

Tips for Awkward Conversations with Your Teen



Having uncomfortable conversations with your teenager may be weird, but it doesn't mean we get a pass as a parent. From something huge like discussing sexuality to something smaller like hearing gossip about your kid, the discussion must be had.

Here's how you can make some adjustments to make it less awkward:

1 Sit next to each other

This sounds weird, but talking while you ride in the car, or sit beside each other at a game or an event. Even having the conversation at the kitchen bar helps reduce the direct eye contact that can make the awkwardness palpable.

2 Limit interruptions

If this conversation was difficult to initiate, the last thing you want to do is restart it. Silence phones and be in a place you won't be disturbed.

3 Allow enough time

Don't start a discussion 10 minutes prior to an activity. It will need to have a Part 2 later.

4 Choose a comfortable/safe place

If you know the subject matter you will discuss could lead to your teen being upset or emotional, make sure you are in an environment that allows for that and one where they are able to focus and feel safe.

5 Keep it private

Don't have awkward conversations in front of their friends or others. This can lead to them feeling trapped and even more embarrassed.

6 Give them some prep time

Just like us, teens can be super busy and have a lot going on. If we just walk in and start talking, they are often distracted, feel irritated by the interruption, and have a hard time changing focus to what you want to discuss. Saying something like, "Hey, I wanted to talk for a few minutes. Could we do that in the kitchen in a half hour?" gives them some time to transition.

7 Tell them what and why

Teens can sense your discomfort. They will be distracted wondering where this conversation is going and why. They often assume they are getting in trouble. Giving them the punchline first will help them to listen better. Consider saying something like, "I wanted to talk to you about drinking because I remember it being a big deal when I was in middle school."