

Module 4-PACK-Teen Parent Handout #15

Problem Solving Together (PST) Steps for Parents: The 5 D's

Defuse

- Use yourself as a calming agent (soft voice, nonthreatening posture, lower to adolescent's eye level).
- Display empathy: "You sound____." "You seem____." "You look____." (Insert feeling word such as *upset, frustrated, disappointed, sad, hurt, angry, or worried.*)
- Use mirroring: "So it sounds like you feel as though. . . ." "So what I hear you saying is. . . ." "So what you are saying is that. . . ." "So the way you see it is. . . ." "So in other words. . . ." Paraphrase or infer the teen's feelings and viewpoint.

Define

- First summarize the teen's feelings and point of view and/or their "wish."
- Summarize your feelings and point of view and/or your "wish." Use neutral language, describe behavior, and keep it short—no blame, no shame, no put-downs. Start with "I hear you saying that. . . . However, I am worried that. . ." or, "I understand you feel as though. . . . However I get upset when. . . ."
- No "buts" ("buts" are butts!).

Da' Party

- "Let's put our heads together and see if we can find a solution where we both get what we want." "Let's see if we can find a solution that works for both of us." "Let's think of some ideas to solve this problem."
- Write down all ideas.
- Do not critique: No idea is considered good or bad at this point.

Decide

- Go down the list and with your teen identify which solutions are "cool-headed" and which are "hot-headed." Try to pick one that will work for both you and your teen.

Do it!

- Implement the plan, ensuring a mechanism for tracking its success.

Possible next step (optional):

Write a contract

- For recurrent, important problem behaviors or conflicts, you and your teen can write out a behavioral contract with target behaviors, a tracking system, and rewards.