

PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO PREJUDICE AND RACISM

Tips to help guide parents & navigate difficult conversations

THE TEEN YEARS (AGES 13–17)

KEEP TALKING

Many believe the last thing teens are interested in is having a conversation with parents. But even if your teen doesn't initiate conversations about issues of difference, find ways to bring those topics up with them. Use current issues from the news as a springboard for discussion. Ask your teen what she thinks about the issues.

Messages about differences exist all around your teen: the Internet, songs, music videos, reality shows, ads and commercials, social cliques at school. Know the websites your teen enjoys visiting; take time to listen to or watch the music and shows they enjoy. Then discuss the messages they send. Ask your teen about the group or groups she most identifies with at school. Discuss the labels or stereotypes that are associated with such groups.

STAY INVOLVED

Discussing the importance of valuing difference is essential, but modeling this message is even more vital. Evaluate your own circle of friends or the beliefs you hold about certain groups of people. Do your actions match the values you discuss with your teen? Teens are more likely to be influenced by what you do than what you say, so it's important for your words and behaviors to be congruent.

LIVE CONGRUENTLY

BROADEN OPPORTUNITIES

It may be natural for teens to stick to groups they feel most comfortable with during the school day. These often are the people they identify as being most like themselves. Suggest volunteer, extracurricular, worship and work opportunities that will broaden your teen's social circle.

ENCOURAGE ACTIVISM

Promote ways for your teen to get involved in causes he cares about. When young people know they have a voice in their community, they are empowered to help resolve issues of injustice.

