

The parent-teen relationship: So high school

Here's a roadmap for adults to help kids navigate ninth through 12th grade

ANCHOR LEDE

High school is a time where a kid is becoming more independent. So that can bring some mental health challenges.

TAKE VO

Here are some ideals for parents to remember: curious, consistent and connected.

OSF HealthCare psychotherapist Sara Bennett says to use those ideal when talking to kids about navigating high school.

SOT

Sara Bennett

OSF HealthCare psychotherapist

"Figure out who they are, what success means to them and how you can best support them. Having those open conversations and allowing them to be themselves means they're more likely to come to you when stuff gets tough. If they feel there's a lot of judgement and condemnation and not a lot of support, they're probably going to go to other people or hold it inside. Then the parent is going to be on the outside of the relationship instead of the inside." (:35)

VO TAG

For a child whose success means good grades, the conversation might include setting expectations in that area. Does the expectation mean certain grades? Certain advanced courses? Or just trying your best? If expectations are or are not met, what are the rewards or consequences? Expectations about social situations like parties could mean a pledge to not drink or use drugs. The parents could also promise to pick up the child from a sticky situation, like an out-of-control party, without judgement.