

# SAFE-T Newsletter:

# Communication

## COMMUNICATING ABOUT SEXUALITY AND RELATIONSHIPS

Talking about sexuality with children and adolescents can feel intimidating, especially if you don't have a lot of practice speaking openly about this topic. However, youth get messages every day about sexuality (from the media, from their friends, etc.) and often-times have questions. When opportunities arise to engage in a conversation about sexuality, it can be helpful to remember a few things.

- You don't need to have all the answers! If you are unsure of something, feel free to let the adolescent know that you will need to get back to them. Then take some time, talk to other people, and/or access resources.
- Start by asking open-ended questions. This helps you to get a better understanding for what the adolescent already knows and what their questions are.
- Be sure to respond in developmentally appropriate ways. Depending on the age of the adolescent, you may choose to respond with more or less information.

Talking about sexuality may create some anxiety at first but it is something that we can all become more comfortable with over time. Remember that talking with adolescents about sexuality is something that, ideally, happens over time and not in one conversation.

## OPEN AND HONEST COMMUNICATION

Being able to have open and honest communication with your adolescent makes them more likely to seek you out as a resource. It also gives you the opportunity to send messages you would like your adolescent to receive or to redirect misinformation. Modeling a relationship with open communication helps adolescents transfer those communication skills to other relationships to encourage healthy relationships with open communication.

### *Year 1 Progression*

1. Program Introduction
2. Support & Resources
3. Coping
4. Empathy
5. Respecting Boundaries
6. Flirting, Joking, and Sexual Harassment
7. Taking Responsibility for Actions
8. Bystanders
9. Healthy Relationships Project I
10. Healthy Relationships Project II

### *Year 2 Progression*

1. Program Introduction
2. Sexuality
3. Gender Stereotypes
4. Consent
5. What is Sexual Abuse?
6. Showing Support
7. Risk Factors & Asking for Help
8. Creating Caring Communities
9. Final Project I
10. Final Project II



[pcavt.org](http://pcavt.org)

## WHAT ARE TEEN ADULT DIALOGUES?

Teen-Adult Dialogues are an opportunity for parents and guardians to reinforce messages in SAFE-T, as well as discuss their own thoughts and perspectives about healthy relationships. Throughout the course of SAFE-T, each Newsletter will have Teen-Adult Dialogue questions. We ask you to find a time to naturally and honestly share these questions with your child.

# Teen Adult Dialogues

**Sexuality:** Where do adolescents get information about sexuality?  
How do you know if this information is accurate?

**Gender Stereotypes:** Why do you think people expect boys or girls to behave in a certain way? Do you agree with these expectations?

**Gender Stereotypes:** Has there ever been a time that you felt like you could not or should not do something because you were a boy/girl?  
How did that make you feel?

## Questions?

If at any point you have any questions or concerns about the SAFE-T Program, please contact the SAFE-T Team at:

**Prevent Child Abuse  
Vermont**

Montpelier, VT  
802-229-5724  
pcavt@pcavt.org  
www.pcavt.org



## A note on families

Each family is unique. We recognize that all families are quite different, even within the same community. We hope that in talking to your child about relationships you will highlight your family's culture as well as perhaps the broader culture your family is a part of. Being able to discuss issues through the lens of specific family experiences and knowledge deepens mutual understanding between adolescents and adults, and can facilitate richer conversation.