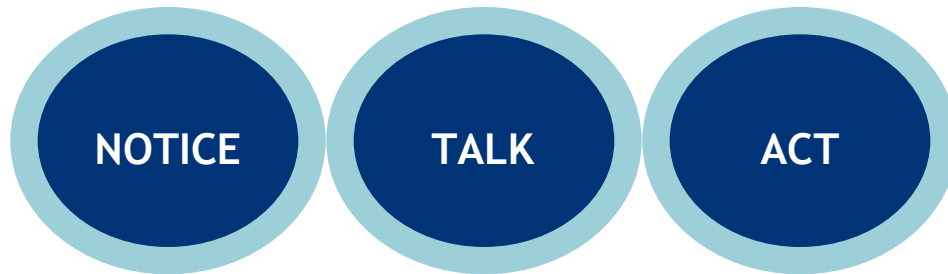


*Typical or Troubled?*®

# Talking to Teens



## Creating the Context for Dialogue

- Create a private space/climate where the adolescent can feel safe to talk.
- Pursue dialogues when the time, location, and conditions are right.
- Clarify what can be kept confidential and what may not.

## Establishing Credibility

- Respond with empathy, warmth, respect, and nurturance.
- Use active listening techniques: Pay attention, show that you are listening, provide feedback, defer judgment, and respond appropriately.
- People typically remember less than 50% of a conversation.

## Facilitating Talk

- Start slowly and avoid asking too many questions at first. This will minimize pressure to talk.
- Use open-ended questions.
- Listen with interest.
- Avoid interruptions.
- If an adolescent is experiencing learning, behavior, and/or emotional problems, find as many ways as possible to have positive interchanges with them and make positive contacts outweigh the negatives.

**Phrases to start the conversation:** “I have been noticing that you seem ...”, “I want you to know that I am here for you”, “Could you tell me more about....” “I want to help you with....”

*Adapted from the University of California Los Angeles Mental Health in Schools, Training and Technical Assistance Program, Howard Adelman, and Linda Taylor*