












PARENT SERIES

Tips when talking with your teenager

What happened to the kid who always wanted to talk? Are you having trouble talking to your teenager? Here are ten tips that might help!

-  **Show interest.** Ask them to tell you about what they are doing and leave it to them to choose what they will talk to you about. Make eye-contact with them – this nonverbal communication will show them that you are paying attention and listening to them.
-  **Demonstrate respect.** Accept the times they don't feel like talking. Let your teenager know that you still want to have the discussion as it is important to you, but that you can wait until a more appropriate time.
-  **Actively listen.** It is not important to do all the talking. If you take over the conversation you may miss out on hearing about your teenager's world. Validate their feelings to show you understand and empathize; "wow, that sounds difficult".
-  **Avoid lecturing, nagging and ordering.** Your teenager may not feel heard and you could possibly close down the conversation, when you probably want to open it up. After they have spoken, ask if they would like some assistance or your opinion.
-  **Be aware of your judgements and reactions.** If teenagers feel judged or belittled, they will not come to you when they need to talk and you will feel closed off from their world. Stay calm, ask questions and listen without judgement to your young person.
-  **Avoid giving mixed messages.** Be assertive, clear, open and honest with your teenager. Lead by example: if you are talking to your teenage about the importance of doing exercise, why not do some exercise yourself, or better yet, go for a run together!
-  **Choose a place and time.** Providing the right environment, free from distraction can allow greater opportunities for deeper discussions. If you are spending a lot of time in the car driving your teenager around, use this time wisely to hold conversations.
-  **Share your experiences.** In an age appropriate manner by enquiring if they would like your experiences and opinion. They are learning to think for themselves and are able to make some decisions for themselves and may or may not need your opinion.
-  **Include other topics.** Talking about a broad range of topics will allow you to gain a deeper understanding of your teenager's perspective and give them an opportunity to see that you are also human which may make it easier for your teenager to talk to you.

If you would like to book an appointment and /or speak with one of our Counsellors, it's as easy as calling 1300 66 77 00 or New Zealand 0800 327 669 or visit our website www.accesswellbeingservices.com.au