Think talking with teens about sexual violence is just for health teachers, parents, or . . . someone else?

How about you? Yep you, the mentor. It’s no secret teens often turn to mentors like you for advice. So even if you have just a few moments with teens, start conversations with them. Moments like these add up to prevent sexual violence. Remember—formal lectures not required.

USE THESE TIPS TO GET STARTED.
✓ Be a good listener.
✓ Be supportive and non-accusatory.
✓ Show them you’re open to talking.
✓ Avoid making assumptions about:
  • Their identities, bodies, or behaviors
  • How they want to handle the situation
✓ Be careful not to judge their choices or show disapproval.
✓ Recognize and reject stereotypes you may have about individuals, cultures, and issues.
✓ Allow them to make their own decisions about the situation (step in when required by law).
✓ Be a resource. Give them tools and show them where to go for more information.
✓ Admit when you don’t know something.
✓ Educate yourself on rape culture. Seek out current, evidence-based resources.
✓ Keep it low key. Don’t push if they aren’t ready to talk.
✓ Use day-to-day language, not medical terms.
✓ When they come to you first, start by listening.
✓ Keep the conversation going by asking open-ended questions.

✓ When talking about real scenarios:
  • Focus on behaviors, not specific people.
  • Challenge them to notice red flags.
  • Ask them what next steps they want to take.
  • Be ready to share resources.

✓ Use what’s going on in current events and in media as a way to start a conversation or to illustrate a point.

✓ Bring up a topic related to sexual violence:
  • Ask them to share what they know about it.
  • Share scenarios and examples that include a wide variety of people, relationships, and identities.
  • Discuss practical ways to prevent sexual violence.

✓ Validate what they know and have shared.
✓ “Everyone deserves to be treated with respect in relationships. What does ‘respect’ mean to you?”
✓ “What are signs of healthy relationships?”
✓ “Have you witnessed unhealthy relationships? How does it make you feel?”
✓ “How do you give or ask for consent?”
✓ “What options do you have if you witness or experience sexual violence?”
✓ “What kind of social media boundaries do you think couples and friends should have?”
✓ “What are signs that someone is being treated like they don’t matter, like they’re someone else’s property, or like they’re objects?”
✓ “How would you help a friend who had bad things posted about them online?”
✓ “Would it be weird if someone you were dating got bugged when you hang out with your friends?”
✓ “What would you say to a friend who tells a rape joke?”
Sexual violence is a broad term and includes rape, incest, child sexual abuse, intimate partner violence, sexual exploitation, human trafficking, unwanted sexual contact, sexual harassment, exposure, and voyeurism. (National Sexual Violence Resource Center)

LEARN MORE – LOTS MORE – AND GET THE SUPPORT YOU NEED TO HELP TEENS:

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