

How Do I Talk to My Child About: Sex, Drugs, Sexting, Masturbation, Bullying, Abuse?

By Rick Deboest, Clinical Director

These topics are some of the most difficult topics of life to talk about with our children. There are many factors that contribute to this difficulty. First, the topics are issues that we as parents do not even want our children to know about let alone talk with them about it. In addition, some parents feel that talking about them will introduce the idea to their child. Know that this is just not the case. Chances are your preteen or teenager has already been exposed to or at least heard other peers talk about these issues. In addition, not talking about them just causes addition curiosity for something that they heard about, but do not understand. It is better for them to have the facts from a reliable source, such as yourself, than for them to seek understanding from unreliable sources or experimentation.

Secondly, some of these topics are embarrassing. You may be the exception, but changes are when you think back to “the talk” with your parent(s), it was awkward at best. Do you with that you had a sensitive caring parent that would and did talk openly with you about the most difficult issues? Someone that you could ask anything and know that they would be open and honest with you without the feelings of awkwardness. Every child wants a relationship like this and though these talks will probably always have an element of awkwardness to them, these talks can create a closeness and openness between a child and their parent. The finally reason why these talks are so difficult f or some parents is that parents love their children and want what is best for them. They have a life for their child in their mind and it is often the perfect life void of all difficulty and full of successes. However, the flip side of this desire for a great life for their child is that at times it causes the parent to deny any difficulties or the possibilities of difficulties. They protect this idea of the perfect life for their child by denying that anything like the issues of sex, drugs, or abuse could happen to their child. They don’t want to know if their child is involved because it would break the façade of the parent’s dream life for their child. If a child is truly struggling in one of these areas, ignoring it will only makes matters worse. The longer the child participates in this sinful behavior the larger the potential consequences can be.

One final thought. The absolute key in talking with your child about these difficult topics is that you have a relationship of openness, transparency, and truthfulness to begin with. Taking the time to talk regularly with your child, without condemnation or judgmental attitude, but rather listening and gentling guiding will establish a relationship that will make the discussion of these topics much easier. Remember Deut. 6:4-9 states that we need to be teaching about God and how to love him well to our children. We do this by talking about life with our children at a real and deep level in order to help them to navigate through a difficult and sinful work and helping them strive for a life that is glorifying and honoring to God.

Other Resources

- *Sex Has a Price Tag: Discussions About Sexuality, Spirituality, and Self Respect* by Pam Stenzel and Crystal Kirgiss

- *Inside a Cutter's Mind: Understanding and Helping Those Who Self-Injure* by Jerusha Clark and Dr. Earl Henslin
- *Thin Enough: My Spiritual Journey Through the Living Death of an Eating Disorder* by Sheryle Cruise
- *Logged On and Tuned Out: A Non-Techie's Guide to Parenting a Tech-Savvy Generation* by Vicki Courtney
- *Standing Up for Your Child Without Stepping on Toes* by Vicki Caruana
- *God, Drugs and Society* by Samuel Diaz
- *20 Things I Need to Tell My Son* by Worthy Publishing