

ARE YOU TUNED IN WITH YOUR TEEN?



Teens today communicate through smart phones, tablets and computers. This advancement in technology is a blessing for global progression but a bane for parents trying to establish effective communication with their teenage children. Your teen could be spending much of the day speaking or texting their friends and 'forget' to communicate with you. How then can you get connected to your child online?

Be in touch via technology.

Learn how your teen communicates with his/her peers via mobile/computers. Get familiar with the latest apps and form an 'online' relationship with your teen. Many families now have private messaging groups and constantly update each other on what is happening, to always stay in touch.

Respectful listening.

To keep communication open, your teen needs to feel emotionally comfortable in approaching you. Teens crave being heard and not lectured. Tune in to what they have to say and you will understand how your teen is feeling. You can then gently turn these sharings into 'teachable' moments.

Share your stories.

Your teen wants to know more about you too. Talk about how you went through difficult situations when you were a teenager and share how you overcame them. Give your teen a chance to know you better and let him/her understand how similar challenges have impacted you to make you the person that you are today. They will find comfort in your experiences and learn from you.

Assert yourself.

Be firm about your thoughts and decisions involving your teen. This does not mean being hostile, aggressive or demanding. Be honest when speaking with your teen on serious matters and make consequences clear.

Pay attention to non-verbal signs.

Observe your teen's body language, facial expressions, eye contact and tone of voice. It can help you connect with him/her better. At times, the way he/she looks, listens, moves and reacts can tell you about how he/she is feeling. This may be much more accurate and effective, than what he/she tells you.

It is important to establish an open and understanding relationship with your teenage child and keep the communication channels open to prevent your teen from being reserved and disengaged from you or your family. This strong connection will allow you to check on your teen against risky temptations of drug abuse.

