

## Parent Tip Sheet on Teen Sexuality in the Era of #MeToo

One of the trickiest challenges of adolescence is navigating the murky waters of romantic attraction and sexuality. In the midst of developing personal identities, pre-teens and teens are also trying to figure out how to forge meaningful relationships with others, and this can be especially confusing in the era of #MeToo. *When does harmless flirtation cross the line? How do we talk to adolescents about intimacy, consent?*

### Consider these tips from experts, parents, and student Peer Leaders:

- Create a respectful culture at home and talk to kids early and often about respect, consent, empathy, being inclusive, understanding differences, etc.
- Teach/model positive relationship skills (include role play -- “What would you do if...?”)
- Reinforce clear, open, positive communication, especially in sexual/relationship encounters. Discuss the difference between casual sex and real intimacy.
- Model and encourage healthy, positive, balanced social media activity. Talk openly about the dangers of sexting.
- Talk about the importance and the hallmarks of setting boundaries and “consent.” Discuss the impact of being under the influence, when judgment is impaired. (**FRIES** is a consent model teens seem to relate to -- **F**reely given, **R**eversible, **I**nformed, **E**nthusiastic, **S**ober.)
- Watch out for gender biases -- don’t assume men are always oppressors and women are submissive.
- Encourage adolescents to stand up – “If you see something, say something” -- don’t be a bystander. And don’t condone joking about sexual harassment and assault.
- Empower adolescents to say “No,” and “If you do that again, I’ll report you.” (Regardless of intent, if behavior makes someone uncomfortable, it is “not okay.”)
- Make sure resources for getting advice/help are clearly known in your family. (All Brookline families can start with the *Prevention/Intervention Team* at BHS – Mary Minott ([Mary\\_Minott@psbma.org](mailto:Mary_Minott@psbma.org), 617-713-5155) & Kendell Jones ([Kendell\\_Jones@psbma.org](mailto:Kendell_Jones@psbma.org), 617-713-5149))

*For more information and resources, go to B-PEN’s “Relationships” page at*

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