



RDU THERAPY
For the Whole Family

Tough Talks in Families

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Every family will face conversations that feel hard — about loss, change, health, or identity. Avoiding these talks may feel easier in the moment, but it teaches kids (and ourselves) that we can't handle tough things. With practice, we can.

Created by RDU Therapy to support child & adolescent practitioners in starting healthy conversations with families.

Tips for Parents and Tough Talks

Remember: kids learn resilience when they see tough topics handled with care and honesty.

- **Know your goal:** Are you sharing information or seeking it?
- **Timing matters:** Avoid fatigue, hunger, or busy moments.
- **Pick the right place:** Home is usually best — private, comfortable, and flexible.
- **Keep it short & clear:** Strong emotions make it harder to process long messages.
- **Prepare:** Anticipate questions, jot down notes, and role-play with a trusted adult if needed.
- **Allow breaks:** Step away and return later if anyone feels overwhelmed.
- **Stay kind & direct:** Clear words are more compassionate than hints.
- **End with collaboration:** Show that the goal is honesty and teamwork.

Common Tough Talks

- Death or loss
- Divorce/separation
- Moving or school changes
- Job loss or financial stress
- Development/health (puberty, orientation, identity)
- Changing family rules or limits
- Shame-related events (mistakes, poor grades, broken rules)

Tips for Kids & Teens and Tough Talks

Tough talks are part of life. They can feel uncomfortable, but they help families grow stronger.

What Helps Me in a Tough Talk

- **Take a breath** before I respond.
- **Listen first**, then share what I think or feel.
- **Ask questions** if I don't understand.
- **Say what I need** (a break, time to think, or a hug).
- **Stay honest and respectful** — it makes the talk easier for everyone.
- **Remember:** tough talks don't mean something is "bad." They mean we care enough to work it out.

"You can do hard things — one step, one talk at a time."



For more tips, workshops, consults, or family therapy focused on family communication, contact RDU Therapy at:
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