

CHILDREN, TEENS AND THE MEDIA

More so than ever before the media is influencing children and teens through the Internet, television, movies, video games, music, magazines and comic books. Become familiar with what your teen is watching, playing, listening too and reading.

Look at Internet sites your teen goes to.

Watch television and movies with your teen.

Offer to play a video game with your teen.

Listen to music your teen enjoys. Read the lyrics if you can't understand them.

Read a magazine or comic book your teen likes.

Use the social media your teen is using. Learn how it works.

Things to think about:

What messages is your child or teen receiving about what it is like to be young today?

What clothing, shoes, jewellery and hair styles are presented as cool?

What music is presented as cool? Is this music respectful, hateful?

What is the music saying about gender and sexuality?

How are people treating each other?

How are children and teens taught to interact, treat and view adults?

What messages are presented about drinking, smoking and drugs?

What messages are presented about sex?

What messages are presented about gender and gender roles?

What messages are presented about sexual orientation?

What are the characteristics of the people portrayed as cool/popular?

What are the characteristics of the people portrayed as uncool/unpopular?

What body types are portrayed?

Are people treated equally?

How are sensitive topics portrayed (e.g. pregnancy, suicide, abortion, eating disorders)

Talk to your children.

Ask your children questions.

Take advantage of teachable moments.

Take an interest in your child's life and interests.

Adapted from: Debra W. Haffner, Beyond the Big Talk: A Parent's Guide to Raising Sexually Healthy Teens