

BREAKING - UP IS HARD TO DO

TEN TIPS FOR SUPPORTING YOUR TEEN

As adults, it is often difficult to stand by and watch as a teen we love and care about suffers through a break-up. There are concrete things you can do, however, that will make you feel less helpless, and hopefully, more helpful.

Directions:

Below are a list of activities you can practice which will improve your ability to help a teen in need of support during a difficult time. Use the list below to assess your current level of comfort and skill in talking to your teen about his/her relationship.

- If you feel you already do the activity, place an **✓** in the space.
- If you feel you will try the activity in the future, place a **+** in the space.
- If you feel uncomfortable with the activity and do not feel you can do the activity, place an **X** in the space.

- ☐ Build a caring, supportive relationship with my teen, so he/she can come to me when he/she has a break-up.
- ☐ Talk to my teen about break-up myths he/she may have been exposed to by peers and media (i.e. Moving on to new partner immediately is the best way to get over the break-up).
- ☐ Take time to talk with my teen about friends and daily events.
- ☐ Provide educational opportunities for my teen to learn about the biological, social, and emotional changes taking place during adolescence.
- ☐ Join my teen in watching his/her favorite TV shows particularly those that involve teens in relationships. Save your comments for after the show when you will have time for a discussion. (For example ask your teen, "How might that situation really end up?", "What is healthy/unhealthy about this relationship or break-up?")
- ☐ Ask my teen open-ended questions about the status of his/her current dating relationships. Avoid forcing the issue, though.
- ☐ Keep information to myself that he/she shares in confidence.
- ☐ Talk to my teen about his/her desire to date. Talk about healthy relationship and break-up practices he/she should engage in when he/she does start to date.
- ☐ Help your teen recognize the signs of a threatening or potentially harmful relationship.
- ☐ Recognize and help your teen deal with the possible public nature of teen break-ups, particularly because of social networking sites.

WHAT NEXT? Now examine your responses. For any activity you already do, keep up the good work. For any activity you are willing to try, get going. For any activity you are uncomfortable with handling, seek outside help and resources. The most important thing is that you stay active and involved in your teen's life and continue to build your own skills to better support him/her through the ups and downs of his/her relationships.

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