

Social Awareness Tips

Spend Quality Time with Your Teen

Your teen's social world evolves during high school, and it's important to keep the lines of communication open. Try to talk frequently and honestly about your teen's feelings and friendships. Whether it's at the dinner table or right before bedtime, have frequent chats with your teen about their social life and their role and responsibilities as a friend. Listen patiently to their stories and concerns. Try not to be too judgmental while having these discussions, as this can cause them to withhold information or not want to talk about these topics.

Help Your High-schooler Come Up with Rules for Her Social Life

As your teen becomes more independent, it's important to give them some say over their social life and activities. Have a discussion with them about their privileges, responsibilities, and curfew, and work together to set rules and consequences for breaking them. This will help your teen feel included and invested in these important social decisions. It can also help guide their behavior once your teen ventures out on their own.

Encourage Your Teen's Interests and Future Career Goals

Many teens have passions and pursuits that are important to them, and it's helpful to encourage them to find what their "thing" is. Ask about their interests and about potential careers related to their passions. If your teen has a hard time defining their interests, help them by pointing out their talents and how they can use them in their future career.

Talk to Your Teen About Bullying

Bullying is a growing concern in the United States, as children and teens are experiencing and engaging in this negative behavior at alarming rates. This is especially true at the high-school level, where cliques, belonging and popularity are major aspects of a teen's social world. Bullying can take many forms, like name-calling, physical harassment, or excluding others, and social media has opened up new avenues for this type of harassment. Often, teens don't recognize that their own behavior could be considered bullying. Talk to your teen about bullying and ask them if they have been victimized or if they have seen it happen to others. By reminding them of the harmful effects of bullying, you are helping to provide your teen with the knowledge and courage that your teen will need to stand up against this behavior in the future.

Discuss Cyberbullying with Your Teen

Online bullying occurs frequently in high school, and it's good to talk to your teen about the importance of being kind to others online. For instance, there have been many news reports about teens who have harmed themselves because of comments on social media. Tell your teen that they should not bully others online or go along with the crowd when someone is being made fun of online. You can also ask them if they have ever experienced cyberbullying and how it made them feel.