trusted adult.

Helping Your Teen Develop Healthy Relationships

✈ Step 1

Help your teen understand that an abuser violates the boundaries of another and seeks to control the actions of another. Your teen should become aware of the signs of an abuser, the signs of someone being abused, or the signs of someone being in an unhealthy relationship.

✈ Step 2

Signs of an abuser may include:

- Being overly jealous
- Checking on you constantly or demanding constant contact to confirm where you are and what you are doing
- Getting overly upset or blowing things out of proportion
- Insulting and putting you down
- Threatening to break up if you don't do what they want
- Throwing things, hitting walls, explosive anger
- Secrets (pressure to keep them)

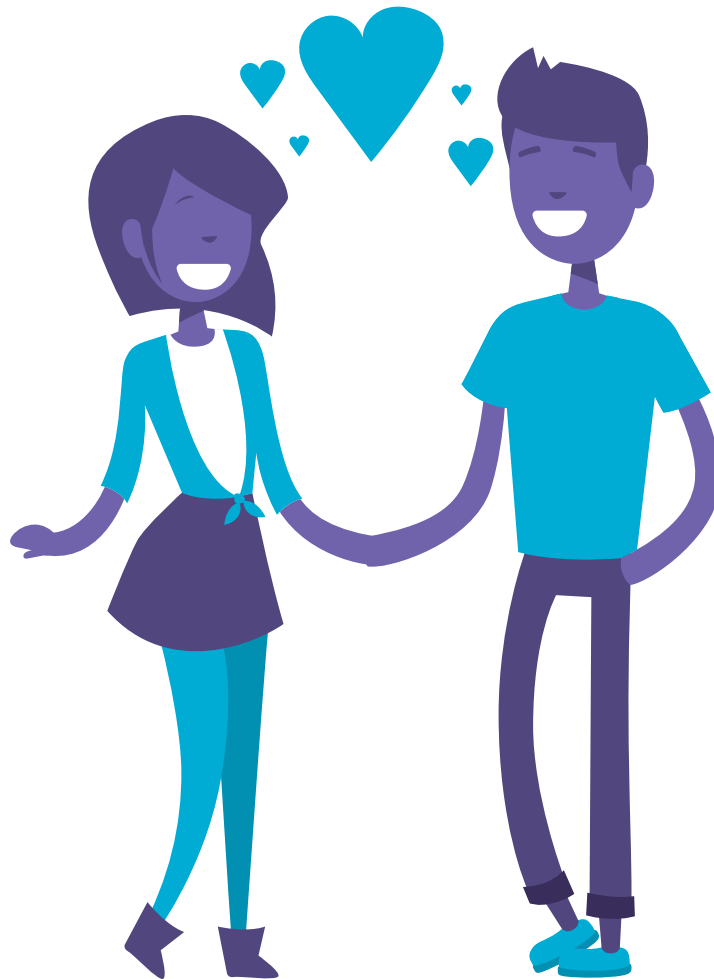
 Step 3

Signs of someone being abused or in an unhealthy relationship may include:

- Always worrying that you are making your partner upset or mad
- Giving up friendships and activities that were important to you
- Constantly making excuses for your partner's behavior
- Getting pressured for sex
- Bruises or cuts
- Becoming withdrawn and isolated

 Step 4

Discuss these signs with your teen. Keep the lines of communication open so that your teen feels comfortable confiding in you if they need your help because they are in an unhealthy relationship.



DRAW THE LINE

Directions:

Talk with your teen about their personal boundaries. There are some things that your teen is okay doing; however, there are other things that cross the line...things that your teen is not comfortable with. For each statement, your teen should determine if it does or does not cross their personal boundaries and draw a line through all statements that cross the line.

- ✧ Lying to a friend.
- ✧ Spreading a rumor.
- ✧ Wearing a bracelet that supports a cause you believe in.
- ✧ Letting someone copy your homework so you can sit together at lunch.
- ✧ Sharing your Facebook password.
- ✧ Giving your friend a hug on their birthday.
- ✧ Grabbing someone by the arm to keep them from going to class.
- ✧ Saying no when asked to do something that makes you feel uncomfortable.
- ✧ Telling your friend you are worried about them and asking if there is anything you can do to help.
- ✧ Persuading someone to kiss you after he or she resists.
- ✧ Intentionally making unwanted physical contact with someone in the hallway.
- ✧ Telling your friend that you won't give him the answers to the test.
- ✧ Writing a comment on your Facebook wall supporting your school's basketball team.
- ✧ Daring someone to steal earrings from the mall.
- ✧ Helping a friend who is struggling with Algebra 2.
- ✧ Always telling your friends that they are stupid.
- ✧ Telling a lie to your parents.

