HAVING CONVERSATIONS WITH PRETEENS ABOUT CHALLENGES

PHP Parenting Healthy Preteens

Things you can do to help your preteen open up about challenges:

- Let them know what you have noticed in a non-judgmental, calm way
- Give them time

Conversation starters you could try:

- "I have noticed that you seem [down, sad, worried, angry, to be having a harder time at school etc.] lately. Is something bothering you?"
- "I was wondering how you have been feeling lately."
- "What is the hardest thing about being you right now?"
- "I have felt [down, sad, worried, angry, etc.] at times. I wonder if you have felt that way sometimes too?"
- "Is there something happening at home/school that has been making you feel [down, sad, worried, angry, etc.]?"

When your preteen does talk to you:

- Really listen
- Ask if they have thought about what might help them
- Normalize challenges

When talking to your preteen you should avoid:

- Minimizing how they feel
- Letting your emotions get in the way
- Making excuses or blaming others
- Telling your preteen what they should do.