

Dear Parents:

We hope the materials in this packet will help you talk to your teen about sexual behavior and relationships.

Its best to start early and talk often, but even if you've delayed these conversations, its never too late!

Somerset County teens, boys and girls alike, tell us they want to be able to talk to their parents about sensitive topics like sex and relationships. But they tell us that either their parents don't give them opportunities or aren't welcoming in the conversation. Sometimes parents jump to conclusions and get upset when teens ask questions, or lecture without listening.

But, if there is a silver bullet to help teens make healthy decisions about sex, it's parents! Survey after survey tells us that teens pay more attention to their parents' values and guidance on these issues than they do to their friends. Parents really do matter; teens really are listening.

Talking with teens about sexual behavior and relationships is not easy, but your teen needs to hear from you. If it's hard for you to begin this conversation, be honest about that. Your teen will admire you for overcoming your embarrassment. And, even if you've made some mistakes in your life (and none of us is perfect!) and don't think you are a great role model, teens respond to honesty and can learn from your experience.

If you would like more support in this parenting task, join a Parenting Teens class. Several will be offered in Somerset County this year. You may also want to invite a speaker to your work, church, or civic group to give a presentation on talking to teens about sexual behavior and relationships. Or, you may want to give a "parenting party" at your home. We'll provide the speaker and materials and give you a gift card for buying refreshments. To make arrangements or find out when classes are offered, contact Anna Court (annaleecourt@gmail.com).

This packet is made available to you through these organizations:

Somerset County Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program
Somerset County Communities for Children and Youth
Somerset County Association of Resource Providers

