THE SEX ABUSE TREATMENT CENTER

A Program of Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women & Children

Teachable Moments

Teachable moments arise naturally and are tied to a specific event or situation. They are usually brief, to the point and delivered in a conversational manner. These spur of the moment comments or dialogue between an adult and teen can reinforce values and expectations.

Don't be deterred if your teen or pre-teen rolls their eyes or looks at you with indifference at the sign of a "teachable moment." Teens need guidance from parents and other trusted adults. Take advantage of every opportunity you get!

Some examples:

1) At the dinner table your family is discussing recent news about a celebrity who was found guilty of physically abusing his girlfriend.

You say something like:

"*What do you think about* (the celebrity) *being physically abusive*?

Discuss the consequences of his actions. Perhaps add: "*It doesn't matter how famous someone is, if they harm someone else they should be held accountable."*

2) You notice your son or daughter watching a music video showing a male recording artist. He is surrounded by a group of women in very revealing clothes, gyrating provocatively around him. The camera angles focus in on their private body parts.

You say something like:

"*I don't like it when I see females presented as just sexy bodies. Women and girls are so much more than that*."

3) Your daughter tells you that several girls at her high school were suspended for spreading mean rumors online about a gay classmate.

You say something like:

"*What would you do if you received something online that was mean and hurtful about someone else?"*

Reinforce positive actions she suggests and spend a few minutes talking about the serious harm caused by online and offline sexual harassment and bullying.

(continued)

4) Uncle Cal and Aunt May visited with your family for a week. Cal and May have a very respectful, caring relationship with each other and it was apparent during their visit. After dropping them off at the airport, you discuss their relationship with your son or daughter.

You say something like:

"I'm going to miss Uncle Cal and Aunt May. I really admire their relationship too. What do you think about their relationship? Discuss the qualities that make their relationship so positive.

5) You overhear your daughter and her classmate talking about a friend who met with a guy in person that she had only communicated with online. They are laughing because the guy turned out to be very different than their friend had imagined.

You say something like:

"*What do you think about her going by herself to meet someone she met online?*"

Discuss the dangers of doing that and the reality that people can lie about who they are and their intentions online. Reinforce your rule that your daughter should never meet in person with someone she meets online without telling you first.

6) You hear loud music in your son's room and note that the vocalist is using crude, sexual terms to describe the girl in the song.

You say something like:

"(artist's name) *might be popular, but the words to that song are insulting and disrespectful to women and girls. What do you think?*

7) At a school parent night, the mother of the girl your son is dating tells you how impressed she is with your son. She says that her daughter describes him as smart and funny, but also respectful and someone she can trust. Later that day you mention it to your son.

You say something like:

"I was really pleased today to hear that Ali and her mom think so highly of you. Ali told her mom some great things about you, including the fact that you are respectful and trustworthy. It made me so proud to hear that!