

Families for **SAFE Dates**

*A Program for Parents and Other Caregivers
to Help Teens Date Safely*

BOOKLET 1

Talking about Dating





Talking About Dating

Booklet 1 includes information and activities to help caregivers and teens talk comfortably about dating so that it will be easier to talk about dating abuse, which will be introduced in booklet 3.

Instructions

1. Read Tips for Successful Activities.
2. Go over Introducing Communication Skills to Your Teen.
3. Do activity 1, Date Talk, to open communication between caregivers and teens about dating.
4. Do activity 2, Dream Date, to learn more about your teen's ideas about dating.
5. Read the Recap of booklet 1.
6. Do the Next Steps listed at the end of the booklet.

Before you start each activity with your teen, read the introduction and instructions aloud, taking turns reading if you prefer.

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You'll need a total of about 45 minutes to do these activities, in one or more sittings.
They should be done in the order they appear.



Tips for Successful Activities

Introduction: Families for Safe Dates involves activities for caregivers and their teens. This will involve finding times for the teen and other family members to get together.

Instructions: Below are some ideas for planning activities. Read through these together. Decide on the ideas you would like to use for planning successful activities. You can use the ideas below or come up with your own.

- Decide which family members to include in each activity.
- Plan a time to work on the activities that doesn't conflict with other important things, and doesn't come right before stressful events.
- Be sure everyone knows when your family will be doing the activities.
- Choose a place where there will be few interruptions and the TV won't be on.
- Let phone calls roll to the answering machine or voicemail.
- Turn cell phones off (and no texting).
- Some families like to plan for enough time to do all the booklet activities in one sitting. Other families find it easier to plan smaller amounts of time to do individual activities. Do whatever works best for your family.
- Some families like to pick a specific time on a specific day of each week to work on the activities. If you choose this option, you may find it helpful to write down the day of the week and the time here.

My family would like to work on the booklets on

Day of the week

Time



Introducing Communication Skills to Your Teen

Introduction: All of the activities in Families for Safe Dates center around teens and caregivers talking with each other; good communication skills will help these activities go smoothly.

Instructions: Review the Tips for Successful Communication and Communication Blockers that are listed below and also on page 15 of this booklet. One goal of this program is for caregivers and teens to use these skills while completing the program activities.

Tips for Successful Communication

- Listen carefully** for words, meanings, and feelings. You may be surprised by what you learn about others simply by listening. It's one of the most important communication skills.
- Use encouraging words and ask questions** to show that you are interested in what the other person has to say, to better understand the other person's feelings, and to keep the conversation going.
- Show respect** for the other person's thoughts and feelings, even if you disagree. Try not to interrupt. Let the person finish speaking before you express your opinion.

Communication Blockers

- Giving too much advice and lecturing
- Acting like you know all the answers
- Forcing your opinions on the other person
- Being critical, judgmental, or sarcastic
- Putting down the other person's opinions, preferences, choices, and feelings
- Using body language that suggests you're not interested in what the other person has to say



ACTIVITY 1

Date Talk

Purpose: To open communication between caregivers and teens about dating.

What you'll need: The Date Talk activity cards found on pages 5–7 of this booklet. Cut the cards apart and place them face down on a table or the floor.

Time needed: 30 minutes

Introduction: Dating practices change over time. Some things that caregivers did while dating as teens are different from what teens do today. Even the word for “dating” changes from one generation to the next. Caregivers often don’t know current dating practices, and teens may find it hard to believe that their caregivers were ever young and ever dated. In this activity, caregivers will learn about current teen dating trends, and teens will realize what dating was like when their caregivers were teens. With this new understanding, talking about dating will be easier.

Instructions: Each Date Talk card has two questions about dating. Caregivers and teens take turns picking a card, choosing which question to ask (A or B), and answering it first out loud. Then that person asks the other player(s) to answer it too. When teens answer the question, they should think about what dating is like today. When caregivers answer, they should think about what dating was like when they were teenagers. When you’ve gone through the stack of cards, you can repeat the game and answer the questions that you didn’t answer the first time.

When you’re done with the activity, caregivers and teens should complete the Communication Checklists that follow on page 8. Each of you should answer for yourself. The goal is to have many checkmarks next to the Tips for Successful Communication and few checkmarks next to Communication Blockers. Then share your checklists and discuss them.

