

Dear Families/Caregivers,

Negative emotions such as frustration, anger, and embarrassment can signal a problem. Developing problem solving skills empowers teens to view problems as challenges to overcome.

We have been learning to solve problems using the acronym STEPS. The steps to solving a problem are:

**S**ay the problem.

**T**hink of solutions.

**E**xplore the solutions.

**P**ick a solution.

**S**tep up and try the solution.

This year your teen is learning to use critical thinking strategies to think of solutions to a problem. Critical thinking strategies include: compare and contrast, connect, create, and categorize.

Next time your teen has a problem, encourage him or her to say the problem. Knowing what is the problem is the first step to solving any problem. Then ask your teen to use one of the critical thinking strategies to help think of solutions to the problem. By encouraging him or her to think of his or her own solutions, rather than providing the solutions(s), he or she will build problem solving skills. If your teen can't think of any solutions, provide him or her with two or three solutions to choose from.