We all have boundaries. Those boundaries are often challenged. People use power to try to control others. It is very important for your teen to understand when there is an imbalance of power in a relationship and how they need to stand up for themselves and maintain control over themselves and their choices. Encourage your teen to think about how people can exert control over others.

HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP SCENARIOS

Directions:

Ask your teen these questions:

- ✖ “Do you think there is a connection between self-esteem and relationships?”
- ✖ “Does the way you feel about yourself influence how you behave with others and how you let others treat you?”

In a healthy relationship, there is a constant positive spiral of positive interactions that increases your teen’s self-esteem and empowers them as an individual. In an unhealthy relationship, there is a constant downward spiral of negative interactions that serves to decrease your teen’s self-esteem and creates an imbalance of power.

Talk with your teen about each of these scenarios and ask them whether self-esteem is being increased or decreased and what effect that might have on their relationship.

Scenario 1

Mary worked really hard on her English essay. When her graded essay was returned, she was excited to see that she had earned a 94%. Mary was very proud of the grade because she had worked so hard. Caroline started laughing and said, “So who did you get to write that for you? You stink at writing!”

How do Caroline’s words affect Mary’s self-esteem?

What if Caroline had said, “Wow, that’s great. I know you worked really hard on your essay”?

What kind of a relationship do you think Mary has with Caroline? Healthy or unhealthy?

Scenario 2

Brian and Kyle are on the baseball team. Brian has not gotten a hit in the last four games. Before the game, he confides to Kyle that he doesn’t want to play tonight because he doesn’t think he will get a hit. Kyle slaps him on the back and says, “Hey man, we all have a few off games. Don’t get down on yourself.”

Did Kyle’s words and actions help or hurt Brian’s self-esteem? Why?

What kind of relationship do you think Brian has with Kyle? Healthy or unhealthy?

Scenario 3

Kaylynn has been learning to cook. She tries a new recipe and is excited to share it. Her mother's friend tastes it and makes a face. He says, "Hey Kaylynn, I think you need some points from your mom. This doesn't taste nearly as good as what she cooks!"

How did his reaction to her cooking make Kaylynn feel? Why?

What kind of relationship do you think Kaylynn has with her mother's friend? Healthy or unhealthy?

Scenario 4

Marcus spent most of the day cutting the lawn and trimming the bushes. When his neighbor comes home, he yells, "Wow, Marcus, good job! The lawn looks great."

Did the comments help or hurt Marcus' self-esteem?

What kind of relationship do you think Marcus has with his neighbor? Healthy or unhealthy?

Help your teen to understand that anytime someone tries to decrease their self-esteem, that is a sign that they are in an unhealthy relationship. Empower your teen and support them to end any relationship that has an imbalance of power.

CONTROL: FORCE, COERCION, OR FRAUD

Directions:

Discuss each of these terms with your teen. Explain that these are tactics people use to get others to do what they want. All of these tactics indicate that there is an unhealthy balance of power and are used in an attempt to control someone's behavior.

Force - making someone do something against his or her will by using violence to control that person

Coercion - making someone do something against his or her will by using threats or intimidation to control that person

Fraud - making someone do something against his or her will by using false promises or lies to control that person

Read each situation with your teen and help your teen determine what type of control is being used: force, coercion, or fraud. Brainstorm strategies with your teen to determine a way to say no or to get away.

Situation	Type of Control Force, Coercion, or Fraud	What Can You Do?
A stranger approaches a 15-year-old in the mall and says, "Wow, you are so pretty. Have you ever thought about modeling? I have some connections. If you come with me, I am sure I can get you a huge modeling contract."		
Chris has been dating Jamie for two months. He says, "I don't plan to wait forever. If you want to keep dating, you have to take things to the next level!"		
Jeremy is on the track team. He twisted his ankle at the last practice. He tells his coach he can't run in the next meet. His coach pushes him up against the locker room wall and shouts, "I don't care if it hurts, you will run at the meet!"		
Tara and Laura have been friends since third grade. They are excited about starting high school. Tara tells Laura that they need to fit in, and if she wants to make friends, she needs to start partying and drinking alcohol.		

