

Wish you could talk to your parents???

Have you ever wished you could talk to your parents about sex and your feelings but just couldn't figure out how to start the conversation?

Maybe your parents feel the same way.

Here are some tips that may help to start this important conversation.

- ☺ Pick a good time to talk. If they are really busy, on their way out the door or not in a good mood- this is not the time! Think about setting up an appointment.
- ☺ Start with general subjects. For example, instead of saying "I'm thinking of having sex with Joe" you could say "Do you think teens should wait until they are married to have sex?" or "Did you ever feel pressured to have sex?"
- ☺ Use a TV show, health class discussion, book, or an article as a starting point. You could say, "We were talking about teen pregnancy in health class and I wondered what you thought about teens having sex."
- ☺ Listen! Your parents are more likely to help if you listen to what they have to say.
- ☺ Do not yell or argue. You might disagree with them, but you should respect them.
- ☺ If they start lecturing, remind them that you are just asking questions. Say you want to be informed and you figure they are the best source of solid info.
- ☺ If you still think you could never talk to your parents about sensitive stuff, don't worry. Try talking to a relative, a friend's parent, teacher, school counselor, clergy, doctor, or school nurse. And, remember you know your family best. Will this be a safe discussion? If not, then try another trusted adult.

If you succeed in making this "communication connection" with your parents the payoff can be huge. Adults in our lives have lots of experience and you can learn from them.

This information came from the article "Talking to Your Parents about Sex" by Emily Chaloner (age 16) online at www.sexetc.org /a project of Network for Family Life of Rutgers University.

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