

Take 4 Counseling Program

Tips for talking to adolescents:

1. Acknowledge and validate their feelings:

Show them you understand, are ready to listen, and know that their feelings matter. If they express difficulties, try saying “Yeah, that sounds tough. What might help you feel better?”

2. Practice transparency:

If you notice your teen is struggling, consider your own struggles and say something like “I had a rough day yesterday too, thinking about everything that’s going on.” Share healthy strategies that made you feel better, like taking a walk or phoning friends.

3. Ask about their friends:

Teens can become overly worried about friends. If you notice your child is upset or withdrawn after chatting with a friend, mention that you noticed. Don’t force the issue, but let them know you care and are available to talk or listen.

5. Give teens control:

It can be frustrating when teens see friends who are allowed to do things you don’t let them do. Provide an explanation so they can better understand your position and offer them other choices to give them a sense of autonomy.

6. Provide facts:

There’s a lot of misinformation about COVID. Assist them by asking where they got their information and what they think about it. Work together to find credible information: doctor’s office, World Health Organization and National Institutes of Health.

7. Give teens privacy:

Teens value alone time. You can schedule breaks in between schoolwork. They can use breaks to listen to music, socialize, play a video game, read or exercise. Get them to offer ideas.

8. Note changes in behavior or mood:

If your teen has lost interest in enjoyable activities or seem more irritable, they might be feeling depressed or anxious. Counseling may be indicated and certainly contact their doctor right away if they make statements like, “Things would be better if I wasn’t here.” Always take these comments seriously, even if you think they didn’t mean it.

9. Take time to clear your mind

Parents are juggling a lot right now between work, homeschooling and responsibilities at home. You need to take care of yourself to continue caring for your family. Parental modeling of coping strategies, including self-care, is an important way to teach teens about healthy behaviors. Invite your teen to join you once in a while; practicing self-care is an important skill to learn early in life.



As your family perseveres through the pandemic, maintain open lines of communication. Don’t get discouraged if your child doesn’t always want to talk. It’s a tough time for everybody in different ways. You can get through it together, one question and conversation at a time.

