



Strengthening Father-Son Communication

Sexual Behaviors

Fathers and Sons Program

Facilitator Script

(Read the text in the boxes as you go through the PowerPoint slides)

Today we are going to discuss how you can communicate with your son about sexuality issues.

We will focus on what you can do as a father to prevent your son from having sex too soon.



Let's Talk About Sex

Who? Your son

How? Talk to him

When? Now

Why? Children who talk to their dads gain knowledge to protect themselves from health compromising decisions and behaviors.

How many of you find it hard to talk to your son about sex?
Why do you think it is difficult to talk about sex with your son?

Understanding the barriers to communicating with your sons about sex will help you overcome them. Your son probably also finds it hard to talk to you about sex. It will take effort on both of your parts to reach a comfort zone concerning talking about sexuality.

Start to become aware of opportunities to talk about sex with your son. For example, if the two of you are watching television and a sexual scene is on, ask your son what he thinks of it and give him your opinion.

Every time you initiate conversations about sex the comfort level increases. Additionally, letting your son know your thoughts and opinions about sex will help him to form his own.

Guidelines About Sexual Behavior

Upper Elementary School

- Everyone is a sexual being
- Children become more curious about their sexuality as they grow older
- Talking to parents about sexuality can help
- Exploring feelings about sexuality is common

Middle School

- Sexual feelings, fantasies, and desires are natural and they do not need to be acted upon
- Sexual feelings, fantasies, and desires occur throughout life
- Sexuality is more rewarding and positive when expressed in a sharing and non-exploitative way

Knowing about the different stages of sexual development that adolescents go through will help you gain perspective about your sons sexuality.

All humans are sexual beings and have desires for intimacy and caring. Sexuality is expressed in a variety of ways and is not necessarily conveyed through sexual intercourse. Letting your child know that sexual feelings are normal, but don't have to be acted upon will help him make better health decisions.

A major problem with kids in today's society is that they see sexual behaviors in the media, but are not made aware of the emotional and physical consequences of acting on them.²



Some Facts....

- 51.5% of African American teens...
report that they have never had sex^{1,2}
- 40% of teenaged African American males...
report that they are NOT sexually active^{1,2}
- On average.....
boys tend to have sex at earlier ages than girls

Let's go over some facts about African American adolescents' sexual behavior.

In 2015, 51.5% of African American teens reported that they have never had sex and 40% of African American male teens reported that they are NOT sexually active.^{1,2}

What does this really mean? It means that not everyone is doing it.

Even though it might seem like teenage sex is inevitable, it isn't. Many teenagers don't feel prepared to take on a sexual relationship with someone.

It is important that you understand this as well, so that you can normalize these feelings in your son. It is a good thing if your son wants to just be friends with girls, because if he engages in sex before he or the girl is ready to, they might have to deal with some pretty heavy consequences.

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What's wrong with having sex too early?

Unwanted Pregnancy
Sexually Transmitted Diseases
HIV/AIDS
Emotional Consequences
Health Problems

So what's wrong with your son having sex too early?

For starters there are health consequences like unintended pregnancy and unintended pregnancy that can occur even when protection is used. Some sexually transmitted diseases are curable, for example syphilis and gonorrhea, but some are not, like herpes, and others kill, such as HIV/AIDS. Still others, if they go untreated, could cause lead to infertility.

There are also emotional problems that result from having sex too early. Emotional confusion about sex happens to boys and girls. When a adolescent establishes these feelings early in their sexual development, lifelong emotional problems can result.



Parental Role

- Be aware of verbal and nonverbal communication
- Communicate in age appropriate language

Talking to your son about sex can seem overwhelming. A lot of fathers feel that they won't be good at communicating with their sons about sex and hand over the responsibility to the mother. While it is very important that mothers communicate about sexuality, a father's advice and guidance in this area is key to the son forming healthy attitudes about sexuality. Your son will want to know what you think about sex.

So what should you do? First, try to be as calm and relaxed as possible. Your son will pick up on the verbal and nonverbal cues that are being given off. Try to talk in a setting that is comfortable for both of you. Being honest and straightforward about the way you feel will also help calm your nerves.

Second, in talking with your son try to be age appropriate—that is, talk to him using words and ideas that he can understand. Sometimes as adults we use big words that kids just don't get. If your son does not understand what you are saying, try using different words or examples and then ask him if he understands what you are saying. It might also be helpful to use learning tools like pictures to help him grasp concepts he might not be familiar with.

Let him know that sex is a natural part of life, but it is an adult behavior. Focus on areas of sexuality other than intercourse like beginning to like girls and the changes in his body. He will have these experiences before having sex.

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Parental Role

- Listen to what your son is saying
- Answer your son's questions

Listening is crucial. Listening sounds easy enough, but it can be very hard to do. Often instead of listening we think about how to respond instead paying attention to what is being said. If your mind starts to form a response while you're supposed to be listening, note what triggered your reaction, take a deep breath, and refocus by looking into your sons eyes. Try to focus on the nonverbal and verbal communication that your son is expressing.

You should also answer your son's questions. Be as clear and specific as possible. Don't use slang terms instead use the correct names for body parts and sexual behaviors. This will help your son distinguish the differences between slang and correct terms.



Parental Role

- Express your feelings and expectations
- Keep communication about sexuality going

Think about your expectation for your son. Let him know what would disappoint you. Discuss your feelings regarding early sexual initiation. Let him know why you feel the way you do. Don't lecture, talk with your son about these issues. Find out his feelings and expectations. Ask him questions about what his friends are saying about sex.

Above all, keep the lines of communication open. Communicating with your son about sexuality cannot happen in one conversation. The more you talk about sexuality the easier it will become. Adolescence is a time of many sexual development phases and keeping an open dialogue as your son goes through these stages will help him make positive health decisions.



An Exercise

1. **Think of the values you want to pass on to your son about sexuality and sexual behaviors.**
2. **Write down 3 things you want him to know (be specific).**
3. **How do you think your son will react to this information?**
4. **Get feedback from the group.**

As a closing exercise, think about what you want to say to your son.

First, think about the values you want to pass on to him about sexuality and sexual behaviors.

Write down 3 things that you want him to know about sexuality. Make sure you are specific about what you want to say.

Share your concerns about expressing your statements to your sons.

(END OF PRESENTATION)

REFERENCES

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2015). Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance – United States, 2015. Surveillance Summaries (65) 6: 1-174. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/2015/ss6506_updated.pdf
2. Crossland, K. (2016). CDC: African-American teens are embracing abstinence. Retrieved from https://world.wng.org/2016/07/cdc_african_american_teens_are_embracing_abstinence

CREDITS

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