

Communication With Your Child

Presented By:

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Our Mission:
A world where every young person benefits from mental health support

Our Services:
Online counseling, designed for teens



Agenda

- Learning about positive communication and relationships
- Learning how to broach difficult conversations with your child
- Connecting to available resources
- Q&A



Positive Communication

Positive communication is communication based in respect, trust, and collaboration, where we feel safe to express our thoughts, feelings, and needs.

Positive communication in families supports:

- healthy caregiver-child relationships
- feeling close and cared for by caregivers and family members
- supports positive youth mental health, higher self-esteem, and confidence
- day-to-day happiness and well-being for youth

Healthy Caregiver Relationships

Healthy caregiver relationships set the foundation for life. Youth learn from you, and can use their relationship with you to **practice** how to have healthy relationships/communicate with others

The way you as the parent behave and communicate with others (*and with yourself!*) shows your child how to communicate with others, and how they should be treated in return.

Family Connectedness

Studies have shown students who feel connected to school or in their families are less likely to experience mental health issues & are less likely to engage in risky behavior in both youth and adulthood by **48% - 66%**, including lower odds of experiencing:

- Emotional distress + odds of suicidal ideation
- STI diagnosis/multiple sex partners
- Physical violence victimization + perpetration
- Prescription drug misuse/illicit drug use

Stress in Families

Stress and transitions in families may impact communication and emotional availability. Learning our “stress language” can help prepare for and move through tough times. Stress responses may look like:

- Isolating from one another
- Spending more time in escape behaviors (drinking, using drugs, overeating, video games, using the Internet, etc.)
- Arguing
- Spending less time at home or with family
- Neglecting individual self-care
- Disregarding important rules or boundaries

Techniques for Effective Communication

Tips for Talking with Teens

- Express **appreciation** when your teen shares with you, or comes to you for support - *"I'm so glad we're talking about this"* or *"I really like how you brought this up, I like talking to you about these things"*
- **Respect** their different points of view and try to understand where they are coming from; **Remember** how hard it was to be a teen
- Show **interest** in their interests and their friends
- **Encourage** them to tell you about problems, and offer solutions only if they **ask** for advice - *"That sounds really tough. Do you want advice or just to vent? I'm here for whatever you need."*

Emotional Regulation

Self-regulation: Your ability to manage your behaviors and emotional responses to the things happening around you.

Co-regulation: The supportive process between caring adults & kids/teens that helps them learn how to self-regulate.

What regulation looks like:

- Challenging negative thoughts
- Pausing before responding
- Focus on breathing
- Taking a break
- Working on impulse control

Co-regulation can help:

- Pay attention to your own feelings and reactions during stressful interactions
- Use strategies to self-calm, respond effectively and compassionately
- Model your own coping & self-regulation strategies

Difficult Conversations

- Having difficult conversations has been shown to strengthen parent-child communication; [Studies show](#) parents have the most influence on teen decision making
- Open & honest communication about difficult or “awkward” topics can:
 - Promote good health practices – making informed decisions around sex or substances, for example and can reduce chances of high risk behaviors
 - Allows them to practice tough conversations with you before having them with peers – ex. “strategies to say no if you’re feeling uncomfortable”
- Prepare by thinking about: *what* you want to say, *how* you say it, & how you can make sure your child still feels *cared for* and *understood* even through difficult conversations or setting rules/boundaries
 - *“These rules are here because I care about you and want to keep you safe.”*

Active Listening

- Give your full attention to your child, try to stop other things you are doing
- Use non-verbal cues to show you are listening: making eye contact, nodding, turning towards them while they are speaking.
 - You can also talk while on a walk or in the car, or even by text if that is more comfortable for them.
- Consider their age and developmental stage.
- Ask questions when you don't understand to show you're interested
- Validate their emotions and experiences - show what they have to say matters & they're worth being heard

