

Common Teen Behaviors	Suggested Responses
<p>Argue for the sake of arguing</p> 	<p>Build trust by encouraging healthy debate. Set ground rules by taking the time to create guidelines for how you will talk and how you will listen to each other. The guidelines should be agreed upon and used by both you and your teen, especially during heated talks.</p> <p><i>"We have been arguing a lot lately and I don't want that to affect our relationship. I would like us to set some 'rules' to follow whenever we start disagreeing about something. Are you OK with this?"</i></p>
<p>Jump to conclusions</p> 	<p>Try not to correct every faulty logic point your son or daughter is trying to make. Ask them how they arrived at a particular thought or conclusion instead of arguing with them about it.</p> <p>When your daughter comes home from school and says she is not doing well in math because the teacher hates her, you might ask something like, <i>"What makes you think your teacher hates you,"</i> instead of responding with an immediate (normal) reaction of <i>"No she doesn't. Maybe you aren't studying enough or doing your homework if you are failing math."</i></p>
<p>Be self-centered</p> 	<p>Help your teen consider someone else's thoughts or feelings by making matter of fact statements (while being aware of your body language and tone of voice) that provide another person's point of view. For example, <i>"Even though he didn't show it, your brother was really hurt when you told him he would never get a prom date."</i></p>
<p>Constantly find fault in your position</p> 	<p>Try not to take it personally and get into an argument. Explain your point of view and clarify any mix-ups.</p> <p>Limit sharing personal experiences when clarifying your position on something. <i>"I'm telling you this because when I was 16..."</i> Teens don't respond well when you share stories about your own experiences. This is hard for parents to understand – especially when we have experiences that we feel will help our teens make better decisions.</p>
<p>Be overly dramatic</p> 	<p>Help teens think through their dramatic or exaggerated response by reflecting their drama (while being aware of your body language and tone of voice) and asking open-ended, clarifying questions. Your teen says <i>"Jessie broke up with me, I can never show my face at school again"</i>. You respond <i>"You will have to drop out of school."</i> Let your teen respond, then follow up with <i>"What would it take for you to feel OK going to school tomorrow?"</i></p>

For more tips on talking with teens, pick up a copy of *Teen Speak* at PossibilitiesForChange.com/TeenSpeak.