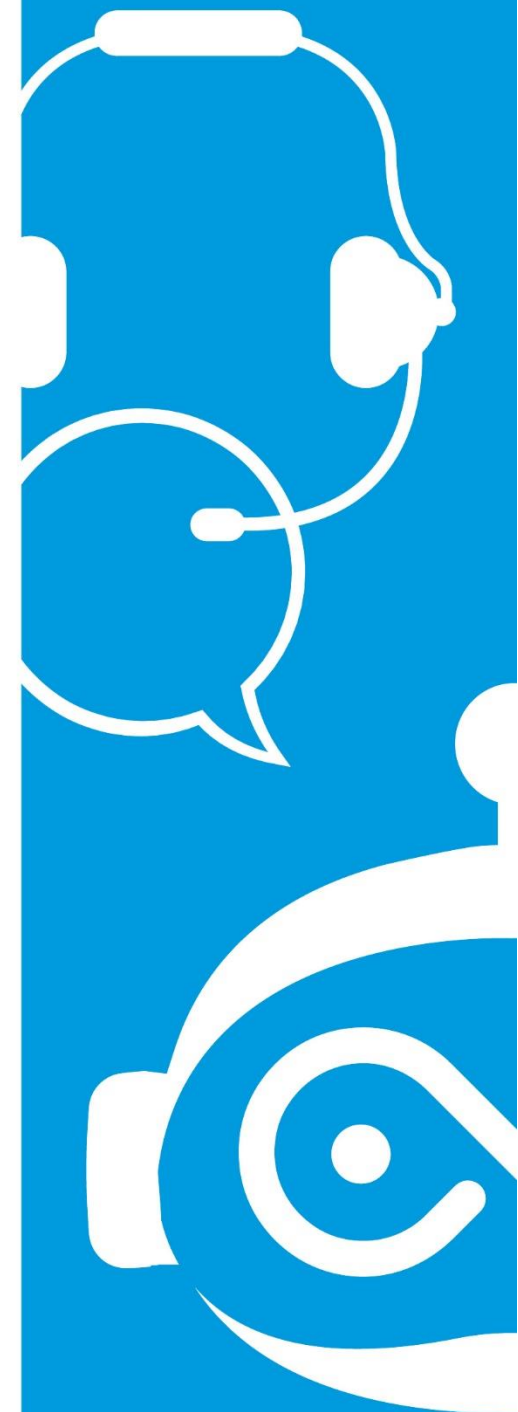




# SRH MATERIAL ONLINE: OPENING A DIALOGUE BETWEEN PARENTS AND YOUTH

## What is it?

Parents play an important role in a teenager's understanding of relationships and holistic SRH education. Nevertheless, a difficulty of establishing a dialogue between parents and teenagers from both sides can often appear, due to embarrassment or discomfort from both sides, fear of the parents' or child's reaction etc. SRH materials online are **digital tools** which can facilitate this exchange and make it easier to start a conversation about a sensitive topic.



### How can it impact the sexual and reproductive health of youth?

Parents or other adults can be a source of personal experiences presented as educational real-life examples for youth, positive or negative. Therefore, they are an indispensable component of a young person's SRH-related education.

Although studies show that adolescents and their parents talk about SRH education, these conversations are not always effective. There is ambiguity, both on the part of parents and children. Teenagers often misunderstand what parents want to say, so it is important to be very clear about the questions or the answers to them.