FLIRTING OR HARASSMENT

Directions:

With your teen, read the following scenarios that describe an encounter between high school students. **Harassment is determined by the words and actions of a person and how they make another person feel.** Ask your teen to think about how the person is feeling or reacting, and circle whether they think it is an example of flirting or harassment.

Scenario	Circle the option that indicates how the encounter was received	Circle whether the encounter was flirting or harassment
<p>Cassie - "I love your haircut. You look fine."</p> <p>Robert - "Thanks, baby. You're looking good yourself."</p>	<p>Did Robert return Cassie's feelings?</p> <p>Returned and shared</p> <p>or</p> <p>Not returned; one-sided</p>	<p>Flirting</p> <p>Harassment</p>
<p>Kevin - "Hey girl, you wanna get some of this?" (Kevin licks his lips and winks)</p> <p>Tonya - "You are disgusting, Kevin!"</p>	<p>Were Kevin's comments wanted or unwanted?</p> <p>Wanted and welcome</p> <p>or</p> <p>Unwanted and unwelcome</p>	<p>Flirting</p> <p>Harassment</p>
<p>Brianna - "Your new dress is really hot."</p> <p>Amanda - "Thanks, Brianna. I got it for the homecoming dance. I can't wait for our date."</p>	<p>Were Brianna's comments wanted or unwanted?</p> <p>Wanted and welcome</p> <p>or</p> <p>Unwanted and unwelcome</p>	<p>Flirting</p> <p>Harassment</p>
<p>Jessica - "Hey Marcus, why don't you get over here and show me some lovin'?"</p> <p>Marcus - Looks away, picks up his backpack, and tells his friend: "Every day, she says something like that, and it's really awkward. I wish I could just have a quiet lunch."</p>	<p>How did this comment make Marcus feel?</p> <p>Good</p> <p>or</p> <p>Bad</p>	<p>Flirting</p> <p>Harassment</p>

<p>Manny gives Rebecca a long hug during lunch. Rebecca hugs back and smiles.</p>	<p>How did this hug or touch make Rebecca feel?</p> <p>Good</p> <p>or</p> <p>Bad</p>	<p>Flirting</p> <p>Harassment</p>
<p>Jeremy comes up behind Sarah and puts his arms around her waist. He squeezes her and rubs his hands over her stomach. Sarah pulls away and looks angry.</p>	<p>How did this hug or touch make Sarah feel?</p> <p>Good</p> <p>or</p> <p>Bad</p>	<p>Flirting</p> <p>Harassment</p>
<p>James - "Hey girl, you are lookin' good today."</p> <p>Jennifer - "Thanks, you are too sweet!"</p>	<p>How did Jennifer perceive James's comment?</p> <p>Compliment</p> <p>or</p> <p>Insult</p>	<p>Flirting</p> <p>Harassment</p>
<p>Thomas - "Oh, hey, Krista, you're not lookin' so good. If you were my girl, you would be lookin' fine!"</p> <p>Krista turns and walks away.</p>	<p>How did Krista perceive Thomas's comment?</p> <p>Compliment</p> <p>or</p> <p>Insult</p>	<p>Flirting</p> <p>Harassment</p>
<p>After football practice. Ray complains that his shoulder hurts. Susan asks if a shoulder massage would help. When Ray agrees, Susan rubs his shoulder.</p>	<p>Was this touch okay?</p> <p>Acceptable and legal</p> <p>or</p> <p>Unacceptable and illegal</p>	<p>Flirting</p> <p>Harassment</p>
<p>Between classes, Tony corners Ben and hugs him. Tony then touches Ben inappropriately. When Ben pulls away, Tony grabs him again. Ben yells and runs away.</p>	<p>Was this touch okay?</p> <p>Acceptable and legal</p> <p>or</p> <p>Unacceptable and illegal</p>	<p>Flirting</p> <p>Harassment</p>

STEPS TO SAFETY

Dating Violence

Teens learn how to behave in relationships from peers, adults in their lives, and the media. Teens often receive messages that suggest violence in a relationship is normal. However, violence in a dating relationship is never acceptable. Dating violence is related to certain risk factors.

