

# Uncovering Common Myths About Parenting Teens

Varisha Singh\*

Department of Clinical Psychology, Christ University, Bangalore, Karnataka, India

## Corresponding Author\*

Varisha Singh  
Department of Clinical Psychology, Christ University, Bangalore,  
Karnataka, India  
E-mail: [macyreeta09@yahoo.com](mailto:macyreeta09@yahoo.com)

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## Introduction

Helping your teen negotiate their first romantic relationship and nurturing their newfound freedom are just some of the obstacles that come with raising a teenager. We've compiled a list of some of the most popular teen parenting myths.

### Myth 1: Talking to your kids about sex makes them want to do it more

Many parents make the mistake of thinking that talking about sex with their children or teaching them about contraceptives would encourage them to be more sexually active. However, a 2019 study found that having safe sex conversations with parents can help to minimize the likelihood of teens engaging in risky sexual activities that can lead to unplanned pregnancy and STIs.

### Myth 2: Boys will be boys

Adherence to "traditional masculinity ideology," according to the American Psychological Association (APA), has been shown to restrict males' psychological growth, constrain their attitudes, trigger gender role conflict, and negatively impact both their mental and physical health.

According to the APA, following negative masculine values increases the likelihood of boys engaging in assault, intimidation, and/or physical and verbal abuse.

### Myth 3: Spare the rod, spoil the child

However, if your teen is acting out in a way that puts themselves or others in danger, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advises against ignoring your teen. Instead, let them know their behavior is not OK and enforce negative consequences — such as taking away one of their privileges.

Instead of physically punishing your teen for misbehaving, the American Psychological Association advises celebrating good attitudes and deliberately avoiding them if they are not listening to you politely.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warns against avoiding your teen if they are acting out in a way that places themselves or others in risk. Instead, tell them that their conduct is unacceptable and that they will face negative consequences, such as losing one of their privileges.

### Myth 4: Good parents don't lose their temper

Experts caution against setting ambitious goals for yourself. When you're stressed or your teenager is pressing your buttons, you can lose control as an imperfect human being. They recommend owning up to and apologizing to your teen for your actions rather than succumbing to embarrassment or guilt.

According to a 2013 report, "harsh verbal punishment" is particularly harmful to tweens and teenagers, who are more likely to have behavioral problems and act out if they have been yelled at.

When you feel your anger rising, remember that it's fine to take a break from the situation and take some time to calm down.

### Myth 5: Fighting in front of your teen is bad for their mental health

Experts believe that expecting you and your partner to never disagree in front of your children is unrealistic. A 2006 study of children aged 9 to 18 showed that if parental conflict was resolved, it was not detrimental to the children. When these tensions remained unresolved, however, children experienced depression, anxiety, and/or behavioral issues. For adolescents, the connection between interparental conflict and emotional vulnerability was even stronger than for younger children. The study's authors concluded that parents should always strive to find a solution to their disagreements and communicate the solution to their children.