



Talking the Talk with Teens

Cathi Cohen, LCSW, CGP

The eye roll and the exasperated sigh. Talking back or not answering at all. Unfortunately, these "modes" of communication are familiar to many parents of teenagers. We at In Step are being asked more and more for helpful ways to better communicate with their teens. More specifically, parents want to know what is "normal" teen behavior and what behaviors warrant heightened concern.

Our In Step team has come up with a checklist for parents, guidance counselors, teachers, and other service professionals whom work with teenagers on a regular basis:

Typical Teenage Behavior Questionnaire for Parents of Teenagers

Is your teenager becoming more distant with his/her siblings?

Does your teenager reject much of your advice?

Is your teenager losing interest in religion?

Is your teenager moody?

Does your teenager want you there one minute and push you away the next?

Does your teenager have lots of self doubts?

Is your teenager embarrassed about his/her body?

Is your teenager overly concerned about what his/her friends think?

Does your teen act as if the world revolves around him/her?

If you answered "yes" to some or more of the above questions, then "Congratulations" - you have a typical teenager! However, even typical teens and their families need support during trying times. Talk to your teen's guidance counselor about your support options or call us at In Step, PC.

Not-So Typical Teenage Behavior Checklist

Increased Isolation.

Sudden Changes of Friends.

Getting in with the Wrong Crowd.

Sudden Decline in Grades.

Suicide Notes or Talk.

Running Away.

Frequent Rages.

Lying.

Stealing.

Preoccupation and/or Distortion with Body Image.

Significant Weight Loss or Gain.

Marked Increase or Decrease in Sleep.

Substance Abuse.

If you answered "yes" to any of the above questions, please talk to you teen's guidance counselor about counseling options for your family, or call us at In Step, PC.