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## Self-Esteem and Sexual Stressors

### Dad Steps in to Help Son with Problem

Matt just entered ninth grade. He is tall, thin and very shy. He's new at school and doesn't know many people. He's not much of an athlete, but is very good at playing the piano and guitar. Some of the boys made fun of him in gym class when he fumbled the ball, and he just hung his head without saying a word.

Later, a couple of kids started saying Matt was gay because he had never been with a girl. He couldn't tell his parents how hard things were for him at school because he knew they would just tell him to ignore it and that things would get better once people got to know him. Matt just wished he could disappear while at school and started thinking no one cared about him.

Matt's parents later sensed there was a problem. Together, they began validating Matt's feelings and helping him process his thoughts about the teasing. For example, after his dad noticed Matt was quieter at home and didn't seem to want to go to school, he approached Matt and said, "I guess it's not easy starting a new school and making new friends. I remember how alone I felt when my parents enrolled me in a private school." Matt then opened up to his dad about all the teasing. His dad asked him, "Why do you think some kids pick on the new kids at school?" After Matt processed his thoughts about this, his dad asked him what he thought he should do about it and whether he wanted some ideas. Matt then told his dad it would be OK and that he was just glad he could talk things out with him. He now knows his parents are there for him whenever he needs them.

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