



## Parents' Night with David & Katie Kobler

### Overview

As parents, it is important you understand there is a huge amount you can do in raising your teenager. **NO-ONE can do the job of a parent as effectively as you can.** Because of this, control should not be handed over to all the other forces in your children's lives.

Society presents sexuality as being all about pleasure and body parts but we need to ensure as parents we are giving our children the bigger context, that sexual intimacy is about the capacity for love, fertility, and about the full human sexual person.

There is so much going on for both teenage boys and teenage girls and ultimately they want to be heard, loved, and really need parents supporting them through this tough season in their life.

### Boys:

#### **How boys can choose to prove manhood:**

- |                |                                  |
|----------------|----------------------------------|
| ▪ Service      | ▪ Alcohol                        |
| ▪ Marriage     | ▪ Drivers License, Car, Speeding |
| ▪ Fatherhood   | ▪ Sex                            |
| ▪ Self-control | ▪ Dominance                      |
| ▪ Friendship   | ▪ Aggression                     |
| ▪ Work Ethic   | ▪ Pornography                    |
| ▪ Adventure    | ▪ Violence                       |
| ▪ Selflessness | ▪ Power                          |

Society is convincing boys that manhood is proven by doing the things on the right however if they really think about it, the men they desire to be have proven their manhood with the qualities on the left. We need to help them understand who they really want to become and what qualities they need to become that type of man.

### Girls:

As parents we need to be constantly assuring our daughters of their worth. In a world where they are constantly told that their value is found in their body parts and their sexuality- we as parents need to provide an alternative message; that their value, identity and worth is found in who they are and is much deeper than just their appearance.



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Help your daughter have a deep understanding of oxytocin and how it affects her when she falls in love. Oxytocin has been found to shut down the part of the brain that mediates negative judgment, caution and fear while activating the part of the brain that promotes trust and attachment. Help your daughter understand that the feelings associated with love are not the most important element.

When looking to be in relationship with someone help her to look not just for attraction and chemistry but most importantly at the character of a person.

### Sexting

The latest research suggests that 54% of students reported receiving a sexually explicit text message while 26% reported sending an explicit photo of themselves. We can see here a doubling effect, giving insight into the reality that many photos are shared beyond whom they may have initially been intended for. Whether you think this is a good idea or not, or whether you would do this yourself or not is besides the point. The language we use around this topic is crucial. Are we giving **empathy** to young people in these situations or are we giving judgment and name-calling.

We have written a great article with a video that you can watch with your child to help start this discussion. You can check it out [here](#).

### Beware Autonomous Rooms

“A lot of kids are coming home, not to a home, as we understand it. Their bedrooms have become ‘autonomous rooms’. Kids are eating in their rooms. They have their iPod, TV and computer in their rooms - where is the reason/incentive to leave it?”

**Psychologist Bill O’Hehir**

### Pornography and Internet Addiction

This generation is the guinea pig generation. We are only just beginning to gain an insight into what the impact of digital technology, Internet addiction, online pornography addiction and violent gaming may be. The average age of first exposure to pornography in Australia is 11 years old.



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### **3 most common scenarios for first exposure to pornography:**

1. Someone else shows them an image
2. They stumble across it while online
3. They hear a sexual term and don't know what it means so they google it and are exposed this way

Understand curiosity and interest in sex is normal and children should not be punished for their curiosity or interest. Explain the difference between the fantasy that pornography shows and your beliefs about sex and intimacy. Explain the potential dangers of their understanding of sex being formed through a purely pixel form. If this [conversation](#) is approached with empathy and a desire to give them helpful information there is a greater chance for open dialogue on this issue.

It is important to take a strong and consistent approach, limiting access to agreed times and negotiating content away from extreme material.

There is a large and growing body of scientific evidence demonstrating serious impact on young people, especially due to the plasticity of their neural structures.

### [Strategies for Change](#)

#### **Begin with ourselves;**

- Have we reflected upon the place we give to dedicated parenting as our core task?
- Prepare yourself. Read and learn as much as you can about this crucial time of life for your son or daughter.
- Talk while doing something. Sport/Driving
- When talking about sex / relationships short frequent conversations are better
- Make sure they know you love them and are proud of them.

□ **FILTER** – Children should not have unrestricted access to the internet. It is crucial that you have some kind of filtering to help minimise the chances of your child stumbling across inappropriate content.



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□ **PROTECT** – Set boundaries in your home and in your child's Internet and device usage. Work with them as to what they and you can agree on as being appropriate times to be online and appropriate behavior online with restrictions that tighten when these boundaries are broken. To protect your kids online they need you to help guide them through appropriate engagement with the online world.

□ **DISCUSS** – Engage with your child about these topics. Give positive affirmation whenever they come to you with questions, "I'm so glad you came to me". Ensure there aren't taboo topics that your child feels they can't ask you. Ask your child's perspective on films you see together, or billboards you pass, or film clips they watch. Help them critically analyze the messages that are being sent to them. Short, frequent conversations are the goal.

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