

AVOIDING RISKS ONLINE

- 1. Protect access to your information.**
Create a strong password and use the security settings on social media sites.
- 2. Watch what you post.**
It could come back to haunt you!
- 3. Stand up to “cyber bullies”.**
Don’t participate. Report it!
- 4. Be wary.**
Online relationships may be based on false information. Internet predators do exist.

Teen Depression

Depression is a condition that affects up to 20% of teens. If left untreated, it can lead to dangerous behavior and even suicide. The good news: once depression is diagnosed, it’s highly treatable, and help is available. Recognize the symptoms:

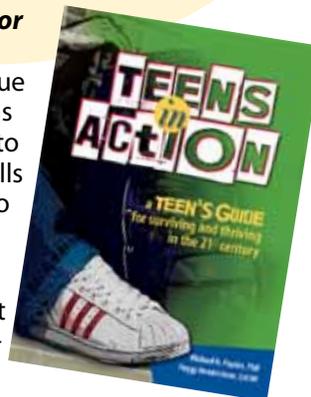
- Persistent sadness
- Distractibility
- Anger or hostility
- Feelings of worthlessness
- Apathy (not caring)
- Unexplained pains
- Withdrawal from people and activities
- Very sensitive to criticism
- Negative changes in eating or sleeping
- Talk of suicide or death
- Lack of energy

Family Enrichment Activity: Expressing Love

You can show your parents you love them in lots of little ways: a kiss, a hug, or just a smile. You can show love through your actions: doing what your parents ask (or better, *without* being asked), or just spending time with them. But you also need to *tell* your parents that you love them. The words may feel awkward if you’re not used to them, but they’re beautiful to the people who love you. Try it this week.

Get more hope and help for the teen years with the *Teen’s Guide*.

Teens in Action: A Guide for Surviving and Thriving in the 21st Century is a unique handbook for today’s teens and tweens. It’s designed to help them develop the skills and character they need to succeed in life. The *Teen’s Guide*...



- Provides deeper insight into the topics presented in the videos.
- Goes *beyond* the videos to cover more of what teens need to know: bullying, peer pressure, online risks, talking about sexuality, and more.
- Presents 10 practical strategies teens can use to avoid high-risk behavior around drugs, sexuality, and violence.
- Teens do more than read: they stay engaged with creative exercises, thought-provoking writing prompts, and activities.
- Includes 25+ pages of comic-book style stories that use art and humor to make learning fun.

GO ONLINE FOR MORE!

TEENS AND TWEENS:

Visit www.activeparenting.com/TIA_Resources for a list of books, web sites, and other resources that can help you survive and thrive as a teen.

PARENTS OF TEENS AND TWEENS:

Visit www.activeparenting.com/ParentingTeens for the latest in parenting news and resources.



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TEENS IN ACTION™

VIDEO 5

Drugs, Sexuality, and Violence: Reducing the Risks Part 1

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10 Risk-Prevention Strategies for TEENS

THE BIGGEST RISKS



Other people may be able to help you steer clear of drugs, sexuality, and violence during your teen years, but the major responsibility is yours. These ten prevention strategies, when combined with a **strong character** and reinforced with **good relationships**, outline a plan for keeping yourself safe from the three major risks.

(Strategies 5-10 are covered in video 6.)

STRATEGY #1

Find positive role models.

We learn a lot—even values and beliefs—from others. So it's important that we choose positive role models, and choose them carefully. Look for someone who has an attitude and values that you'd like to develop in yourself.

A role model's behavior and values may be a combination of positive and negative, but no role model is perfect, so remember:

ROLE MODELS

ADOPT THE BEST AND LET GO OF THE REST.

STRATEGY #2

Educate yourself about the risks.

Teenagers get a lot of what they know about drugs, sexuality, and violence from other teens. Much of this information is inaccurate or one-sided, emphasizing the exciting aspects while downplaying the risks. So it's best not to assume that you know the facts. You need reliable and accurate sources of information.

Believe it or not, parents can be one of your best resources! They care about you and they have the benefit of experience. Talking about serious issues with parents may feel uncomfortable at first, but it will become more natural with practice. It will help to have short but frequent talks rather than one long discussion.

SO, WHAT WILL YOU TALK ABOUT?

Here are a few ideas for topics you could discuss with your parents.

- Effects and risks of specific drugs
- The consequences of breaking the law
- The reproductive process; birth control
- Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)
- When is sex OK?
- Bullying
- Date violence
- Abusive relationships
- Stranger danger
- Fighting (how it escalates; how to avoid it)

STRATEGY #3

Filter OUT the negative influences and IN the positive ones.

Teens who have positive people in their lives are more likely to get into success cycles and less likely to get involved with drugs, reckless sexuality, or violence. Look for opportunities to learn from positive experiences and role models. For example:

youth groups ORGANIZED SPORTS school clubs relatives mentoring programs spiritual education summer programs POSITIVE MEDIA

But there are also negative influences out there: people and events that can actually push you towards engaging in risky behavior.

As the saying goes, "Garbage in, garbage out." If we think of negative influences as garbage, we can apply this idea to the Think-Feel-Do Cycle...



Some negative influences that put garbage into our systems are:

- Media that promotes poor values and risky behavior
- Peers who engage in risky behavior
- Adults who set poor examples

STRATEGY #4

Establish clear guidelines for behavior.

Working with your parents to set guidelines of behavior for yourself may sound like, "Goodbye, independence!", but it's actually the opposite. Your parents are going to make rules one way or another. Wouldn't you rather have a say? Plus, negotiating and following guidelines are opportunities for you to demonstrate responsibility and earn more freedom. And finally, having set guidelines can really pay off when you're facing a tough decision or a potentially risky situation.

Not every situation requires a guideline. Most of the time you'll have to use your own judgment to make decisions on the fly. But situations that might involve drugs, sexuality, or violence are often too risky to allow teens full freedom to make an unwise decision. Setting guidelines for these situations is both useful and smart. For example:

Using alcohol, tobacco & other drugs	Dating
Spending nights out/Having friends over	Curfews
The use of media	Going to parties
How & when to use physical force	Driving