Exploring the Problem with the Student/Family
(an overview of the types of information you might pursue in order to learn a bit more about a student's problem).

In general, you will want to explore

What's going well?

What's not going so well and how pervasive and serious are the problems?

What seems to be the causes of the problems?

What's already been tried to correct the problems?

What should be done to make things better?

(What does the student/family think should be done? Do the causes shed any light on what needs to be done? Does what's already been tried shed any light? What are the student/family willing to try? How much do they truly think that things can be made better?)

Obviously, in a brief session, only a limited amount of information can be gathered. Choices must be made based upon your understanding of the problem(s) identified and the population you serve.

Specific areas and topics that might be explored in understanding the nature and scope of the problem(s) and examples of the many tools that are available to structure interviews are to be found in our Resource Aid Packet on Screening/Assessing Students: Indicators and Tools. This can be downloaded from our website at the following url: [http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdftdocs/assessment/assessment.pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdftdocs/assessment/assessment.pdf)

Remember, if you are going to do a formal interview with a student about psychosocial/mental health concerns, you usually will need both a signed informed consent from a parent or legal guardian. And, even if it is required, it is good practice to get the student's assent as well.*

* Your school may want to obtain a copy of the Resource Aid Packet on Screening/Assessing Students: Indicators and Tools—available from the Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA.