

How To Help A Friend

If you're worried about a friend who may be struggling, you're in the right place. Here are some ways you can help.

LISTEN. BE THERE.

Let them know you care and are concerned — as many times as they need to hear it. Tell them that they can count on you to be there for support.

Spend time together. Do things you enjoy together such as watching a movie, going for a walk or having dinner.

When your friend is ready to talk in person or online, it's important to listen to them and let them know you hear them. Don't interrupt, judge or give advice, unless they ask. Feeling heard and supported can be very helpful, and talking to you may be the first step your friend takes to getting professional help.

Provide hope — let your friend know that things can get better. Share how you're feeling. Tell your friend how honoured you are that they reached out to you, if you're feeling that way.

... Having a friend who is going through something difficult can be hard on you, too. Talk about it with someone you trust.

CONNECT WITH KIDS HELP PHONE

Kids Help Phone counsellors are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to support young people with whatever they're going through. If you're worried about a friend, we can provide you with support or you can recommend that your friend contact us.

ENCOURAGE YOUR FRIEND to call Kids Help Phone at 1-800-668-6868 or connect through Live Chat at KidsHelpPhone.ca. If they prefer, you can contact Kids Help Phone together.

IF YOU NEED ONE-ON-ONE TIME with someone who gets what's going on in your life, you can connect anonymously and confidentially using the Always There app. Talk about anything. Chat with total privacy.

DOWNLOAD THE ALWAYS THERE APP to chat for free on your iOS or Android device, available in both English and French.



Kids Help Phone

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(Continued)

LEARN MORE

Educate yourself about mental health and wellness. Knowledge helps us challenge misinformation, stigma, judgments and assumptions. It also helps us provide helpful support and begin to recognize the signs that someone may be struggling. To learn more about different topics related to mental health, visit KidsHelpPhone.ca.

INVOLVE OTHERS

Encourage your friend to talk to someone who can provide assistance. They could be a:

- Family member (parent/caregiver, sibling, grandparent, etc.)
- doctor or other health professional
- teacher
- school social worker
- counsellor
- spiritual leader
- on-campus residence don

Some secrets are too big to keep. If you're really concerned about your friend or suspect that they're at risk of suicide or other serious harm, talk to someone else about your concerns. The person you tell should be in a position to provide assistance. Ask them what they're going to do about what you've discussed with them, and if they don't quite "get it," tell someone else.

If your friend talks about suicide, encourage them to visit their doctor or a mental health professional immediately. If they're in immediate danger of suicide, call 911 and stay with them until help has arrived.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Remember, you're not responsible for your friend's wellness. In order to recover from mental health challenges, a person needs a community of support, access to professional resources and a readiness to take steps toward recovery. Try to make sure that you aren't the only person supporting your friend — it's more than you can or should do alone. Draw on other safe and trusted people whenever possible.

If you've reached out to a friend and it didn't go as well as you had hoped, try to be understanding with yourself. It's natural to want to help a friend who's hurting, but there are limits to how much you can do. Be there for your friend by encouraging them to get the help they need, but don't blame yourself for your friend's struggle(s).

Get some support for yourself. Having a friend who is going through something difficult can be hard on you, too. Talk about it with someone you trust. You don't have to go through it alone.

24/7

If you're a young person who's struggling with a problem, big or small, you can always contact Kids Help Phone. We're free, anonymous, confidential and available 24/7.

1-800-668-6868

KidsHelpPhone.ca

Download our free chat app.