12 Power Tips to Build Skill and Confidence When Talking About Sexuality

1. **Be open, non-judgmental, and kind** when you are answering questions or bringing up the topic. Remember, it can take a lot of courage to ask a question.

2. **Start early and keep talking,** even when it's uncomfortable. The more you practice, the easier it gets.

3. **Use teachable moments.** You can start a conversation naturally while you're watching television or people are interacting, reading a book or listening to music together.

4. **Use multiple teaching techniques:** present information through pictures, books, videos, or social learning, including role-play or ask, "What would you do if...?"

5. **Use correct terms that prepare people to talk about their body and experiences:** knowing the real names for their body parts makes it easier to communicate about them.

6. **Give positive messages**. Being positive and non-judgmental helps people develop personal values, self-esteem, effective communication, and good decision-making skills.

7. **Keep it simple;** provide simple, direct explanations, using words they can understand. Long explanations can be unnecessary, or more confusing.

8. **You don't have to know all the answers.** We put a lot of pressure on ourselves to know everything about sexuality. It is okay to say, "I don't know, but will find out for you."

9. **Be approachable,** make it clear that they can ask you anything, as well as seek help to find the answer together.

10. **It's OK to feel embarrassed.** If you feel embarrassed say, "I feel a little embarrassed about your question. Your question is a really good question." Make sure your embarrassment doesn't give the impression they did something wrong by asking the question.

11. **OK to answer later.** If you don't know how to answer the question it's okay to say, "great question, but I need some time to figure out how to answer that question. I will get back to you soon."

12. **Give facts and a range of opinions.** Stick to facts. When you just give the facts you aren't imposing your values. You can also add a range of opinions to your answer. You could say, "some people think this and others think this, what do you think?".

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