

10

WAYS TO PROTECT YOUR TEEN FROM SEXUAL ASSAULT



1. ASK THEM TO DEFINE KEY TERMS

This allows you to have a clear understanding of what they think and know about assault and consent. It also gives you the opportunity to clear up any misconceptions that they might have.

2. DEFINE ASSAULT

Many young people have a very narrow idea of what assault is and do not understand the range of behaviors that constitute assault. It is sexual touching or other sexual activity without consent.

3. DEFINE CONSENT

They need to know that consent should be verbal and affirmative. It is about someone actively agreeing to some activity. It is much more than just the absence of them saying no.

4. GO BEYOND DEFINITIONS

Make sure that your teen understands that consent is an ongoing process and it can be withdrawn at any time. If someone becomes uncomfortable at any point, there is no longer consent.

5. GIVE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES

Provide a variety of age-appropriate scenarios and examples of assault, such as sex with someone who is incapacitated or someone who consented to some activity but is uncomfortable with other activity.

6. ENCOURAGE A CULTURE OF CONSENT

Getting your child into the habit of asking for and granting consent when it comes to touching or hugging will make consent a more natural part of the process in physically and sexually intimate situations.

7. TEACH BOUNDARIES WHEN THEY ARE YOUNG

Before your teen becomes sexually active, make it clear that they have control over their body. You and others will respect their physical boundaries, and they also must respect the boundaries of others.

8. TALK WITH OTHER PARENTS

Making sure that your teen's peers also have a clear understanding of assault and consent can go a long way toward protecting your child. Talking to others can also provide you with additional ideas or approaches.

9. EMPHASIZE LOOKING OUT FOR OTHERS

Talk to your child about standing up for others who might be in danger or are being assaulted. Discuss scenarios and help them develop strategies to intervene and protect others from the trauma of sexual assault.

10. CREATE A LIFELINE

Let them know if they are ever in a situation they want to get away from or where they feel uncomfortable, you will come and get them. Honest and open communication is critical to reducing the risk of sexual assault.



A PARENT'S ROLE

Sexual assault cannot be reduced to a single cause, but confusion about consensual sex is a major factor. Regardless of your teen's gender, your role is to make sure they understand the importance of consent and the need to respect the boundaries of others. If you are the parent of a male teen, help them understand that sexual assault is more than using violence or forcible rape. If you are the parent of a female teen, help them understand their power to establish boundaries and exercise autonomy over their own bodies.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network

www.rainn.org/resources

Youth.gov

youth.gov/federal-links/share-youth-sexual-assault-resources-teens-and-their-parents