

The greatest risks to our teens:

Drug Use Reckless Sexuality Violence

What can you do to prevent your teen from getting involved with these risks? Your primary goals are to:

- make sure your teen **knows the facts** about drugs, sexuality, and violence—and that **he's not immune** to the risks.
- teach your teen to **pause and think** before making decisions about drugs, sexuality, and violence.
- help your teen develop the **courage** and **responsibility** that will enable him to make smart decisions about these risks.

Teen Depression

Affecting up to 20% of teens, depression is a serious condition that can lead to self-destructive behavior and even suicide. However, it's highly treatable: talk therapy and medication help 80% of depressed teens. Detection is key. Know the warning signs of depression:

- Persistent sadness
- Restlessness; distractibility
- Anger or hostility
- Lack of energy
- Apathy (not caring)
- Feelings of worthlessness
- Withdrawal from friends, family, and activities
- Unexplained pains
- Negative changes in eating or sleeping
- Very sensitive to criticism
- Talk of suicide or death

Family Enrichment Activity: Expressing Love

All teens need to know that whatever else may happen, their parents love them. You can show your teen you love him in many small ways: a kiss, a pat on the back, tousling his hair, putting your arm around his shoulder. But you also need to *tell* him that you love him. The words "I love you" may be awkward if you're not used to saying them, but they're beautiful to your teen (even if he rolls his eyes in embarrassment).

Supplement this video with the Active Parenting of Teens Parent's Guide

The 256-page Parent's Guide is a unique how-to book that provides:

- in-depth information about the Active style of parenting and complete explanation of skills taught in the videos.
- insight into today's teen issues such as online behavior, bullying, peer pressure, and gangs.
- valuable strategies for preventing high-risk behavior around drugs, sexuality, and violence.
- examples, charts, memory tools, and activities to help you put your new parenting skills into action.

...and much more!

GO ONLINE FOR MORE!

Continue your Active Parenting experience at www.activeparenting.com/ParentingTeens for the latest in parenting news.

Active Parenting has created a special place on our Web site just for parents of teens! The Parenting Teens page provides parents with information on topics that concern you and your teen. Plus, you'll have the opportunity to communicate online with other parents who share your experiences and concerns.

The Parenting Teens page gives you access to:

- dates and locations of upcoming Parenting Workshops in your area.
- a list of resources to point you in the right direction when you need more information on teen issues.
- a quiz to determine your parenting style.
- a Parents' Discussion Forum.
- a Parents' Bookstore with lots of useful resources and fun stuff.



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Active Parenting
of Teens :)
third edition

VIDEO 5:

Drugs, Sexuality, and Violence: Reducing the Risks Part 1

BY MICHAEL H. POPKIN, PH.D.

10 Strategies for Reducing Risky Behavior

Preventing your teen from becoming harmfully involved with drugs, sexuality, and violence is one of the greatest gifts you can give. These ten strategies outline a plan for doing everything you can to keep your teen out of trouble with the three major risks.

(Strategies 5-10 are covered in video 6.)

STRATEGY #1

Be a positive role model and a teacher of values.

As your teen grows towards adulthood and independent life, he'll need a set of values and beliefs that he can base his actions on when he's not sure what to do. You can help him form these values by talking with him about issues and setting a good example yourself. Remember that "values aren't taught; they're caught." And ask yourself:

What do I model for my teen through my behavior?

What you teach your teen about risky behaviors is as much about what you *do* as it is about what you *say*.

STRATEGY #2

Educate teens about the risks.

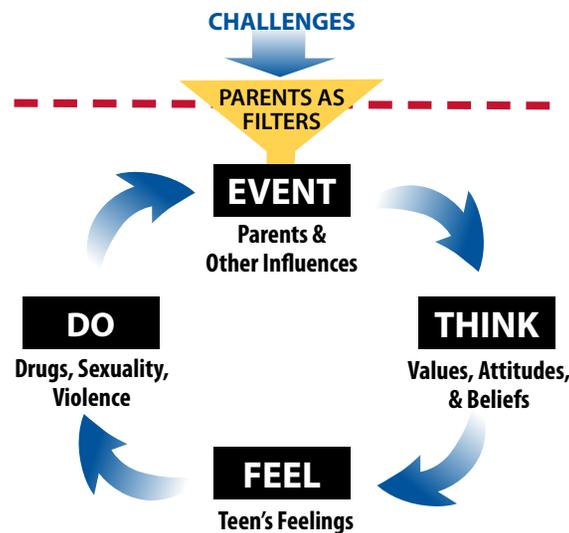
A typical teen gets most of what she knows about drugs and sexuality from other teens. Much of this information is inaccurate or biased to emphasize the exciting aspects and down-play the risks. It's a parent's job to set teens straight. Make yourself a significant part of your teen's education on drugs, sex, and violence by having planned discussions. That way you can be sure the information she gets is accurate and that your values come across clearly. These tips will make your discussion go more smoothly:

- Instead of having one long talk, have short but frequent discussions with your teen.
- Be prepared. You need to present more than your emotions on the subject. Research it and get the facts.
- Avoid getting drawn into an argument or making judgements. Keep lines of communication open.
- Invite your teen's input. Ask his opinion.
- Come from caring, not authority.

STRATEGY #3

Filter OUT the negative influences and IN the positive ones.

Sometimes parents need to GET IN THE WAY! You can filter out an event's ability to influence your teen's Think-Feel-Do Cycle. Aim to filter out events that are excessively dangerous or promote harmful values.



You can also filter IN positive influences. For example: adult role models (teachers, counselors, coaches); peers with good values and habits; a good school; spiritual education.

STRATEGY #4

Establish clear guidelines for behavior.

Be sure your teen knows that some behaviors are off limits. Establishing clear guidelines for behavior can pay off greatly when your teen has to make a choice. A Problem-Prevention Talk is an ideal way to do this:

1. Identify a potential problem or risk.
2. Share thoughts and feelings about the problem.
3. Generate guidelines via brainstorming/negotiation.
4. Set logical consequences for violating guidelines.
5. Follow up to ensure that guidelines were followed.

TALKING WITH YOUR TEEN ABOUT RISKY BEHAVIOR

The following communication tips can help create an open discussion environment for you and your teen.

DO	DON'T
Speak respectfully.	Put others' ideas down.
Listen to everyone's ideas.	Interrupt.
Share your opinions.	Monopolize the talk.
Try to see issues from other points of view.	Consider only your own point of view.
Encourage others.	Criticize others.

When choosing a discussion topic, let your values be your guide as well as your sense of what your teen needs to hear. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

Discussion Topics

- Effects and risks of specific drugs
- The consequences of breaking the law
- The reproductive process; birth control
- Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)
- When is sex OK?
- Bullying
- Fighting: How to avoid it; What to do if it becomes unavoidable
- Date violence
- Gangs
- Violence and sex in the media
- Internet use: Safe practices; Appropriate vs. inappropriate content

Where to Establish Guidelines

Choose carefully where you establish guidelines. Too much control may either spark rebellion or hinder independence. The best place to start is with situations in your teen's life that may introduce risks. For example:

- curfews
- the use of tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs
- having friends over, or spending nights out
- going to parties
- dating
- going places that could be dangerous
- driving; using the car