



**BELMONT WELLNESS  
COALITION**

**BWC  
PARENTING  
GROUP**

**GUIDANCE  
AROUND TEENS  
AND DATING**

**JANUARY 31, 2024**

# CHECK IN...

Share what's going **well** for you this month as a parent. 🌞

# DATING/RELATIONSHIP CONCERNS

Consider:

What are you *most* concerned about?

# COMMON PARENTAL CONCERNS

- **...that my child will get emotionally hurt**
- **...that my child is too young to have sex**
- **...that my child does not have accurate information**
- **...that dating will take up too much time**
- **...that my child will engage in sexting**
- **...unintended pregnancy and/or STI's**
- **...that my child will be unjustly accused of assault**

# WHAT IS HAPPENING?

Starting around puberty, many kids will be interested in “dating” and will develop crushes:

- By age 15, about 50% of teens say they are ready to be “going out” or having relationships
- But fewer will *actually* be in a relationship-only 20-25%

# WHAT “GOING OUT” TENDS TO LOOK LIKE

- Often starts with texting and messaging on social media (Snapchat, Instagram, Tiktok, Tinder for older ages)
- Middle School: hanging out socially becomes mixed gender
- Some ‘hooking up’ occurs
- Some will form dating relationships
- Going out in group settings (mall, movies, parks, etc.)

# PARENTS' ROLE: HAVE ONGOING CONVERSATIONS

## Talk About Dating and ...

- **Expect Reluctance** - many do not want to discuss with parents
- **Provide Resources** - have books/websites available

## YOUR ROLE (CON'T)

- **Be a Source of Reliable Information** – (their peers will have less reliable information to pass on)
- **Both Parents Should be Involved** – (not at the same time, but both should be engaged in having conversations)



# DO DISCUSS ...

- **The comfort factor**
- **That dating should be a *positive* experience**
- **How to be your own person**
- **Warning signs of unhealthy relationships**
- **Relationships are learning experiences**
- **How to end a relationship**

# YES, YOU CAN PUT BOUNDARIES IN PLACE

## Examples of Dating Boundaries:

- ✓ No dating before 9<sup>th</sup> grade
- ✓ Significant others can't be at home when parents aren't there
- ✓ No hanging out in the bedroom/doors closed
- ✓ Parents need to meet this person

# GUIDANCE ON TALKING ABOUT SEX

## Conversation Tips:

- ❖ Find out what's being covered in school
- ❖ Find out what their pediatrician may have covered with them
- ❖ Ask them what questions they may have
- ❖ Impart Your Values - and - explain where they are coming from

# COVERING THE BASICS

- **Birth Control:** they need to have access to birth control
- **Consent:** they should understand the basics of requesting and giving consent
- **Safety:** they should understand what constitutes an *unhealthy/unsafe* dating experience
  - (1 in 4 teens report some type of abuse, e.g., verbal, emotional, physical, sexual)

# CONSENT BASICS

- An **explicit and enthusiastic agreement**
- It's *never* okay to pressure someone
- Flirting is **not** the same as consent
- Consent can be withdrawn at any time
- Consent cannot be given *if under the influence*
- Encourage check ins: “*Are we moving too fast?*” “*Are you still ok with this?*”

## IN THE EVENT OF AN ASSAULT ...

**Let the person know they have control over what happens next.**

Things to say:

- *I believe you*
- *This is not your fault*
- *I am sorry*
- *You are not alone*
- *There are lots of resources to help you through this*

# SEXUAL ASSAULT RESOURCES

**Explore the options together:**

**1. Boston Area Rape Crisis Center (BARCC)**

[www.barcc.org](http://www.barcc.org) 1-800-841-8371

**2. National Sexual Assault Hotline (RAINN – Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network)**

[www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org) 1-800-656-HOPE

# GENERAL RESOURCES

- Sexetc.org  
education for teens
- Scareleteen.com  
education for teens
- Amaze.org  
great videos for teens
- Childmind.org  
info on consent
- Plannedparenthood.org  
for parents and teens
  
- It's Perfectly Normal  
Robbie Harris
- For Goodness Sex  
Al Vernacchio
- S.E.X. All You Need to Know  
Heather Corinna



## DISCUSSION ...

Let's discuss:

Thoughts? Questions?