

Talking with young people about what they're watching

PARENTS'
GUIDE



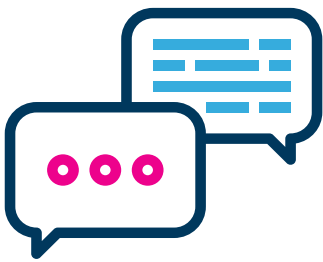
Why you need to talk

Young people, our rangatahi, can access virtually any content on their devices. They watch TV, movies, games and videos on YouTube and social media. It's entertaining, educational and can be social. But there are downsides.

You can't control everything they see but you can help them make good decisions about what they choose to watch.

Our research tells us rangatahi want advice about this stuff.

Let's start talking



HOW TO START THE CONVERSATION

- Ask about what they like watching and why.
- Watch something together.
- Keep it casual, if you make it heavy it's harder.



USE ENTERTAINMENT AS A LEARNING TOOL

- *The views of rangatahi about society, relationships and how to behave can be informed by what they watch.*
- *Talking about what they see is a great way to help them think critically about what they are viewing.*



WHAT TO SAY

- Ask for their opinion about something you've both watched.
- Ask who their favourite and least favourite characters are and why.
- Ask if they feel the movie or show was realistic.
- Ask if they think the show reinforced stereotypes, why or why not.
- If the real consequences of violence were shown, ask if they think there are better ways of handling conflict.



Show that you respect their point of view, even when you disagree.

Challenging content

Movies, shows and games provide great opportunities to talk about sensitive topics including drug/alcohol use, suicide, bullying, sexual violence and pornography.

BE PREPARED TO TALK ABOUT

- How sex and relationships are depicted in media.
- Respectful relationships and consent.

DEALING WITH DISTRESS

If your teen has a strong reaction to something they've seen on screen ask what made them feel that way, and help them talk about the emotions they're feeling.

BE THE PERSON THEY COME TO FOR SUPPORT...

Rangatahi often don't want to go to parents for help because they're worried they'll get in trouble – or that it might feel awkward.

Remember, the more you talk with your teenager about what they are watching the more comfortable they'll be talking about sensitive, challenging or distressing content.

TIPS:

- Check your own emotions before reacting and keep calm.
- Always take it seriously if your teen is upset by something they have seen. Even though what they have seen may be fictional – the impact is real.
- **DO NOT** take their device away if they come to you with concerns or worries as they might feel like they are being punished for talking to you.

Safer media use

Taking opportunities to engage with your teen's use and understanding of what they are watching will help build their confidence and resilience. Here are some ways you can support a safer media environment for young people.

ENCOURAGE RESPECTFUL MEDIA USE

Talk to them about the importance of being aware of who is around them before they view something that might be scary or offensive to younger audiences.

IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT SOMETHING THEY'RE WATCHING

Check the online reviews – when you know more about the content you can take the opportunity to bring it up with your teen.

RESPECT AGE RATINGS

- Read warning notes for information about why something is age-restricted.
- Encourage your teen to do the same especially if watching with young tamariki.

SET SOME BOUNDARIES

Try to communicate your position clearly. If you don't want them to watch or play something, or visit certain websites, be open about the reasons why you feel that way.

TE MANA WHAKAATU
**Classification
Office**

ABOUT US

The Classification Office is an independent Crown entity which classifies films and other content and has a key role providing information about classification work. It conducts research and produces evidence-based resources to promote media literacy and enable New Zealanders to make informed choices about content they consume.

Social media @NZOFLC

For practical advice and videos visit: www.classificationoffice.govt.nz