

The 'Please Hear Me Out' card

a tool to maintain a positive relationship with your child

Building a strong, close relationship with your child is important now, and as he or she grows. Teens in Arlington tell us that fewer than 1 in 3 teens feel that they can talk to their parent or caregiver about difficult topics*.

Building the relationship, and the communication, start at any age and carries through a lifetime. We offer the Hear Me Out Card as a simple tool to help you and your family.

Hang the card on the fridge or other place where it is visible and invite your kids to hand it to you when they need you to listen. When they give it to you...

- **Breathe.** They are probably stressed, so keep things calm for both of you.
- **Thank them for coming.** This is exactly what you want: for your child to share their concerns and questions!
- **Let them talk.** Listen. *Just listen.* For every 5-minutes of conversation, you should talk less than 1 minute.
- **Use Reflective Listening.** Repeat back what they just said. It sends a *clear message that you're listening AND gives you a moment to breathe and be mindful of your response.*
- **Ask neutral, open-ended questions.** These open up the conversation!
 - o Can you say more? (easy to ask, non-judgmental)
 - o What do you think (or feel) about that?
 - o I wonder if there is another way to think about that? (*this could be a way to move them towards a different way of thinking, without imposing it on them.*)
- **Suppress your surprise.** If it is a topic that *really* makes you uncomfortable, do your best not to show it. Young people will test adult reactions to a particular topic. A calm response tells them it is safe to talk about this. *Once a parent indicates that a topic is taboo, a child will not bring it up again. Ever.*

The card is a reminder to...

...**Parents** (and other adults) to **listen** and be supportive when your child or teen has a question, problem or issue.

...**Teens** to **talk to a trusted and caring adult** when you have concerns or questions about a difficult topic or issue.

Why this? Why now?



One in three (29%) of Arlington teens (8th, 10th & 12th graders)* feel comfortable talking to parents or caregivers about difficult topics (alcohol, dating, sexual activity, drugs etc.).



Parents and caregivers are THE primary sources of information for young people and the most powerful prevention measure.



As teens talk (and listen) to their parents, risky behaviors drop, and Developmental Assets® rise!



HELP ME FEEL SAFE TO TALK

PLEASE HEAR ME OUT

I have a question or problem that might make you upset. So even though I'm still responsible for my actions, by accepting this CARD you agree to "LUV-Listen" and support me, staying calm and helping me find answers or solutions.

LUV LISTENING

L – LISTEN without judgment, with your ears, eyes and heart to understand my situation. Try to put yourself in my place.

U – UNDERSTAND: Repeat back what I say in your own words to show understanding. Ask me respectful questions.

V – VALIDATE my feelings by expressing empathy, even if you disagree. Express confidence in my ability to find solutions.