Risks of having unhealthy relationships increase for teens who:

- ✈ Believe that dating violence is acceptable
- ✈ Are depressed, anxious, or have other symptoms of trauma
- ✈ Display aggressive behaviors toward peers
- ✈ Use drugs or other illegal substances
- ✈ Engage in early sexual activity and have multiple sexual partners
- ✈ Have a friend involved in dating violence
- ✈ Have conflicts with a partner
- ✈ Witness or experience violence in the home

Teens who communicate effectively with their partner in a dating relationship, manage emotions like anger and jealousy, and treat others with respect are more likely to have relationships that are healthy and nonviolent. Teens who feel as though they can turn to their parents in times of need are more likely to disclose that they are in an unsafe dating situation and get the help they need to remove themselves from that situation.

Steps to Protecting Your Teen from Dating Violence

Step 1
✈ Explain to your teen that young adults experience the same types of abuse as adults, and reinforce that this abuse is NEVER acceptable.

Step 2
✈ Help your teen to learn about the various forms of abuse that may occur in a dating relationship:
Physical – Any intentional use of physical force with the intent to cause fear or injury, including hitting, shoving, biting, strangling, kicking, or using a weapon.

Verbal or Emotional – Non-physical behaviors such as threats, insults, constant monitoring, humiliation, intimidation, isolation, or stalking.

Sexual – Any action that impacts a person's ability to control their sexual activity or the circumstances in which sexual activity occurs.

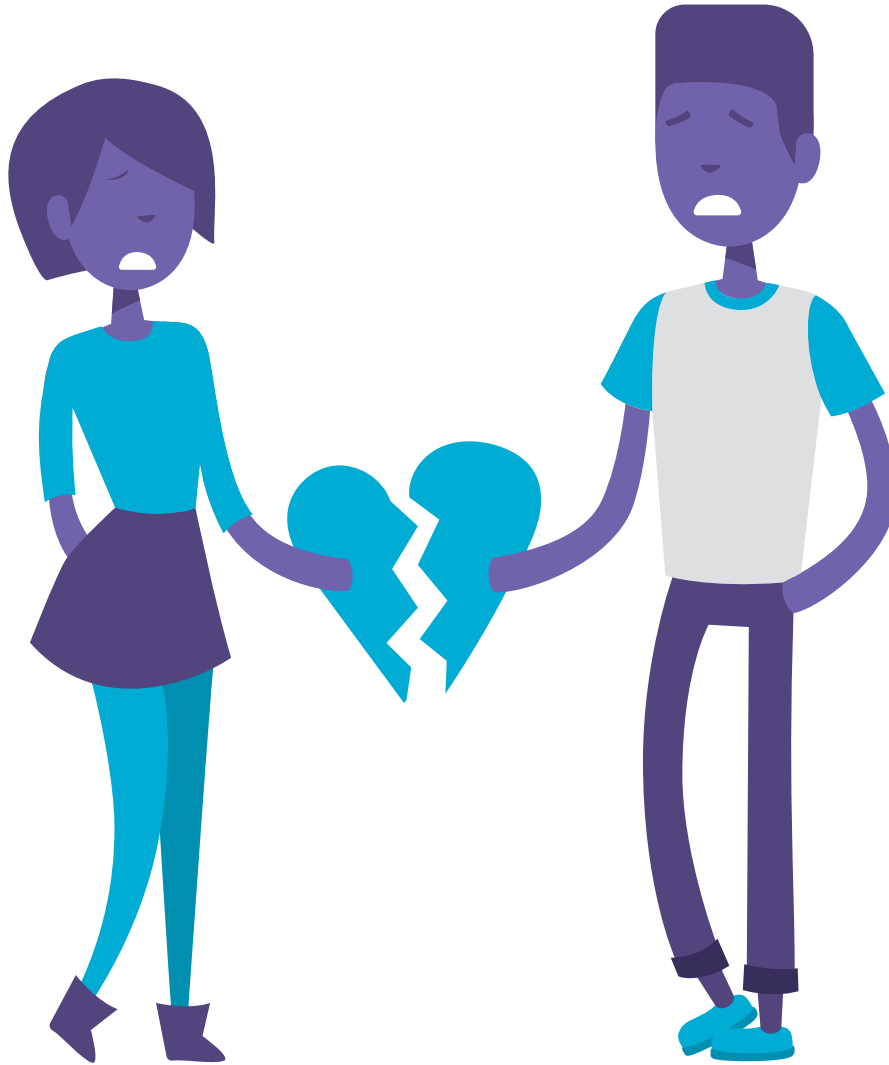
Cyber – Use of the Internet and any technology, including social media, to intimidate, harass, or threaten a current or former dating partner. Examples include demanding passwords, checking cell phones, cyber-bullying, distributing inappropriate pictures, sexting, excessive or threatening texts, or stalking on social media.

