**Coping with Teen Dating – Tips for Parents**



Most parents have some fears of the day their child will start dating. It is the big sign that they’re growing up and are entering adulthood. But it’s important to remember that they do still need you now and this is a normal development phase of the teen years. There are also things you can do to make dating easier for both of you.

Talk to your teen about what a good relationship is. While you may think your teen already knows how to date, they probably don’t. Most of their information comes from media that’s meant to be entertaining, not realistic. Make sure your child understands what it means to be in a loving and supporting relationship. Once you’re done talking, set a good example in your relationship with your significant other.

Once your child starts dating, don’t stop talking to them about relationships. Dating doesn’t always go as you expect; your child may need someone to come to if they have a problem. You need to keep the lines of communication open and also reiterate to them how they should treat people and expect to be treated in a relationship.

When it comes time to meet your teen’s date, be kind and respectful. While you may want to give a lecture on the rules; their date is not the one you should be talking to. It is your teen’s responsibility to know your rules and follow them. Also, while you may not like the person your child is dating, be supportive. If you have taught them about a proper relationship, then you should trust them to make their own decisions. Only intervene if you think the relationship is dangerous for your child.

As a parent, it is important for you to recognize the danger signs of an unhealthy or abusive relationship. If you have a concern, talk honestly with your child and ask other’s for help. Here are some clues that your child’s relationship may be in trouble.

* Constant visits and phone calls
* Having to report where they are and what they’re doing
* Signs of physical abuse
* Signs of depression

It may be hard to see your child growing up and finding new people to get close to, but if you take the right steps and teach them how relationships are supposed to be, they’re much more likely to make the right choices.