

# PARENTING ADOLESCENTS

Adolescence is one of the most exciting times in a person's life because there is such rapid brain development. Talking with teens about situations they can expect to face (themselves or as a friend) will help better prepare them.



## Peer Pressure

As teens spend more time with their friends, they have more opportunities to define their own values. They will, with practice, learn the art of saying no to someone while remaining friends. Ask your child, "What would you do in this situation?" This may be a low-stakes manner to build their "saying no" muscle. Our children will face peer pressure and need to firmly say no and remove themselves from an uncomfortable or dangerous situation. Helping our children understand how their choices may impact their lives will help them make a better decision.

## Driving

Proactively building their driving skills will help your anxiety and give your child much needed coaching and practice. Find a time to practice when you *both* are calm. Give them driving lessons yourself every few months. Proactively building their driving skills will help your anxiety and give your child much needed coaching and practice. Have specific conversations around driving safety as a passenger. Give them a way to have an "out" and to stand firm to their safety beliefs.

## Mental Health

Our mental health is as important as our physical health. We should all be on the lookout for signs of depression, anxiety, and warning signs related to [suicide](#). (Call 1-800-273-8255 for immediate help.) Find support for your child when you notice things such as complaints of physical pain, increased irritability, avoiding or numbing feelings, and social isolation. Encourage your child to talk with others - family members, friends, and school counselors. Model how to talk about feelings - positive and negative - letting your child know that all of their feelings are okay.