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## How to **talk** about violence

Talking about violence with teens is important. These tips can help make the this tough conversation easier.

### **Know Why You're Talking**

Be clear about your reasons. Are you worried about your teen or your family's safety? Did something specific happen? Start with honesty.

### **Choose the Right Time**

Timing is everything. Pick a private moment, like during a car ride or after dinner, to have this conversation. Avoid talking in front of your teen's friends or siblings, or when your teen is busy with another task.

### **Find the Best Way to Talk**

You know your teen better than anyone. Decide if a serious talk, casual chat, or even a text message conversation would work best to reach them.

### **Share Your Perspective**

To encourage a positive conversation, share your thoughts without telling your teen what to do.

### **Stay Calm and Fair**

Serious topics can be confronting for anyone. Remember to use a calm voice and 'I' or 'we' statements to avoid sounding judgmental. For example, say, *'I'd like to talk about this'* instead of *'You need to tell me.'*

### **Respect Their Space**

If your teen is not ready to talk, don't push it. Keep communication open and try again later.

### **Listen Carefully**

Let your teen talk without interrupting. Show you are listening by nodding, even if what they say is hard to hear.

### **Silence is Okay**

If your teen does not say much, it is still good they know that you are there for them.

### **Acknowledge Different Experiences**

Not all young people experience violence. You can acknowledge this by saying something like, *'I know not everyone deals with violence, but it is important to talk about it just in case.'*

### **Promote Awareness**

Let your teen know where to turn if they are worried about violence, like talking to trusted adults or anonymously sharing crime information with Crime Stoppers.

### **Work on Solutions Together**

Talk about how to solve problems together without restricting your teen's freedom or friends.

### **Seek Professional Help if Needed**

If you are worried your teen may be involved in dangerous activities, get help from school counsellors, mental health professionals, or community support services.