

Parents and carers



Having conversations about relationships, sex and consent isn't always easy and some of us might feel a little awkward or unsure about how to approach these.

However, these conversations are important and parents and carers play a crucial role in keeping children and young people safe.

It is important that young people know that they can come to their parents/carers with questions or for advice about relationships, especially if something has happened to upset them.

♥ Let's talk!

Parents and carers should feel empowered to have conversations with children and young people on this subject from an early age, in an age-appropriate way.

Find a time when your child is relaxed and somewhere they feel safe to have the conversation. Try to find somewhere they won't be overheard and can speak freely e.g. in their bedroom or going for a walk.

It can sometimes help to have these conversations while also doing something else such as cooking or baking so that the young person doesn't feel under pressure.

These conversation starters were designed with a group of young women and girls and are intended to provide a guide in having these conversations.

If your child doesn't want to talk about this now, don't force it but do try again in future.

Listen to them and let them know that they can come to you if something happens that makes them feel uncomfortable, worried or upset and assure them that they are never alone.

Don't make them feel as though they are being lectured or judged.

Rather than having one, big conversation, try to chat with your child little and often about this subject.

You might want to use examples from films or TV shows where appropriate to open the conversation.





♥ Conversation Starters

Everybody is different and how you approach these conversations will depend very much on you and your child or young person. Below are some conversation starters which you might find helpful.

Ask how they are feeling.

Ask what a healthy relationship means to them.

Ask about their friendships and relationships with others.

Talk about examples in films or TV of unhealthy relationships and what warning signs are. Where appropriate you may want to give examples of your own experiences.

Let them know that you are there if they ever need to talk about something.

If you are worried about them, you might want to:

Use positive language to help them see good things about themselves – you deserve to be happy/safe.

Reassure them that they have not done anything wrong.

Ask what their advice to someone else would be in this situation.

Let them know where they can get help.

You should avoid simply telling them to end a relationship or giving ultimatums as this may mean that they shut off.

♥ Sex and consent

You can find more information on how to talk to young people about sex and consent by visiting:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/sex-relationships/healthy-relationships/>

♥ Need more advice?

For parenting advice and support call the **NSPCC Helpline** on **0808 800 5000** or email help@nspcc.org.uk

