

Social Awareness Skills

Social awareness is the ability to understand and respect the perspectives of others, and to apply this knowledge to social interactions with people from diverse backgrounds. As teens make their way through high school, their sense of social awareness is maturing, as is their ability to understand how their behaviors affect others. Their interest in sexuality and gender also grows at this age, as many teens are dating by now, and they are figuring out their role in intimate relationships. The unpredictable moods of adolescence may still appear every now and then, and hurt feelings, arguments with friends, cliques, peer pressure, and dating issues can have a dramatic impact on some teens. You can help your teenager navigate these years by having frequent and meaningful conversations with them and by supporting their growing independence.

The high school years are a time of great personal development as teens are further developing their identities, preparing for adulthood, and gaining more independence. Encouraging your teen's social and emotional development is still important at this age, as these skills can be developed throughout life. While your teen is becoming more independent, it is important to remember that you are still needed. Reminding your teen that you care can go a long way in keeping them on track and planning for the future.

At this age, your teen is focused on defining their identity and on establishing close bonds with their friends and, possibly, romantic partners.

Your teen's ability to use verbal, physical, and situational cues to identify what others are feeling improves greatly during the high school years.

Your teen's capacity to understand the feelings, motives, and actions of others is also growing. At this age, your teen has been exposed to many different social experiences, and they may be better prepared to apply empathy to social interactions and to adjust their behavior to meet the needs of others. They may not always put empathy into action, however, as high schoolers are very concerned about their social standing. This may lead your teen to criticize or hurt others in order to go along with the crowd.

Keep in mind that all adolescents have different social and emotional tendencies and behaviors and develop at different rates.

The concepts highlighted in this section are based on the five sets of competencies developed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL).

Adapted from: <https://www.today.com/parenting-guides/9th-grade-social-awareness-skills-t178810>



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