

# Let's Talk Party

**Thank you for hosting a Let's Talk Party! This packet was created to help you, our party host, prepare in 10 easy steps.**

**Let's Talk Parties** are designed to promote conversations about sexual health between trusted adults and the young people in their lives. Through these parties, we aim to provide parents and trusted adults with the opportunity to have conversations. The goal is simple:

- To encourage adults and youth to have open, honest and accurate discussions about love, sex and healthy relationships.
- To help adults feel more comfortable starting conversations about sexual health.
- To share resources for adults such as [NotRightNowSC.org](http://NotRightNowSC.org) where tips and FAQs can be found.



**Just so you know,** Fact Forward who prepared these materials:

- Do not assume that all young people are having sex and want to make sure young people know that the safest, healthiest option to avoid both pregnancy and STIs is abstinence.
- Believe it is important to educate young people about condoms and other contraceptives so they know how to protect themselves if they do become sexually active.
- Stress the importance of sharing factual, medically accurate information with young people.

## 10 Steps for Hosting a Let's Talk Party

- 1.** Decide on a date, time, and location that will work best for you and your guests.
- 2.** Compile your guest list and send invitations to all your potential guests. Remember: Guests should include people who are parents to children of all ages, but may also include people who consider themselves to be a "trusted adult" to a young person. Aunts, uncles, "godparents," and other influential people are welcome.
- 3.** Send out a reminder a couple of days before the party.
- 4.** Before the party, review the conversation starters and scenarios included in this guide. Become familiar with the host script.
- 5.** Cut the conversation starters into separate slips of paper and place them in an envelope to draw from during the party.
- 6.** Let's Party! Have fun! Reference the open questions and scenarios to spark discussion and allow conversation to flow naturally.
- 7.** At the end of the party thank your guests for attending and have them complete a quick evaluation before leaving.



### Contact Us

Have questions? Contact us at 803-771-7700 or [communications@factforward.org](mailto:communications@factforward.org).

For additional resources, visit **[FactForward.org](http://FactForward.org)** and **[NotRightNowSC.org](http://NotRightNowSC.org)**.

# Conversation Starters

Use these conversation starters to begin group discussions with party attendees:

**1. Have you talked to a young person in your life about love, sex and relationships? If so, how was your experience?**

*Many parents and trusted adults find conversations with young people on the topics of love, sex and relationships awkward and uncomfortable. Young people feel the same way, but overwhelmingly say that they value the opinions of the adults they trust. Research shows that teens who have talked to their parents about sex are more likely to delay having sex and are more likely to use protection when they do become sexually active. One way to start these conversations is by using teachable moments (a TV show, song, or event that happened at school). Bringing up challenging topics in a casual way makes the conversation less awkward for both of you. Remember, “the talk” is most effective when it is an ongoing series of conversations.*

**2. Did a trusted adult have a conversation with you about sex? How did you feel about that conversation or lack thereof?**

*Regardless of our backgrounds, we have all experienced being a teen. We’ve gone through puberty, felt curious, embarrassed, and pressured. As a teenager, did you have adults in your life you felt comfortable talking to? If not, do you remember needing or wanting that? Even if it’s uncomfortable, the young people in our lives need us to have those challenging conversations. Think back to what it felt like to be that age – and make yourself available to the young people in your life.*



**3. Many teens say they have not talked with a parent about sex, but parents overwhelmingly say they have had that conversation. Why do you think there is such a difference between responses from parents and young people on whether or not they’ve had a conversation about sex?**

**What needs to happen to get parents and young people on the same page?**

*There seems to be a disconnect between what adults and young people perceive as conversation. As adults, we tend to tell young people what we expect of them and what decisions they should make. While there is certainly a place for that, young people need to be able to ask questions, discuss situations they may be struggling with, and gather information without us making assumptions or casting judgment. Children and teens may ask questions because they are seeking knowledge—not because they are engaging in a particular behavior or are planning to. Be careful to maintain an “open door” for conversation so that the young people in your life will always know they can come back to you to talk whenever they need to.*

**4. What do you believe young people should be taught related to love, sex and relationships? In school? At home? By the faith community?**

*South Carolina has a Comprehensive Health Education Act (CHEA) that was passed in 1988 and requires a minimum of 750 minutes of reproductive health and teen pregnancy prevention education between 9th and 12th grade. The law requires that students learn about disease prevention and pregnancy prevention, including information on condoms and contraception. All of this information must be taught in the context of future family planning.*

*While the CHEA exists to ensure all students in South Carolina get basic sexual health information, parents should be the primary sex educators of their children. Teens clearly state that they value their parents’ opinions on these topics, but are often uncomfortable initiating these conversations. Churches and other faith communities can also play a critical role in helping young people make decisions about sex and relationships. If churches value abstinence until marriage, equipping young people with the skills on how to abstain is important. Faith communities also have the opportunity to give parents and youth leaders skills they need to effectively have conversations with young people.*

**5. According to Power to Decide, 7 in 10 teens say their primary reason for not using contraception is fear that their parents will find out. How does that make you feel as a parent or trusted adult? Do you believe that fear keeps teens from having sex? Explain.**