LUV – *Listen, Understand, Validate*

I-Statements

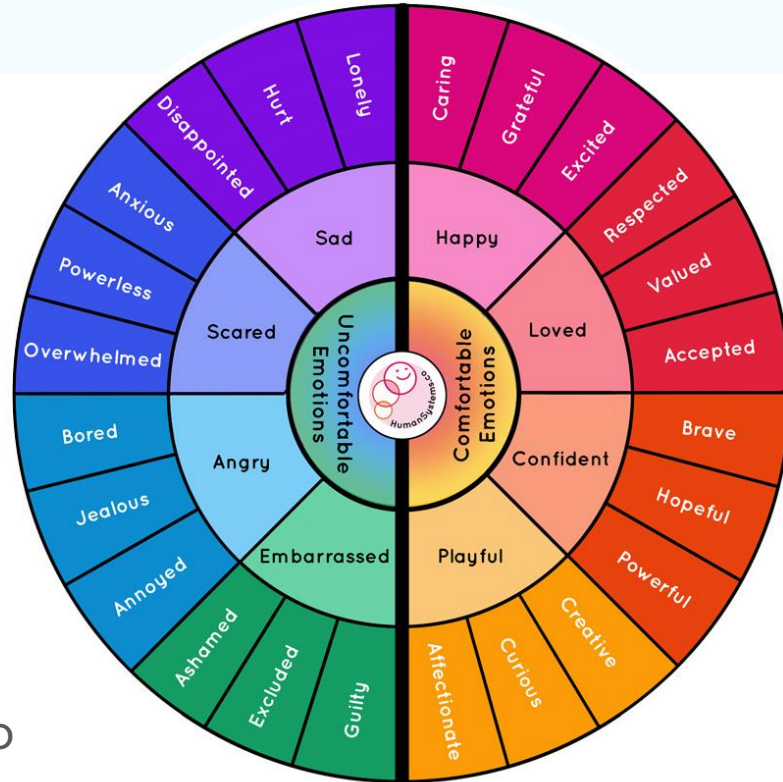
Using “I-Statements” helps make sure your child doesn’t feel blamed or attacked. This can help avoid arguments or confrontations, and can help resolve issues or concerns without getting defensive

- Begin with the word “I” and state your feelings, needs, or thoughts respectfully
 - Use non-blaming language/tones to describe specifically what you want, or the behavior that bothers you
 - Explain reasons for your feelings/thoughts/needs
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- **Instead of:** *“You never talk to me”*
 - **Try:** *“I would love to know how you’re feeling”*
 - **Instead of:** *“You came home late & didn’t call”*
 - **Try:** *“I feel worried when I don’t know where you are & I want to know you’re safe”*

Naming Emotions

It can be hard to understand what we are feeling sometimes. Help kids by reflecting back what you hear: *“I hear that this is really hard for you”* or *“it seems like that incident made you feel really angry”*


- Use emotion wheels to help youth name and separate their feelings
- Show it’s okay to talk about feelings
- Communicate understanding/wanting to understand from the parent



Communication Strategies

- Build **routines**: Rose, Bud & Thorn check-ins during family dinners/meetings
- Avoid **communication traps**: Always/never language, getting defensive, blaming, or using a cranky voice
- Use the five most important words often: *"I love you"* & *"I'm sorry"*

ROSE, BUD & THORN CHECK-IN



ROSE
What went well?
What is something that you are grateful for? What positive thing happened to you lately?

BUD
What could bloom?
What is something that you look forward to? What gives you hope, motivation, and inspiration right now?

THORN
What didn't go well?
What is something challenging or stressful that you could use more support with right now?

Use this mindfulness exercise to reflect on the day and to notice where you are.

Additionally, what can you do to turn this thorn into a bud?

Resources

Hays CISD Resources



- [Hays CISD Guidance & Counseling Resources](#)
- [Hays CISD Community Resources 23-24](#)

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Panel Discussion
Q&A

Q&A

Add your questions for our panelists in the chat - we'll respond to them in the order that they come in



Thank You!

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