

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Mums raising teenage boys

TIP SHEET

Relationships Australia WA's education team have developed a range of tips to help support you during the COVID-19 outbreak. As a free resource, we encourage you to share this with your community.

Various studies show that teenage boys have a sense of independence that contributes hugely to their happiness at this stage of their lives. Hence, many will be finding the restrictions imposed by this pandemic particularly difficult.

Because friendships are so important, not being able to have close interaction with their friends will be hard to deal with. Nevertheless many teenagers love their parents and want a good relationship with them, so this will be a good opportunity to draw closer to them.

Here are some tips about how mothers can support their teenage boys:

- **Help them to find ways to stay connected with their friends.**
This might mean that you encourage games that can be played online or from a distance, and that you relax the rules around the time spent on social media. If your son does sneak out to be with friends, avoid lecturing and just reiterate the importance of the rules.
- **Speak openly with them**
Take advantage of their sense of independence and speak openly with them about the pandemic. Ask them to do some research about what the government has directed the community to do at this time and how other people are keeping safe around the country. Then ask them what they think you should all do as a family to keep safe.
- **Build on your bond together**
Ensure that your teenage boys feel safe and valued. Tell them you love and are proud of them, focusing on something specific. For example, you could say *"Thank you for being helpful in the kitchen today"*. Find new ways of showing affection even when they may roll their eyes. They will appreciate it nevertheless.
- **Be interested in their world and be accepting of it**
You may sit next to them while they are playing a video game and learn more about it. This will foster feelings of connectedness and belonging.

- **Allow them time**

Teenage boys may find it difficult to speak about their feelings. Rather than badgering, allow them time to process what is going on. When they do speak, listen carefully to their feelings and acknowledge them. Refrain from correcting and giving advice.

- **Let your teenager choose an activity that you can do together**

Follow their lead. This will motivate them to want to spend time with you, and by extension this will bring you closer together.

- **Concentrate on enjoying your teenagers' company**

Try to be enthusiastic and actively cooperate with what your child is doing – the activity itself is less important than shared fun and talking together.

- **Encourage interaction with a father figure**

Teenage boys have a need for a positive male role model. This will be a good time to encourage interaction and activities with Dad. Activities during this time could mean a simple walk in the park, a quick game of footy in the back yard or a game of cards.

As we journey through these challenging times, please reach out for support and connection amongst your community or if you'd like further support from Relationships Australia WA you can call us on 1300 364 277.

Our Education team will continue to facilitate Relationship Australia WA's seminars, workshops and courses face-to-face once government guidelines allow. You might like to like us on Facebook to keep up to date with support information and details of services we can offer during this time.

If you'd like to register your interest in attending a course on **Mums Raising Teenage Boys** once available, or any of our other courses, please email education@relationshipsWA.org.au or call 6164 0200.