

SAYING SORRY

Saying sorry is an important step in rebuilding damaged or strained relationships between parents and teenagers.

If you've caused your teenager hurt or pain, saying sorry can help them forgive you. Saying sorry doesn't mean you are weak or a bad person. We all make mistakes and we are all capable of hurting others. Saying sorry means that you understand your teenager's pain, you're brave enough to take responsibility for what you did, and that you want to restore the relationship.

When you say sorry:

1. Let your teenager know that you are sorry for the hurt they feel.
2. Apologise for your actions that led to the hurt and ask for forgiveness.
3. Don't justify or defend yourself.
You can explain your reasons, but don't offer them as an excuse for what you did.
4. Do something to help fix the damage or to make amends.
5. Take steps to ensure you won't do it again.

If the hurt was deep, don't expect your teenager to trust you straight away; it may take time to rebuild trust.

Based on the poster *Rebuilding relationships*, by Psychologists for the Promotion of World Peace, an interest group of the Australian Psychological Society.



Prepared by the Parenting Research Centre

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