

Modeling Healthy Relationship Behavior

Additional resources, skills, and strategies for parents are available at no cost through the online Thrive Initiative programming. Visit the Thrive website https://thrive.psu.edu, and sign up today!

Healthy Relationship Modeling

Positive Behavior	How It Is Modeled
"I" Statements	Use "I" statements when talking with your teen. Avoid accusatory "you" statements.
Active Listening Skills	Give your teen your full attention when they are talking to you. Do not judge them or try to think about what you're going to say while they are saying it.
Problem-Solving Skills	Calmly and rationally talk through challenges with your teenager. Help them break the problem down and have a solution-focused conversation.
Purposeful Intent – Compromise	When disagreeing with your teen, try to find a "middle ground" solution that both parties are comfortable with.
Purposeful Intent – Mutual Respect	Continually demonstrate that, for the most part, other human beings, regardless of differences, hold value and deserve respect.
Purposeful Intent – Boundaries and Values	Discuss with others what you are comfortable and uncomfortable with. Engage with your child from their point of view.
Purposeful Intent – Reciprocity	Show care and compassion and expect nothing in return.
Honesty	Own your mistakes and discuss them with others. Refrain from lying, cheating, and stealing.

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Unhealthy Relationship Modeling

Negative Behavior	How It Is Modeled	Try This Instead
Uncontrolled Anger	Exhibiting violent or overly emotional conversations or actions when angry.	Take a short break from the conversation and collect your thoughts. It's okay to say you need a minute and revisit the conversation later.
Disrespecting Other's Boundaries	Continuing with problematic behavior directed at others after being asked to stop.	If you are asked to stop a specific behavior, do so.
Physical Abuse	Hurting someone physically — like pushing, hitting, grabbing, or kicking.	Physical abuse can be a result of uncontrolled anger. If you have these feelings, remove yourself from the situation until you have had a chance to cool down.
Dishonesty	Some common forms of dishonesty include lying, cheating, and stealing.	Refrain from acting in deceitful ways. Avoid having dishonest or disingenuous conversations.
Avoidance	Neglecting others' emotional needs, limiting difficult conversations, or an unwillingness to engage in problem-solving behavior.	Check in with those in your life periodically. Make sure that everyone is doing okay and try to help those who may not be doing fine.
Transactional Behavior	Only doing things when there is something in return for yourself.	Act selflessly — find ways to help others when there may be no clear gain for yourself.
Isolation	Keeping others from support networks outside of the relationship	Understand that you, alone, cannot be a complete support network to someone. Work to cultivate support networks for others.