Remember to use the Tips for Successful Communication and avoid the Communication Blockers.

Date Talk Activity Cards

CHOOSE EITHER QUESTION A OR QUESTION B

QUESTION A

Teen: What words did teens use for dating?

Caregiver: What words do teens use for dating?

QUESTION B

Teen: What embarrassing things might have happened on a date?

Caregiver: What embarrassing things might happen on a date?

CHOOSE EITHER QUESTION A OR QUESTION B

QUESTION A

Teen: What kinds of things did teens like to do on a date?

Caregiver: What kinds of things do teens like to do on a date?

QUESTION B

Teen: How did teens ask someone on a date?

Caregiver: How do teens ask someone on a date?

CHOOSE EITHER QUESTION A OR QUESTION B

QUESTION A

Teen: Where did teens go on dates?

Caregiver: Where do teens go on dates?

QUESTION B

Teen: At what age did teens start dating?

Caregiver: At what age do teens start dating?

Date Talk Activity Cards (continued)

CHOOSE EITHER QUESTION A OR QUESTION B

QUESTION A

Teen: How did teens let someone know they're interested in dating them?

Caregiver: How do teens let someone know they're interested in dating them?

QUESTION B

Teen: What did boys or girls do to impress a date?

Caregiver: What do boys or girls do to impress a date?

CHOOSE EITHER QUESTION A OR QUESTION B

QUESTION A

Teen: How did teens dress on a date?

Caregiver: How do teens dress on a date?

QUESTION B

Teen: Who paid for expenses on a date?

Caregiver: Who pays for expenses on a date?

CHOOSE EITHER QUESTION A OR QUESTION B

QUESTION A

Teen: Did teens date in groups?

Caregiver: Do teens date in groups?

QUESTION B

Teen: Did teens go on blind dates?

Caregiver: Do teens go on blind dates?

Date Talk Activity Cards (continued)

CHOOSE EITHER QUESTION A OR QUESTION B

QUESTION A

Teen: How did teens know if someone was interested in dating them?

Caregiver: How do teens know if someone's interested in dating them?

QUESTION B

Teen: What made a bad date?

Caregiver: What would make a bad date?

CHOOSE EITHER QUESTION A OR QUESTION B

QUESTION A

Teen: When did teens go on dates—what day of the week, what time of day?

Caregiver: When do teens go on dates—what day of the week, what time of day?

QUESTION B

Teen: What did teens do for transportation on a date?

Caregiver: What do teens do for transportation on a date?

CHOOSE EITHER QUESTION A OR QUESTION B

QUESTION A

Teen: How did teens turn down a date?

Caregiver: How do teens turn down a date?

QUESTION B

Teen: How did teens let other teens know they were already dating someone?

Caregiver: How do teens let other teens know they're already dating someone?

Communication Checklists for Activity 1

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING SUCCESSFULLY

Teen	Caregiver 1	Caregiver 2	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I listened carefully.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I used encouraging words and asked questions.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I showed respect.

COMMUNICATION BLOCKERS

Teen	Caregiver 1	Caregiver 2	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I gave too much advice or lectured.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I acted like I knew it all.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I forced my opinion on another person.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I was critical, judgmental, or sarcastic.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I put down another person's opinions, preferences, choices, or feelings.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I used body language that suggested I wasn't interested in what another person had to say.



ACTIVITY 2

Dream Date

Purpose: To learn more about your teen’s hopes for dating.

What you’ll need: The Dream Date Activity Checklists for parents and teens found on pages 11–12 of this booklet.

Time needed: 15 minutes

Introduction: In this fun activity, teens imagine their dream dating partner and dating activities, and caregivers learn more about their teen’s hopes for dating.

Instructions for teens: What qualities would you like in your dream dating partner? Read the qualities in the chart under the heading “I like someone who is . . .” Then check the five qualities that you would like the most. Do the same for the next chart, which lists dating activities. If you need time and space to think about it, you might want to go to a bedroom or another private place.

Instructions for parents and caregivers: What do you think your teen is looking for in a dream dating partner? Read the qualities in the chart under the heading “My teen would like a dating partner who is . . .” Then check the five qualities that you think your teen would choose. Do the same for the next chart, which lists dating activities.