 Step 3

Promote healthy relationships. During the preteen and teen years, your teen is learning skills they need to form positive relationships with others. Healthy dating relationships early on can prevent patterns of dating violence and domestic violence that can last into adulthood.

 Step 4

Don't miss signs that your teen may be in a violent relationship. Monitor your teen's behavior and intervene if you see behaviors in their partner that could indicate that your teen is at risk. Involve law enforcement and notify school officials when necessary to keep your teen safe.



STEPS TO SAFETY

Red Flags of Grooming

Your teen should always be aware of strangers, but sometimes people they know well and trust can hurt them. Help your teen understand that when someone makes them feel uncomfortable, unsafe, or threatened, or is just too close to them, that person has violated their body boundary. It is important that your teen is able to recognize if a relationship is just not right, could become harmful, or could be the process of grooming.

Grooming is when an adult gives a teen extra attention that isn't normal, healthy, or appropriate in an effort to gain their trust and the trust of their family. This kind of inappropriate behavior can lead to that adult harming the teen. Your teen may think that everyone enjoys attention, and that the attention makes them feel special. If that attention begins to make them feel uncomfortable or if their body boundary becomes violated with unwanted and inappropriate touches, your teen should immediately report it to a trusted adult.

It is important for your teen to understand that there are instances that can make them vulnerable to an abuser who could use these situations as part of the grooming process. Abusers are skillful and manipulative, often behaving in friendly and fun ways to gain a teen's trust. They may be acquaintances of the family, community leaders, trusted family friends, family members, or strangers.

Grooming tactics are methodical and intended to gain access to a teen, to isolate and create secrecy around the relationship. Giving gifts and special privileges are common tactics. It is important for teens to establish their boundaries and to be confident in maintaining those boundaries. Teens should always be alert to the red flags of grooming and should tell a trusted adult right away if they feel that a situation is not quite right or if that situation makes them feel uncomfortable.

Red Flags of Grooming

Grooming behaviors are the steps an abuser takes to win the trust of kids and their families over time to set the stage for sexual abuse.

- 🦋 Expensive gifts
- 🦋 Special treatment
- 🦋 Testing boundaries
- 🦋 Checking reactions
- 🦋 Isolation
- 🦋 Unsafe secrets
- 🦋 Unsafe touches

Protecting Your Teen from Grooming

🦋 Step 1

Your teen knows about the danger of strangers and that they are never to talk to, go anywhere with, or meet with a stranger. But there is a much greater chance of your teen being harmed by someone they know. It is very important that you and your teen know that there are behaviors predators use to groom victims and gain their family's trust.

Step 2

Know the red flags of grooming. Grooming behaviors are the steps an abuser takes to win the trust of teens and their families over time to set the stage for sexual abuse.

-  Expensive gifts
-  Special treatment
-  Testing boundaries
-  Checking reactions
-  Isolation
-  Unsafe secrets
-  Unsafe touches

Step 3

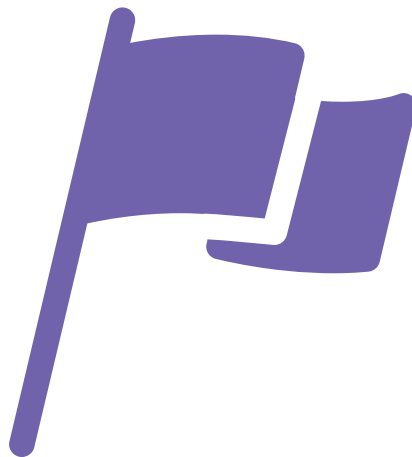
Keep the lines of communication open with your teen. Talk to them about the interactions they have with other adults. Remember that teens who feel like they can talk to their parents or caregivers about anything are much less susceptible to being victimized by a sexual predator.

