

Little Talks to have with your 16- to 18-year-old.

1.

Support healthy body image.

Reinforce your child's self-esteem. Compliment their whole self. Their appearance, intelligence, and talents are all tenuous for them right now. As they are looking more toward the future, they need frequent reminders from you about how amazing you think they are.

2.

Discuss drugs and alcohol.

Peers are extremely influential at this age. If your teen hasn't been taught about drug and alcohol use, they may not be equipped to make the right choice when a situation arises. Also help them understand the connection between substance use and risky sexual behaviors.

3.

Discuss sexual health and intercourse.

Have open discussions with your teen about contraception and your values about intercourse. Be sure they understand the full implications of making sexual decisions at this age, the danger of unprotected sex, and the precautions to take in relationships if they choose to be sexually active.

4.

Talk about relationships, consent, and respect.

Model for them what a healthy relationship looks like. Educate them about consent – for themselves and others. Teach them the role respect should play in their relationships.

5.

Discus dating, appropriate boundaries, and sexual assault.

Empower them to set boundaries with the people in their lives. Talk openly about dating and relationships, especially as they transition into adulthood. Make sure they know the risk of sexual assault, especially in their freshman year of college. Help them know how to reduce the risk, how to report, and what to do if they learn about a sexual assault.

6.

Talk about media.

Have discussions about how sexuality, body image, and gender roles are portrayed. Include a discussion of media that portrays sex and the dangers that can come from viewing women, men, sex, and relationships in violent, demeaning, or non-consensual ways.