

# Questions for discussion

As parents of teenagers, we don't have all the answers – but we do know a lot of the questions! And in many cases, parents find that asking the right questions is the beginning of understanding what's really going on with teenagers.

To help expedite discussion within your family, there are questions on the next two pages for you and your teen to answer independently. This will provide a framework for meaningful conversation.

To promote family communication:

- Each parent and teen should independently review these questions and record his/her responses on a separate piece of paper.
- Before talking with their teen, parents should first compare their own answers and find consensus.
- Next, the family – parents and teen(s) – should gather to compare answers.
- Through discussion, the family can try to establish some workable “rules” with reasonable consequences.

Be prepared that this may take some time. This should be a time for listening, really listening to each other – no TV, no deadlines to meet... Such dialogue should be conducted when no big issue or punishment is pending. This conversation should lead to new awareness for everyone.

## **Curfews and plans**

Is there a set curfew time?

What is curfew for school nights?

What is the curfew for nights with no school the next day?

Can the teen change the curfew in a particular situation? How?

If the teen has a change of plans during an evening, is he/she expected to let the parent know? Is there a set time for this?

What are the consequences for the teen not “checking in?”

Are there consequences for the teen being out past curfew? What are they?

How does the teen let the parent(s) know he/she is home?

## **Alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs**

What are the parent's views on teenage drinking or other drug use?

What are the family consequences if the teen is discovered to be drinking or using drugs?

Is the teen allowed to attend parties where alcohol and/or drugs are available?

## **Parties**

In your family, do parents plan or help to plan a party for/with the teenager? How is this done?

What should a teen do if he/she arrives at a party and finds there is no adult supervision?

What should the teen do if (lots of) kids show up at your house and there is no parent at home?

## **Driving**

Is the teen allowed to drive friends in the car? If yes, how many?

What limitations are placed on the teen's driving?

Is he/she allowed to ride with other/certain teenage drivers?

Do the parents place limitations on their teen's riding with other teenage drivers?

Is the teen allowed to lend the car or drive someone else's car?

## **Dating and sex**

Has a parent shared views with the teen on abstinence, premarital sex, and birth control, and the consequences of acting irresponsibly?

Has a parent shared views on homosexual relationships?

What should the teen do should she find she missed her period?

Is the teen allowed to have unlimited Internet access to all types of websites? Has a parent shared their view on pornography?

What are the parent's views of social networking sites such as MySpace or FaceBook?

## **Employment**

What is your family's policy on the teen's employment/volunteering?

## **Your own topics for discussion:**