

# 5 Tips to Help Your Teen Manage Conflict

The middle school and high school years can be challenging for kids --and parents too. Kids are dealing with changing bodies, the need to fit in-- plus conflicts at school, bullying, and social media drama. When your child experiences conflict, here are 5 tips that might help.

One: Recognize their feelings. Let your child know it's okay to be angry or feel hurt. You can support them by asking about their feelings without trying to take away their pain.

Two: Work on staying calm. It's hard to solve a problem when you're upset. Show ways to calm down, like doing breathing exercises.

The 4-7-8 method is something you can try. Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold your breath for 7, and exhale for 8.

Three: Help them practice speaking up. Conflicts are hard to resolve without talking about them. Encourage your teen to write a practice letter to decide what's most important to say and how best to say it. Then, you can practice the conversation with your teen.

Four: Teach fairness. Ask your teen to try to imagine their friend's side of things-- even if they don't agree with them.

Five: Prepare them for conflict. For example, you can tell your teen a story about how you handled conflict as a kid and what worked--and what didn't.

You can ask your teen to reflect on past conflicts that they handled well-- or wished they'd handled better. Or talk about ways they've seen others stay calm, walk away, or problem-solve.

So, 5 tips. Recognize their feelings. Stay calm. Help them practice speaking up. Teach fairness. And prepare them for conflict.

If you put these tips into practice, you'll increase trust and open the door to future conversations. And guess what? Your child will probably appreciate it--even if they don't always admit it.