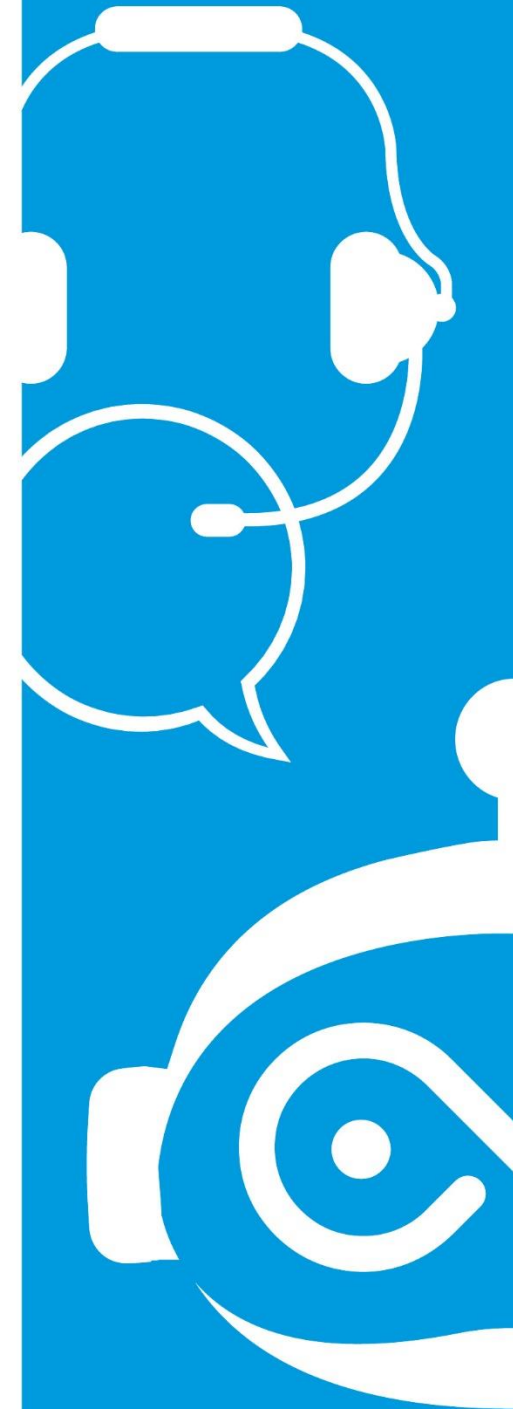
When young people and their parents browse online materials with SHR topics together (blogs, websites articles, video content, TV shows, podcasts...) young people can be inspired to ask different questions and refer to their parents for their opinion. This can break the ice and the conversations will flow more easily.

Studies show that young people are more embarrassed to talk about this topic than their parents. This is where the utility of digital tools comes in. Starting SRH-related conversations on an online platform or via text messages without in-person contact can lead to youth more easily articulating questions or answers. However, paying attention to clarity is important, because this can quickly be lost in the absence of face-to-face contact, and errors in understanding what is written can occur.



### What are some ways in which youth can be supported?

- Encourage young people to talk to their parents. Digital tools can give them support, but nothing can replace a face-to-face conversation with parents.
- Introduce them to digital content they can show parents at home. Already interacting with a medium can help both sides to break the ice and open a dialogue. On the other hand, there are also materials with tips for parents on how to more easily and effectively provide young people with SRH-related education.
- Be a good listener, no matter your relation to them. Talking with young people, especially teenagers, about SRH education, requires a great deal of tolerance, respect and understanding by the adults. Do not rush, listen to the young people and their questions and answer them thoughtfully.
- Approach conversations with a sex-positive lens. Information about developing an ethical approach to SRH education with an emphasis on how to care for, support and respect one another, foster emotional relationships and pleasure are the most lacking online. Talking about SRH in such a way can reduce the chance of young people committing, or being vulnerable to, sexual violence and can equip them to have healthy relationships in the future.



### Related digital phenomena/tools:

See sheets:

- Misconceptions & misinformation: Emotional effects of sex
- SRH material online: Expert opinions
- SRH material online: User-generated content

### Further reading:

- Parents and Teens Talk about Sexuality: A National Survey, [https://cdn.plannedparenthood.org/uploads/filer\\_public/ac/50/ac50c2f7-cbc9-46b7-8531-ad3e92712016/nationalpoll\\_09-14\\_v2\\_1.pdf](https://cdn.plannedparenthood.org/uploads/filer_public/ac/50/ac50c2f7-cbc9-46b7-8531-ad3e92712016/nationalpoll_09-14_v2_1.pdf).
- 'Let's Talk Month: Parents Talking to Their Teens about Sex', Planned Parenthood, <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/about-us/newsroom/campaigns/lets-talk-month>.
- 'Sex Education That Goes beyond Sex', Harvard Graduate School of Education, <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/ideas/usable-knowledge/18/11/sex-education-goes-beyond-sex>.
- 'Talking Sex, Puberty & Relationships: A Resource for Parents', Planned Parenthood, <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/parents>.

