

How to Build Healthy Communication with Teens



Engaging youth in meaningful conversations can help you offer support and navigate challenges by building empathy, trust, and healthy communication.

Reflect on insights and questions from leading youth engagement experts in your role as a caregiver, parent, or educator.

Checking in with Self and Others

“It’s important that you know that your best is enough. Whether you’re a student, or parent, or staff, everybody’s handling so many different challenges.

It’s important for us to communicate and be transparent with each other that we do have things going on, and it starts with ourselves and how we check in with ourselves.”

- David Anderson, *Think Together*




REFLECT

- Take a moment to acknowledge how you feel. Are you comfortable describing how you feel for others? Use the [Feelings Chart](#) to help you identify and express your feelings.
- Together with colleagues or other adult family members, discuss steps you can take to support open communication.

Supporting and Reassuring Youth

“The best things that adults can offer young people are support and reassurance. It makes me feel like I can get through this year when I feel like my parents and the adults around me in my support group believe in what I’m doing.”

- Diana Fernandez, *Youth Advocate*




REFLECT

- Think about a time when someone really believed in you. How did that make you feel, and what did they do to express their support?
- How can you model self-care for young people in your life? Choose a healthy habit from Self-Care Tips for Parents & Caregivers that you can practice and share today.

Being a Caring Adult

“ We need to remind adults that being a caring adult is cool. Sometimes you have to remember, ‘Who did you have, or who did you not have, as a kid and how can you be that for other young people?’ There’s some young person in your life. How are you checking on them?”

- Kiara Battle, Youth Engagement Leader



REFLECT

- Who was or is a supportive adult in your life, and how did they show up for you when you faced challenges?
- How do you check in with youth in your family, school, or community? How can you make this a meaningful part of your interactions?

Sharing Our Stories

Sharing stories from our lives can help develop social-emotional health and build empathy with adults, children, and youth. The questions you ask are as important as the way you approach your conversations.

Ready to connect? Try the communication strategies and prompts in Sharing Our Stories: Family Conversations for Social-Emotional Health.

As you learn more about each other, come up with your own questions together to keep the conversations going.

For more insights, view view our on-demand webinar, "A Conversation on Inclusion, Cooperation, and Self-Esteem."