

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Mums raising teenage girls

TIP SHEET

Relationships Australia WA's education team have developed a range of tips to help support you during the COVID-19 outbreak. As a free resource, we encourage you to share this with your community.

The teenage years are very significant for girls. This is a time of many changes, both physically and emotionally, which in themselves can cause stress.

At this stage in their lives, many girls will be wanting association with their peer groups and the social isolation imposed by the pandemic will be hard to take. This can be an added stressor.

Mothers can take this opportunity to support their teenage girls in ways that can build them up emotionally and enhance their ability to cope with challenges.

Here is a list of suggestions about how you can support your teenage daughters:

- **Maintain structure in their life during the pandemic**
Ensure that meal and sleep patterns are not disrupted and have light discussions about the importance of keeping healthy. Allow them to help with shopping and other household chores. Including teenage daughters in the effort to protect the family helps them feel valued and this empowerment lessens anxiety.
- **Acknowledge their emotions**
Understand that not being able to associate with friends or to go ahead with planned activities is difficult. Take their feelings seriously and listen with empathy and compassion as they talk about their disappointments. Let them know it is OK to feel upset.
- **Keep communication flowing**
Your daughters will more than likely know how to navigate their world, therefore refrain from giving advice and trying to solve their problems. Ask how you can support them at this time.
- **Be aware of your body language when you are speaking about the pandemic**
You want to maintain a calm demeanor so as not to increase the anxiety they are already experiencing. Girls are especially good at paying attention to body language, so if your words are saying one thing but the body language doesn't match, they will believe your body language.
- **Do things together**
There is plenty of time while we are all at home to play a game, watch a movie together or teach each other something new. The time spent doing this will give us a better understanding of who they are as a person and provide a renewed appreciation for them as an individual.

- **Give compliments frequently**

Teenage girls especially are target of unhealthy expectations from society. Use this time to let them know as often as you can what you like about them and this will in turn help them feel good about themselves.

- **Be a good role model**

You can show them how to manage their emotions effectively by managing yours. Honesty is key - by acknowledging you are also anxious and showing them practical things you are doing to feel lessen the anxiety, they will be inspired to follow suit. This will in turn increase their feelings of safety.

As we journey through these challenging times, please reach out for support and connection amongst your community or if you'd like further support from Relationships Australia WA you can call us on 1300 364 277.

Our Education team will continue to facilitate Relationship Australia WA's seminars, workshops and courses face-to-face once government guidelines allow. You might like to like us on Facebook to keep up to date with support information and details of services we can offer during this time.

If you'd like to register your interest in attending a course on ***Mums Raising Teenage Girls*** once available, or any of our other courses, please email education@relationshipsaustralia.org.au or call 6164 0200.