

TIPS FOR TALKING WITH YOUR **TEENAGE** PATIENTS ABOUT **ABORTION**

INSTEAD OF THIS...	SAY THIS!
Highlighting “good” and “bad” reasons for having an abortion	Ask about the teen’s thoughts concerning abortion. Allow them to direct the conversation without determined ideas of what is good/bad
Positioning abortion as an inherently difficult choice	Allow the teen to guide you on their abortion outlook and meet them where they are.
Assuming that an abortion will damage a teenager’s mental health and well being	<p>Provide a teenage patient with accurate information about their abortion options and then help them obtain one, if they desire.</p> <p>Note: A study by researchers from Oregon State University found that teenagers who have abortions are no more likely to become depressed or have low self-esteem than are their peers whose pregnancies do not end in abortion</p>
Positioning yourself as someone who has all the answers about what abortion access looks like for every teen.	<p>Position yourself as a contact point that the teen can look to for help finding the necessary information to obtain an abortion.</p> <p>The abortion landscape is changing rapidly and being upfront with teen patients about this reality can help them (and you!) feel better about navigating it together.</p>
Presenting abortion as a dangerous issue that requires separate rules and complicated discourse	<p>Talk about abortion as you would any other reproductive health choice.</p> <p>Abortion is common, safe, and legal in all 50 states.</p>
Referencing how a patients’ “parents”, “mom”, “dad” or any other specific caregiver may feel about abortions (especially when you do not have knowledge of the teen’s family situation).	<p>Understand that not all teens are upfront with their caregivers about their reproductive choices. Additionally, many teens do not have caregivers and referencing such people may create an unnecessary barrier to establishing you and your patient’s relationship.</p>
Deciding what option the teen is most likely to choose pertaining to abortion/pregnancy continuation.	Provide them with <u>all</u> options and information and allow them to make an informed decision about their reproductive health.

A FEW MORE NOTES...

- 1. EYE CONTACT IS NOT NECESSARY.** If you notice the patient feels uncomfortable with direct eye contact, try asking questions while you’re prepping equipment or filling out the EMR.
- 2. IT IS OKAY TO ASK!** If the teen’s answers and demeanor lead you to wonder if someone is influencing their choice to have or not have an abortion, **ask!** **Be clear that the teen has the choice to have or not have an abortion and no one else gets to make that choice for them.**