*No matter how close a parent may feel toward their child or vice versa, bringing up the topic of sex has the power to immediately fill the air with completely unwanted and uncomfortable tension. However, 68% say they hoped their teen would talk with them so they can guide them towards using the proper birth control, 21% said they would try to convince their teen to stop having sex, 4% would feel angry and disappointment, and 3% said they would rather not know about their kids’ sex lives. If you want your teen to have open, honest conversations with you about sex, you have to create a relationship that allows for those conversations.*



# Scenarios

**1. A young person in your life tells you that her/his best friend is pregnant (or has gotten someone pregnant). What is your response?**

*Things to consider: encourage the young person to think about what challenges that friend is facing or will face. How might their goals and dreams be put on hold or become more difficult to achieve? How would the young person feel being in the best friend's shoes? What can the young person do to make sure they are making different decisions? Make sure your response, including facial expressions and words, are friendly. An immediate shocked and aggressive response will shut down communication. Thank the young person for talking to you about the situation. Remember, it takes a lot of courage for a young person to talk about sensitive topics.*

**2. You find a condom in your young person's book bag. What is your response?**

*Things to consider: Don't automatically assume that the young person is having sex. Talk through why he or she has a condom. Are they having sex or thinking about having sex? If you feel it is not appropriate for the young person to be having sex, you can share that you're concerned about whether he/she is ready, old enough, or in a healthy relationship, and what your own family values are around sex. Make sure that the young person leaves the conversation knowing that you are available to talk any time and that if he or she is struggling with difficult decisions to come to you first.*



**3. The young person you care about asks you when he/she will be ready to have sex. What is your response?**

*Things to consider: Again, don't assume that the young person is planning to have sex. In a sex-saturated culture, it is normal for young people to wonder if they are normal if they aren't having sex at a certain age. Sharing your family beliefs and values about when it is best to have sex—perhaps after college, once the person is in a meaningful, committed relationship, or after marriage—means a great deal. Rather than focusing on phrases like “just say no,” help the young person to understand why it is important to wait or why, if he or she chooses to have sex, it is important to use contraception to protect against pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. Also, consider helping your young person come up with a response to help him/her practice what to say to a potential partner when they are faced with this difficult decision.*

**4. The young person you care about asks when you first had sex. What is your response?**

*This can be a very difficult question for any adult! If you choose to be open and honest about your own decisions as a young person, be careful to explain why you made the choice you did and whether or not you feel it was the best decision. Then talk through what decision would be best for the young person and why. Have him or her think through some of the consequences of having sex as a young person and whether or not he or she is prepared to handle those consequences.*

**5. The young person you care about asks where his/her friend can go to get birth control. What is your response?**

*Things to consider: Talking about condoms and other contraceptives does NOT encourage young people to have sex. It DOES, however, increase the likelihood that they will protect themselves when they DO make the decision to become sexually active. NotRightNowSC.org has a list of local health centers. You can direct your young person to these resources if it is appropriate.*

# Let's Talk Party

## Host Script

**Read this script to your group to get started.**

Let's Talk Parties first began during *Let's Talk Month*, a public awareness campaign held each October to promote communication around sexual health issues between parents or trusted adults and young people. The goal of the campaign is simple: encourage adults and children to have open, honest, and accurate discussions about love, sex, and healthy relationships.

Fact Forward would like to continue the *Let's Talk Month* theme throughout the year by bringing adults in South Carolina communities together to encourage and support each other in initiating these conversations with sons and daughters, nieces and nephews, students, athletes, patients, youth group members, and mentees. If we talk through these sensitive topics together—including what makes us nervous, afraid, or uncomfortable—hopefully we can help each other be better prepared to engage in these really important conversations with our young people.

During our time together, we'll take turns pulling a slip of paper from a set of 10. Whoever pulls a piece of paper will read it aloud and then we'll just start discussion. Some slips of paper contain a question designed to start conversation, and some contain a scenario to allow us to think through how we might respond to a certain situation. There are no right or wrong answers. There won't be a test. This is just a chance for us to learn from one another. So... let's talk!

# Let's Talk Party

## Conversation Starters

**Cut the conversation starters below into separate slips of paper.  
Distribute the conversation starters to participants to read aloud.**

Have you ever spoken to a young person about love, sex and relationships? If so, how was your experience?

Your young person tells you that a couple at school got caught having oral sex in the bathroom. He/she wants to know if they are still virgins since it was "just oral sex". What is your response?

Did a trusted adult have a conversation with you about sex? How did you feel about that conversation or lack thereof?

You find a condom in your young person's book bag. What is your response?

What do you believe young people should be taught related to love, sex and relationships? In school? At home? By the faith community?

A young person you care about asks you when he/she will be ready to have sex. What is your response?

Some adults believe young people should only be taught NOT to have sex (abstinence). Others believe young people should also learn about condoms and birth control. Do you think teaching about both is confusing? Why or why not?

A young person you care about asks where his/her friend can go to get birth control. What is your response?

According to Power to Decide, 7 in 10 teens say their primary reason for not using contraception is fear that their parents will find out. How does that make you feel as a parent or trusted adult? Do you believe that fear keeps teens from having sex?

While you are talking with your child about love, sex and relationships, they interrupt and ask, "Did you abstain from having sex as a teen?" How do you respond in a way that keeps the young person engaged and the conversation going?