Step 4

Monitor the time and frequency that other adults spend with your teen. Make sure that any other adult who is spending time with your teen knows that you are aware, involved, and in communication with your teen. Anytime you feel as though some of the grooming behaviors are becoming apparent, remove your teen from the situation immediately. Inform other parents of your concerns if their teen is involved with this adult.

Step 5

Report suspicious behavior on the part of any adult interacting with children and/or teens to the agency or organization employing the individual, and follow up with law enforcement. Be aware of predators who may be living in your area.



IS IT GROOMING?

Directions:

Discuss the process of grooming and the tactics that predators use with your teen. Explain that there are common characteristics of grooming tactics. Remind them that there can be victims and abusers who do not fit these descriptions. For example, victims may be described as isolated from family and friends. However, that does not mean that someone who is very close with his or her family and who has a lot of close friends can't be a victim. Abuse can happen to anyone.

The grooming process usually starts with the abuser finding a victim who they think may be vulnerable. The abuser looks for someone who may be emotionally vulnerable, has low self-esteem, may seem lonely, or has a need — such as being in a family that is going through a difficult divorce or financial hardship.

Next, the abuser develops a relationship with the victim and, many times, with the family, too. The abuser is often very nice and likeable. The abuser finds out what the victim needs and then works to fill that need. For example, if finding out the victim feels alone and wants attention, the abuser may provide that needed attention. It may be more than just spending time together; the abuser may give gifts or take the victim places. Secrecy is an important tactic that a predator will use in the grooming process. The predator usually tells the victim to keep gifts, attention, special favors, and trips a secret.

Once the relationship has been formed, the abuser will begin to isolate the victim by setting up situations where they are alone together. A critical part of the grooming process is testing the boundaries and the reactions of the victim. Once there is a trusting relationship in which it is common for the victim and abuser to be alone together, the abuser will begin to introduce a sexual relationship.

Finally, the abuser will establish and maintain control through secrecy, blame, intimidation, and threats. The abuser often convinces the victim that terrible things will happen if the victim tells.

Reinforce to your teen that telling someone, being heard, and being helped will stop the abuse.

Complete the activity on the next page with your teen. Read each scenario together and discuss if the interaction is okay and a normal situation for someone their age or if they think it is a potential grooming situation. Underline the clues. If they think it is grooming, ask what they think the person in the scenario could do to stop the abuser from continuing the grooming relationship.

Reinforce to your teen that telling someone, being heard, and being helped will stop the abuse.

Complete this activity with your teen. Read each scenario together and discuss if the interaction is okay and a normal situation for someone their age or if they think it is a potential grooming situation. Underline the clues. If they think it is grooming, ask what they think the person in the scenario could do to stop the abuser from continuing the grooming relationship.

Scenario	Safe or Grooming?	What can you do?
<p>Kelly is 14, and she often goes over to her best friend Mandy's house. Mandy's college-age sister Meghan is frequently at the house even though she has her own apartment. Meghan and Kelly often talk about school, shopping, and boys. Kelly doesn't have any sisters, and her mother works long hours, so she enjoys having someone to talk to and spend time with. Meghan begins inviting Kelly over to her apartment. She takes her shopping and buys her new clothes. She encourages Kelly to keep it a secret because she doesn't want Mandy to get jealous. She then begins to invite Kelly to spend the weekends with her.</p>		
<p>Miles is on the swim team. Usually he is very talkative and jokes around before practice. Today, he is quiet and keeps to himself. His coach walks over and asks if anything is wrong. Miles explains that he just found out his parents are splitting up. His coach says, "Yeah, my folks split up when I was young, too. It can be rough, but you will get through it. I remember it really helped me to talk to someone, so if you need help getting together with your school counselor, let me know."</p>		
<p>Keisha has always gone out for burgers after the basketball games with a group of friends. She starts to make excuses about why she can't go with them. She stops sitting with them at lunch. She doesn't talk to her friends before school. One friend tries talking to her to find out what's wrong. Keisha denies anything is wrong, but she gets a text from J.T. that reads, "See you after school. I have something special for you."</p>		
<p>Antonio's neighbor offers to pay him to do some work around the house. He tells Antonio that he knows money has been tight and he just wants to help out. However, he doesn't want Antonio's mom to know that he is paying him because he doesn't want to hurt her pride. Antonio starts out helping with the yard work. Then he is asked to come inside and help with some painting. One day, Antonio misses the bus for school and decides to stay home. His neighbor notices and says he will tell Antonio's mom that he skipped school unless he agrees to keep helping out around the house.</p>		

STEPS TO SAFETY

Cyber-Safety

As technology rapidly changes every day, cyber-space has become a place where teens are frequently ahead of their parents in their knowledge of the digital world. Teens are more connected to technology than ever before, and new devices, apps, and sites become available to your teen almost daily. Because of the nature of teens, who believe that nothing will happen to them, the digital world can be very dangerous.

