

Collectively, the book advances the self-defined standpoint of Black mothers as a useful framework for theorizing how Black mothers resist negative constructions of their maternal selves while renegotiating and redefining their maternal thinking and practice. Although such acts of resistance do not remove the embedded tensions that emerge between discourse, expectations, and choice, these acts of resistance present useful coping strategies that strengthen the resilience of Black mothers overtime and provide ways in which they can begin to re-imagine and re-shape their own maternal identities.

Got Teens? The Doctor Moms' Guide to Sexuality, Social Media and Other Adolescent Realities

Logan Levkoff and Jennifer Wider
Berkeley, CA: Seal Press, 2014

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The goal of this guide is to alleviate concerns and angst by equipping parents with information. Both authors face the queries of young people professionally and are preparing to do so in the near future in their own families as they mother their own children. The audience they address in their writings are “parents, relatives, caregivers and friends” who are embarking on a journey of living with teens and want to be informed, open and positive. The authors reassure and encourage using humour and practical, non-clinical language and information. Topics explored include physical development and anatomy, sexual and mental health, eating and body image, substance use and abuse, and the omnipresent use of social media and technology.

The authors, Jennifer Wider, a physician, and Logan Levkoff, a health educator, focus on health and sexuality and are motivated by a clear goal and belief that “...when armed with up-to-date, accurate information and a few strategies for handling tough conversations, we have the opportunity and, dare we say it, responsibility to give our children the information and understanding they need to survive the precarious, precious time that is puberty” (p.7).

The format of the book is based on a range of hypothetical questions posed by parents with responses consisting of thoughtful discussion, and possible answers based on research and common sense. Examples include:

- What is sex?
- My son asked me at what age I first had sex and how I knew it was

the right time?

- My son told me that he hates his life and that no one would miss him if he were “gone.” Should I take this seriously, or is he just trying to get my attention?
- My son told me that he doesn’t feel comfortable in his own skin and that he feels he should have been born a girl. Help! I am at a total loss.
- I’ve been considering getting my child a cell phone, but she’s begging me for a smartphone. Is she old enough?
- How can I explain gay marriage to my child?
- My daughter just asked me how she’ll know when she’s in a good relationship. What should I tell her?

The authors write using concrete examples of experiences or interactions and decisions relating to their own children and their friends to illustrate ideas. They share events that provide starting points for open discussion. For instance:

- “Jena’s girlfriend once walked in on her seven year old daughter playing “doctor” with a friend....”
- “At one get-together that Jena attended with her kids, a friend’s husband made an off-color remark about gay men playing football.... Jena knew she had to speak up.”
- “Logan and her son, Maverick, saw a boy being chased and picked on by a group of older boys on the opposite side of the park. There were plenty of people watching but nobody did anything—except for Logan.”
- “Logan loves to talk about erections in class, because there is nothing better than seeing a boy’s face when he figures out that his erections are part of a natural development, rather than something that is wrong with his body.”

Each of the examples introduces a concept in a casual parent-to-parent way though the expertise in the subject and presentation style is very clear. The focus is clearly on developing communication opportunities. It is easy to picture adult friends talking in a living room, at the soccer field, or on a hike, about the adolescents in their world and that is exactly the approach for which the authors were aiming. The writing is folksy and knowledgeable.

In contrast to most books with the lofty goal of providing information on sexuality and development, the explanations, discussions, and answers in this book include no graphics, no diagrams, no photographs or visuals of