

SUPPORTING YOUR TEEN THROUGH A BREAK UP

Remember your first high school partner? Remember how it felt when you broke up? Dealing with a break up is difficult at any age. As adults, watching a young person go through a break up reminds us of our own lessons learned and we want to share that information. This tool is a helpful reminder of what we already know, broken down into concrete points. Reminding us how we can be most helpful in starting conversations about break ups with the young people in our lives.

ADOLESCENT BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

Be mindful that a young person's brain functions differently than adults when having conversations around break ups.

Keep in mind that young people:

- Think with the more emotional part of their brains (Amygdala)
- Believe that how something makes you feel in the moment is more important than how they might feel in the future.
- Are exploring their gender identity/presentation and sexuality.
- Biologically are wired to begin separating from their families and be more independent.

ADULTISM

Its important to recognize that adults hold more power than a young person in this world and not overpower the teen's decision making power.

Keep in mind that:

- The feelings and break up experiences that the young person is experiencing are valid.
- Remind the young person they have control over the trajectory of their lives.
- Allow the young person to process how they will act during the break up so they have the skills to do it as an adult.

ADULT ROLE

Tips for the role you can play in the break up conversation

Try To:

- Spend most of your time empathizing
- Ask questions to gain a stronger understanding of their feelings and thoughts
- Brainstorm options on how they want to behave during the break up if they are the initiator OR the break upee.
- Brainstorm options on things they can do to keep their mind off of the break up.