



SHEBBEAR COLLEGE

NAVIGATING THE CHALLENGES OF TEENAGE RELATIONSHIPS: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

Maya Griffiths brings a vital topic to the forefront in her latest article, "Sexual Coercion in Teenagers: What Can Parents Do?" This insightful piece addresses the complexities and concerns that parents face when their children enter teenage relationships.

As teenagers explore their sexuality and face peer pressure, they may encounter situations where they feel compelled to engage in sexual activities prematurely. The concept of sexual coercion, which involves pressuring someone into unwanted sexual activities, is a critical issue that parents need to understand and address.

Nicola Baldwin, Spurgeons' (Children's Charity) Parenting Lead, offers valuable advice to parents on safeguarding their children from such coercion.

Key strategies include:

1. **Educating about Healthy Relationships:** It's essential to discuss what constitutes a healthy relationship, emphasising love, respect, and the right to refuse uncomfortable situations. Parents should specifically define these characteristics to their teens.
2. **Debunking Myths:** Teens often have misconceptions about relationships and sexual activities, influenced by media, social networks, or pornography. It's crucial to correct these myths and promote informed decisions.
3. **Understanding Consequences:** Teenagers need to be aware of the potential consequences of sexual activities, such as the risks associated with sharing intimate images and the responsibilities that come with sexual relationships.
4. **Promoting Rational Decision-Making:** Encourage teens to apply the same level of rational thinking to relationships as they would to other aspects of life, like avoiding risky behaviours with friends.
5. **Acknowledging the Responsibility of Sex:** Discuss the importance of being ready to handle the outcomes of sexual activity, such as the possibility of pregnancy, even with precautions.
6. **Identifying Healthy Friendships and Relationships:** Educate teens on recognising the signs of a healthy relationship, including feeling safe, respected, and free to express dissent.
7. **Maintaining Open Communication:** Please keep the lines of communication open, letting your teen know that their concerns will be taken seriously.

The approach to these conversations might slightly differ between boys and girls, focusing on respect and consent.

Young People should be educated about respecting their partners' wishes and understanding consent, they should be empowered to assert their right to refuse unwanted advances.

<https://www.dad.info/article/fatherhood/being-dad/sexual-coercion-in-teenagers-what-can-parents-do/>