

The parent-teen relationship: So high school

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

SOT

Sara Bennett

OSF HealthCare psychotherapist

"Kids become more centered on their looks because they're developing differently. Guys might ask 'how come that guy is six feet tall all of the sudden and I'm still five foot two?'. It changes our self-concept, self-image, how we feel about ourselves and our confidence level. We see girls start to take a step back a little bit. They don't want to be the smartest one in the class. They're sitting back. What their friends think about them is way more important than what Mr. Smith in chemistry thinks about you." (:29)

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"There's a lot happening in kids' brains as they mature and go through those teenage years. As parents, we have to shift our mindset a little bit to be a better supporter and not so much that manager." (:16)

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"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)

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"Evidence-based research shows the more we connect with our kids in that way and not shy away from these conversations, the more likely they are to stay away from the riskiest decisions." (:11)