Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
PolicyLab

How to Start the Conversation by Using Netflix's Series "Sex Education" in 200 Words

Adolescent Health & Well-Being

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Editor's note: If you're looking for more information on how to talk to your teen about sexual health topics, visit parentsaretalking.com; a website developed by Children's Hospital of Philadelphia adolescent health researchers.

Netflix's new hit show "Sex Education" is making its way through teens' and young adults' TV queue. The show follows the journey of a group of teenagers through adolescent development, which naturally includes exploring how they are navigating puberty, and romantic and sexual relationships. "Sex Education" provides an opportunity for parents to talk about sexual health with their teens. When parents engage in open, honest conversations with their teens, teens are more likely to delay sexual initiation and engage in safer sex practices once sexually active.

Here are a few suggestions on how to use the show to talk to your teen:

1. Pubertal changes: Pubertal and body changes come up often in the show, which may lead your teen to have questions. It's important to reassure your teen that physical changes, emotional changes and emerging sexual interests are all normal aspects of adolescent development. Helping them to understand that they can trust you with questions is one way you can keep your teen safe.
2. Access to confidential reproductive health services: A female character in the show seeks confidential reproductive health services. This can lead parents to talk about what services teens can access without parental permission and where your teen can go if they think they need these services. It varies by state, and in Pennsylvania the age to access confidential sexual health services is 14.
3. Sexually transmitted infection (STI) prevention: It's important to make sure your teen knows the different types of STIs, how STIs are transmitted and how to prevent STI transmission. "Sex Education" covers the topic of STIs, providing parents with an opportunity to gauge how much knowledge your teen already has.

Ava Skolnik, MPH, is a former clinical researcher coordinator at PolicyLab.

This post is part of our "____ in 200 Words" series. In this series, we tackle issues related to children's health policy and explain and connect you to resources to help understand them further, all in 200 words. If you have any suggestions for a topic in this series, please send a note to PolicyLab's Strategy & Communications Manager Lauren Walens.

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