After you have completed the activity, compare answers with your teen. Discuss the similarities and differences. Caregivers, what did your teen choose that surprised you, and why? Teens, what did your caregiver choose that surprised you, and why?

Consider these extra discussion questions about your teen’s dream date:

- What qualities would you both add to the lists?
- Why did you both pick the qualities you picked?
- Which of these qualities is the most important to you (teens)?



Remember to use the Tips for Successful Communication and avoid the Communication Blockers.

Consider these extra discussion questions about your teen's dream date activities:

- What dating activities would you (teens) add to the lists?
- What activity would you (teens) enjoy the most?
- What activity would you (teens) like the least?
- If you (teen) chose "go out to eat," where and what would you eat?
- If you (teen) chose "play some kind of sport," which sport would you play?

Again, when you are done with the activity, complete the Communication Checklists that follow and discuss each other's checklists.

Dream Date Activity for Teens

I LIKE SOMEONE WHO IS . . .

(check your top five choices)

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> funny | <input type="checkbox"/> confident | <input type="checkbox"/> mysterious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> unique | <input type="checkbox"/> romantic | <input type="checkbox"/> artsy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> musical | <input type="checkbox"/> smart | <input type="checkbox"/> charming |
| <input type="checkbox"/> popular | <input type="checkbox"/> loyal | <input type="checkbox"/> thoughtful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> stylish | <input type="checkbox"/> religious | <input type="checkbox"/> friendly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> independent | <input type="checkbox"/> outgoing | <input type="checkbox"/> fill in your own |
| <input type="checkbox"/> adventurous | <input type="checkbox"/> athletic | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> honest | <input type="checkbox"/> a good listener | <input type="checkbox"/> fill in your own |
| <input type="checkbox"/> respectful | <input type="checkbox"/> supportive | _____ |

ON A DATE, I WOULD LIKE TO . . .

(check your top five choices)

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> go to a movie | <input type="checkbox"/> go roller or ice skating | <input type="checkbox"/> go to see a play |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hang out at my house or at my dating partner's house | <input type="checkbox"/> go to the beach | <input type="checkbox"/> go to a park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> go to a sporting event | <input type="checkbox"/> play some kind of sport | <input type="checkbox"/> go to an amusement park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> go for a walk or hike | <input type="checkbox"/> go bowling | <input type="checkbox"/> go on a picnic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> play video games | <input type="checkbox"/> go to an art show or a museum | <input type="checkbox"/> go to a concert |
| <input type="checkbox"/> go out to eat | <input type="checkbox"/> listen to music | <input type="checkbox"/> go for a bike ride |
| <input type="checkbox"/> go out in a group | <input type="checkbox"/> go to the mall | <input type="checkbox"/> fill in your own |
| <input type="checkbox"/> go to a party | <input type="checkbox"/> go dancing | _____ |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> eat dinner with my dating partner's family | <input type="checkbox"/> fill in your own |
| | | _____ |

Dream Date Activity for Parents and Caregivers

MY TEEN WOULD LIKE A DATING PARTNER WHO IS . . .

(check your top five choices)

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> funny | <input type="checkbox"/> confident | <input type="checkbox"/> mysterious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> unique | <input type="checkbox"/> romantic | <input type="checkbox"/> artsy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> musical | <input type="checkbox"/> smart | <input type="checkbox"/> charming |
| <input type="checkbox"/> popular | <input type="checkbox"/> loyal | <input type="checkbox"/> thoughtful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> stylish | <input type="checkbox"/> religious | <input type="checkbox"/> friendly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> independent | <input type="checkbox"/> outgoing | <input type="checkbox"/> fill in your own
_____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> adventurous | <input type="checkbox"/> athletic | <input type="checkbox"/> fill in your own
_____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> honest | <input type="checkbox"/> a good listener | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> respectful | <input type="checkbox"/> supportive | |

ON DATES, MY TEEN WOULD LIKE TO . . .