It is very important that parents become keenly aware of what their teen is doing on the Internet and that they reinforce safe use of their devices.

Steps for Keeping Your Teen Safe in the Digital World

Step 1

Your teen needs to have your permission for the use of Internet devices. You are responsible for your teen's actions on the Internet, so you need to know what they are doing. Stress the importance of protecting passwords on their computer and phone. Passwords should NEVER be shared with anyone. That is private information.

Step 2

Your teen needs to understand that you or another trusted adult should have knowledge of the sites they visit online — websites and game sites. They should never visit a site or use an app unless approved by you or another trusted adult.

Step 3

Your teen needs to acknowledge that using the Internet or social media to harass or bully someone is not an activity that is permitted, and it is illegal in some cases.

Step 4

Your teen needs to know the name of anyone they interact with online. Your teen needs to know that this person is real and that this person is telling the truth about his or her identity. Stress the idea that your teen should not chat with or reply to a stranger online, just as they would not give personal information to a stranger in person. Your teen should never agree to meet in person with anyone they met online. Your teen needs to understand that they should never go to chat rooms or chat online with someone they do not know. They need to realize that when they are chatting online, they really never know with whom they are chatting. Teens have a very difficult time accepting this concept. Your teen needs to understand that they should only use their devices for the permitted activity of a game, site, or app that is allowed by you or another trusted adult.

While it may seem like a daunting task to monitor your teen's Internet activity, it is essential that they know there are boundaries and expectations for their behavior online, just like there are boundaries and expectations for their behavior anywhere. The anonymity of the Internet may make your teen think they can do whatever they want, but they need to fully grasp that there are consequences for making unsafe decisions online.

CELL PHONE AND INTERNET SURVEY

Directions:

You and your teenager may be surprised by some of the statistics in the Cell Phone and Internet Survey. Take the survey together and discuss the information.

Cell Phone and Internet Survey

1. What percentage of high school students have a cell phone?
A. 80% B. 65% C. 50% D. 25%
2. What percentage of high school students have access to a computer at home?
A. More than 90% B. 75% C. 50% D. Less than 30%
3. Who accesses the Internet more often?
A. Boys B. Girls C. Boys and girls access it equally
4. What percentage of teenagers communicate through social media?
A. 95% B. 84% C. 68% D. 45%
5. What percentage of teenagers have had private or embarrassing information shared online without their permission?
A. 40% B. 29% C. 19% D. 7%
6. What percentage of teenagers say they can text with their eyes closed?
A. 72% B. 55% C. 43% D. 28%
7. Is a teenager more likely to call or text a friend?
A. Call B. Text
8. How much time each day does the average teenager spend texting?
A. Less than 30 minutes B. 45 minutes C. 1 hour and 15 minutes D. More than 1 hour and 50 minutes

Survey answers

1. A
2. A
3. 93% of boys and 92% of girls access the Internet
4. B (www.pewinternet.org/files/old-media/Files/Reports/2013/PIP_TeensandTechnology2013.pdf)
5. B
6. C
7. 54% send a text message and 34% make a phone call
8. D – the average teenager spends 1 hour and 51 minutes texting each day
– www.cell-phone-parental-control-software-review.toptenreviews.com/are-teenagers-becoming-too-attached-to-their-cell-phones.html
– www.psychologytoday.com/blog/teen-angst/201103/teen-texters

TO SHARE OR NOT TO SHARE

Directions:

Read each item with your teen. Discuss if your teen should share that information or should not share that information. Brainstorm with your teen about what the potential consequences of sharing information might be.

Information you may text or post	Should it be shared?	Consequences
Study time! Boring.		
Girls' night. Pizza and a movie. Nothing better!		
Can't wait for the weekend! Parents are out of town, house to myself! Call if you want to chill 352-384-3XX2.		

