Five tips for talking with your teens and understanding their emotions

1. Initiate conversations with your teenager
   1. Keep in mind that timing can be everything.
   2. Try to gauge their stress level and when a good time is to start a conversation
2. Create an open environment so your teen feels comfortable talking with you about anything, anytime
   1. Be around, be available
   2. Share your feelings
3. Listen to your teenager no matter what they are saying
   1. Really listen. Look at them. Stop any other activity you are doing and be present in the moment with them. This will validate that their feelings are important
   2. Try to understand their perspective without judgement!
   3. Ask them to try and make a connection with what is happening in their lives and the emotions they are feeling. (Try not to make the connection for them!)
4. Be patient
   1. Sometimes we don’t know why we are feeling the way we are. Keep the conversation going but know when to take a break
   2. Remind them to be patient with themselves.
5. Encourage them to feel the emotions they have
   1. Do not rush them or encourage them to “tuck” that emotion away. It will come back and probably stronger
   2. The feelings will change. And understanding all of your feelings/emotions is important
6. Be empathetic NOT sympathetic
   1. This will build connection with your teens
   2. It makes you vulnerable and this will connect you with your teen