

## Giving direction (values) about sex

Values are simply what you feel is right or wrong. This handbook does not suggest what values you should teach. It does encourage you to say out loud what your values are. By giving direction, I mean making clear what kinds of behaviours and attitudes you think are OK and not OK.

Do not leave a values vacuum at home. The media will fill it.

- Say your values out loud, in simple words. Be specific. Don't hint. Say clearly what you like or don't like about the behaviour or attitude.
- Explain why you feel that way.
- Be open to discussion, especially as the child gets older.
- If you get frightened by a values difference with the young person, don't 'lay down the law' more than absolutely necessary. When you have values differences with the child, stay calm, and keep talking. Keep discussing, and try to understand their point of view. But, stay firm about your own values.
- Stay open to the possibility that your values can change.

Here are some examples of values statements—of giving direction. For simplicity, the topic is sexual intercourse; and the examples are suggestions for wording of *different values, depending on what your values are*.

1. Intercourse is only for a man and a woman who are married to each other.
2. Intercourse is a natural part of adult sex, and when you are old enough, you will decide when you want to have intercourse, and who with.
3. If two adults agree to have intercourse, that's fine. But they need to protect their sexual health by using condoms.
4. Some think that casual sex is OK, but I think it's a health risk.
5. I don't like the attitude that you have to have sex to be cool.

## If values conflicts develop

If you and your partner or spouse have differing sexual values, either:

- Talk together privately, and agree on what you want to teach the children, or
- If your children are ages ten or more, openly discuss the values differences between you, and develop a set of 'family values' that everyone agrees on.

If you and your child are having values conflict:

- It is up to the adult to keep discussions from degenerating into arguments,