<p>Having dinner with Britany at our favorite Mexican spot, Los Compadres! Will be here until 8!</p>		
<p>I wish I could just get out of my house. I'm sick of being told what to do!</p>		
<p>I know we've never met, but you have been so nice to listen to me. Maybe we can meet sometime?</p>		
<p>Big plans today! Running around the neighborhood after school, getting my nails done at L.A. Nails, dinner at the food court, and then meeting friends for a movie. See you at the theater around 9.</p>		

STEPS TO SAFETY

Safety P.L.A.N.

The purpose of the Safety P.L.A.N. is to keep your teen safe. Review each step and stress the importance of it.

Safety P.L.A.N.	
P = Permission	You should always ask for and receive permission before you go somewhere. If you want to go somewhere your parents won't agree to, then you probably shouldn't be there.
L = Location	Make sure your parents or another responsible adult knows where you are going. This means the exact location, not just a "friend's house." If there is an emergency, you need to know the address so you can get help.
A = Activity	What are you going to be doing when you get to the location?
N = Names and Numbers	Give your parent or responsible adult the names and phone numbers of the person or people you are going to be with.

How to Make a Safety P.L.A.N. with Your Teen

Step 1

Help your child complete a Safety P.L.A.N. for an everyday situation, such as going to the movies with a friend, a sleepover, or riding bikes to the park. Reinforce the importance of each step of the Safety P.L.A.N. and emphasize how each step helps to keep your teen safe, and why there should not ever be a step that they skip.

Step 2

Help your teen understand that sometimes situations arise that put them in a position where they might be tempted to change their Safety P.L.A.N. Talk with your teen about the importance of sticking with their Safety P.L.A.N. and how that will keep them safe. In the event that your teen wants to change their Safety P.L.A.N., model the appropriate way to do that by repeating the process, beginning with getting Permission.

Step 3

Reinforce the lessons by asking your teen what they would do in possible situations that would cause their Safety P.L.A.N. to change. Play the "what if?" game! For example, what if your teen is in a situation where a friend changes the Safety P.L.A.N. and tries to convince your teen that it will be okay, or tells your teen not to tell you? What if an adult changes the agreed upon Safety P.L.A.N. and tells your teen that it is okay with you? Asking your teen what they think or feel about something before the situation occurs allows your teen to practice what to do. It also lets them know that they can talk with you about anything and that you are there to help them figure out what to do. By regularly engaging your teen in such conversations, your teen is more likely to come to you with real-life situations, ask more questions, and gain your input.

Step 4

Use a Safety P.L.A.N. regularly in your home. Place a whiteboard in your kitchen titled Safety P.L.A.N., and require that your teen complete their Safety P.L.A.N. each time they leave the house without you.

SAFETY P.L.A.N.

Directions:

Start a discussion with your teen with the following statement: **“Let’s talk about planning to stay safe.”**

Remind your teen that they are making plans all the time. For example, if they are going to the movies, they would plan what movie they want to see, locate a theater, find out the show times, figure out transportation, and get money for the tickets and refreshments. However, they often fail to plan to stay safe. Making plans to stay safe are some of the most important plans your teen can make.

An important part of personal safety is having a plan. As your teen gets older, they have more freedom and independence. With this independence come responsibilities. They cannot just hope that everything goes well and that they never find themselves in a potentially dangerous situation. Creating a well-thought-out plan in advance will help protect them and keep them safe.

Review each part of the Safety P.L.A.N. with your teen.

Safety P.L.A.N.	
P = Permission	You should always ask for and receive permission before you go somewhere. If you want to go somewhere your parents won’t agree to, then you probably shouldn’t be there.
L = Location	Make sure a parent or another responsible adult knows where you are going. This means the exact location, not just a “friend’s house.” If there is an emergency, you need to know the address so you can get help.
A = Activity	What are you going to be doing when you get to the location?
N = Names and Numbers	Give your parent or responsible adult the names and phone numbers of the person or people you are going to be with.

Use this Safety P.L.A.N. when your teen goes out. Reassure your teen that you are not using this information to follow them or because you don’t trust their judgment, but that it is just for your knowledge. You need this information to help your teen stay safe.

Safety P.L.A.N.	
P = Permission	
L = Location	
A = Activity	
N = Names and Numbers	