

## **The Counselor's Clipboard**

Parenting is not an easy job, and parenting a daughter comes with its own challenges. It's especially easy to feel confused and overwhelmed with the task of raising a daughter entering adolescence. Parents frequently ask me questions about how to handle the beginning of these stormy years. It can be frightening when your little girl starts talking about boys, weight, and body image. Here are some tips that you may find helpful. They are from the book "You have to say I'm pretty, you're my mother"; How to Help Your Daughter Learn to Love Her Body and Herself by Stephanie Pearson and Phyllis Cohen. The book is an excellent resource for learning how to communicate with a daughter in the throes of adolescence.

- "Fat" is a code word for an emotion, not a number on the scale. "Fat" is also the vocabulary for your daughter's emotions; it may be the only way she knows how to talk about what's bothering her.
- There are all sorts of fears and insecurities your daughter may have about herself and her body. Don't dismiss these; they are the best clues you'll get about her inner thoughts.
- Your daughter is bombarded by girl talk about bodies all day long, and she believes her friends more than you. This is normal. Help her to think things through.
- Be aware of what you're adding to the mix: how you talk about *your* body, *your* weight, *your* appearance. Think about what kind of role model *you* are.

The good news is that there are plenty of resources out there to help you and your daughter, or other girls you care about...here are just a few.

### **Books for Parents:**

Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls by Mary Piper

Odd Girl Out: The Hidden Culture of Aggression in Girls by Rachel Simmons

Queen Bees and Wannabees: Helping Your Daughter Survive Cliques, Gossip, Boyfriends, and Other Realities of Adolescence by Rosalind Wiseman

### **Websites for Girls and Parents:**

[www.girlspace.com](http://www.girlspace.com) provides education for girls on physical/mental well being and current events.

[www.health.org/gpower](http://www.health.org/gpower) seeks to reinforce strong attitudes and positive values about health related issues for girls aged 9-14.

[www.daughters.com](http://www.daughters.com) is the website affiliate of the newsletter *Daughters; A Newsletter for Parents of Girls*. It provides interesting articles for parents about handling the tough times.

### **Magazines for Girls:**

*New Moon Magazine* is dedicated to publishing resistance strategies for girls to remain connected to "the girl within".

*Teen Voices* is dedicated to publishing work created by girls; and is aimed at continuing the idea that girls are "more than just a pretty face".

I am here to answer any question you may have about your child's emotional, academic, or social development. Feel free to reach me at 410.887.3455

This Friday, December 12<sup>th</sup> is School Spirit Day.

Bring in a new pair of mittens or gloves, and dress as a twin or a triplet for the day.

Let's show our Carroll Manor Spirit by helping others this Christmas.