(check your top five choices)

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> go to a movie | <input type="checkbox"/> go to the beach | <input type="checkbox"/> go to see a play |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hang out at home
or at dating
partner's house | <input type="checkbox"/> play some kind
of sport | <input type="checkbox"/> go to a park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> go to a sporting
event | <input type="checkbox"/> go bowling | <input type="checkbox"/> go to an amusement
park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> go for a walk
or hike | <input type="checkbox"/> go to an art show
or a museum | <input type="checkbox"/> go on a picnic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> play video games | <input type="checkbox"/> listen to music | <input type="checkbox"/> go to a concert |
| <input type="checkbox"/> go out to eat | <input type="checkbox"/> go to the mall | <input type="checkbox"/> go for a bike ride |
| <input type="checkbox"/> go out in a group | <input type="checkbox"/> go dancing | <input type="checkbox"/> fill in your own
_____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> go to a party | <input type="checkbox"/> eat dinner with
dating partner's
family | <input type="checkbox"/> fill in your own
_____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> go roller or ice
skating | | |

Communication Checklists for Activity 2

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING SUCCESSFULLY

Teen	Caregiver 1	Caregiver 2	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I listened carefully.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I used encouraging words and asked questions.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I showed respect.

COMMUNICATION BLOCKERS

Teen	Caregiver 1	Caregiver 2	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I gave too much advice or lectured.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I acted like I knew it all.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I forced my opinion on another person.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I was critical, judgmental, or sarcastic.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I put down another person's opinions, preferences, choices, or feelings.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I used body language that suggested I wasn't interested in what another person had to say.



Recap

- Booklet 1 of Families for Safe Dates was designed to improve communication between caregivers and teens about dating.
- Understanding more about teen dating can help caregivers and teens communicate better about dating and about dating abuse in later booklets.
- Caregivers, in your discussions with your teen, you may have discovered that he or she is in an abusive relationship. If so, please refer to the resources listed on page 16 of this booklet. Remember, the National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline is 1-866-331-9474, and the National Domestic Violence Hotline is 1-800-799-SAFE (7233).

Next Steps

If you have received all five Families for Safe Dates activity booklets at once, these are your next steps:

1. Continue to practice communication skills.
2. Complete booklet 2, Skills for Handling Conflict, which includes activities on the following topics:
 - ways to recognize and deal with anger
 - skills for settling disagreements

These skills are useful for reducing and resolving conflict in any relationship, including the caregiver/teen relationship and dating relationships.

If your family is participating in Families for Safe Dates through an organization that will be calling you after you complete each booklet, these are your next steps:

1. Continue to practice communication skills.
2. Write down any questions you have about dating abuse or this booklet's activities to ask the health educator who will be calling you soon.
3. Booklet 2 (described above) will be sent to you about three days after your telephone conversation with the health educator.



Tips for Successful Communication

Cut these cards out and place them in high-traffic areas around your home, such as on the refrigerator or next to the computer.

Families for **SAFE Dates**

Tips for Successful Communication

- Listen carefully
- Use encouraging words and ask questions
- Show respect

Communication Blockers

- Giving too much advice and lecturing
- Acting like you know all the answers
- Forcing your opinions on others
- Being critical, judgmental, or sarcastic
- Putting down the other person's opinions, preferences, choices, and feelings
- Using body language that suggests you're not interested in what the other person has to say

Families for **SAFE Dates**

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Resources

If Your Teen Is in an Abusive Dating Relationship

The national telephone hotlines and Web sites listed here are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They provide counseling, referrals to local services, and legal options.

National Domestic Violence Hotline (NDVH)

1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or
1-800-787-3224 (TTY)
www.ndvh.org

The NDVH provides crisis intervention services, information about domestic violence, and referrals to service providers in your area for victims of domestic violence.

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)

1-800-656-HOPE (4673)
www.rainn.org

RAINN can connect you directly with rape crisis centers in your local community. The Web site provides further information on counseling centers in your area.

Love Is Respect: National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline

1-866-331-9474
www.loveisrespect.org

Advocates provide information and confidential crisis intervention and support to teens

who suspect or know they are in an abusive relationship. Family and friends may also call for support. Teens can chat online with a peer advocate via the Web site.

Childhelp USA, National Hotline

1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453)
www.childhelpusa.org

Childhelp USA provides free crisis intervention from professional counselors. The hotline counselors also provide referrals to local agencies and adult survivor groups.

National Center for Victims of Crime (NCVC)

1-800-FYI-CALL (1-800-394-2255)
www.ncvc.org

The NCVC hotline offers supportive counseling, practical information about crime and victimization, referrals to local community resources, and skilled advocacy in the criminal justice and social service systems. Visit the Web site to learn about legal options and resources for families of teens who are victims of crime.