

Parents and Caregivers' Information Sheet

Grade 10 - Workshop 2 - 2022

BOUNDARIES AND COMMUNICATION

HOW DO I MAKE SURE MY TEEN HAS HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS?

- Refer your child to the resources on page 3! Several organizations fight for the promotion of healthy relationships and equip young people to discern the indicators of unhealthy relationships.
- Lead by example by demonstrating the importance of core values and principles in interpersonal relationships, such as respect, listening, collaboration, honesty and equality.
- Create an open space for questioning and ask your teen questions about their relationships and who they are dating.
- Discuss the positive and negative models of relationships in the media together. It helps teens to understand that what they see on TV shows or movies sometimes normalizes unhealthy relationships.



HOW CAN I ENCOURAGE MY TEEN TO BE ASSERTIVE?

We communicate in many ways: we can use verbal, non-verbal, tone of voice, gaze, actions, body position, online and in person. During our workshops with young people, we explore three types of communication: aggressive, assertive, and passive.

These three modes of communication can be simplified to the following behaviours:

- **Aggressive:**
 - I take up space with my body, shoulders back, aggressive posture, hard gaze;
 - I say what I need without worrying about the content or respecting the other;
 - I shout or raise my voice.
- **Passive:**
 - I take up little space, folded in on myself, shoulders tucked in, and shy gaze;
 - I do not say anything or avoid;
 - I mumble, in a low voice.
- **Assertive:**
 - Feet anchored in line with my hips, straight posture, shoulders relaxed but straight;
 - Sustained and determined gaze;
 - I say what I need clearly without insults or aggression;
 - I speak in a clear and calm voice.

As a parent and guardian, you have the opportunity to encourage your teen to use an assertive tone when their limits are exceeded. Aggressive and passive tones can be essential in situations of danger or emergency, but assertiveness remains the ideal communication style for defending one's values, comfort zone, and maintaining healthy relationships with others.



THE "I" STATEMENT

Communicating using the pronoun "I" makes it easier to communicate your limits and helps to avoid having an accusing or aggressive tone. Conversely, the "I" communicates the limits that a person exceeds. Here is an example of communication using the "I":

- I feel (insert feeling) when you (insert behaviour). I would like you to (insert optimal query/solution).

HOW TO COMMUNICATE THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSENT IN RELATIONSHIPS?

We often talk about consent in sexual relationships but not very often in the context of friendships, despite its importance in these relationships too! If you feel that this is not well understood by your teen, especially in the context of friendships, remind them that putting pressure on people is equivalent to disrespecting consent.

Adults have the responsibility of leading by example. When we respect the limits of our teen (such as not touching their belongings without asking them, knocking on the door before entering their room, or asking them for their agreement before giving them a hug), we communicate very clearly that their consent is respected.

In short, remind your teen that everyone must learn to communicate their limits, preferences, and values in their relationships and listen to those of others. By doing so we learn to respect ourselves and others, which contributes to a culture in which consent is valued in all its dimensions.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ESTABLISHING PERSONAL BOUNDARIES

Identifying their own boundaries helps your teens to:

- feel good about themselves;
- to discern whether they want to engage in a relationship/situation or not;
- to recognize when they are not respected by others.

Boundaries often require that we have confidence in our own opinions, wants, and needs. You can also emphasize that their boundaries are their own, and are affected by a variety of things: culture, age, religious beliefs, mood, personality, etc. Understanding this will help your teen better understand why their boundaries may be different from others around them!

ENSURING THE RESPECT OF PERSONAL BOUNDARIES

Parents can help teens develop reasoning through honest and open discussions. Encourage your teen to verbalize their limits. Use your judgment and decide if you should share your opinion on the limits established by your teen:

- It is crucial to verbalize your concerns if you feel that your teen's limits are unhealthy and/or put them in danger.

UNDERSTANDING BOUNDARIES

Personal boundaries are a guide or a set of rules that a person creates to identify reasonable, safe, and permissible ways in which others can interact with them. We have several different types of limits:

- Physical limits (who touches me, how and where)
- Emotional boundaries (what I share, what I am comfortable hearing)
- Digital limits (who has access to my information online, who I interact with online, password sharing, etc.)

It is important to define these limits for yourself and to support your teen in the development of their own boundaries and decipher what is acceptable and what is not for them.



QUESTIONS TO ASK TO BETTER UNDERSTAND YOUR TEEN'S BOUNDARIES:

It is important to understand that your teen's limits may be different from yours. Here are some questions to get to know them:

- **Physical limits:** Is it still okay for me to hug you? Would you rather something else?
- **Emotional limits:** Are you comfortable when I ask you questions about your friends?
- **Digital limits:** How do you feel after spending the entire evening on TikTok or Instagram? Does it bother you?
 - Do you share your passwords with your friends?

! IMPORTANT

If someone goes beyond their limits, teens must feel that they have the power, authority and the right to express their discomfort and reaffirm their limits.

Resources

⚠ Important! If you are concerned about your adolescent's health, ask a professional for help, or call the helplines mentioned below.

Do not hesitate to communicate with the school staff: the counselor, the teacher or the principal. Your family doctor can also help, as can the following resources:

- Kids Help Phone: to confide in somebody, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Anonymous and bilingual. Toll-free number: 1-800-668-6868. kidshelpphone.ca
- Phobies-Zéro (French only): support and self-help group for people with anxiety, panic disorders, phobias and agoraphobia. 514-276-3105 or toll-free 1-866-922-0002.



RESOURCES IN FRENCH

- [Sur la pression des amis.es](#)
- [Parler ouvertement avec ses jeunes](#)
- [Livre: On ne se comprend plus !: traverse sans dommage la période des portes qui claquent entre 12 et 17ans.](#) par Isabelle Filliozat, Marabout, DL: Vanves, 2019



RESOURCES IN ENGLISH

- [Teenage Friendships](#)
- [Having open conversations with your teens](#)
- [Book: Raising kids to thrive: Balancing love with expectations and protection with trust.](#) by Ginsburg et al.IL: American Academy of Pediatrics, 2015.

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