

SUPPORTING A FRIEND



1 hour

Create a safe and positive learning environment by agreeing ground rules for the lesson.

In this lesson we will learn:

- the importance of encouraging friends to get support
- our roles in helping our peers
- when to be concerned about a friend
- how to use strategies to help a friend.

Key message

It is sometimes easy to know what should be done – but a lot harder to actually do it.

Resources

- hint cards
- small piece paper or card per student
- role cards
- large pieces of paper.

Digital resources

- Supporting a friend audio
- I'm fine film.

Activity

1. Ask each student as they come into the room how they are feeling – count how many say “I’m fine”.
2. If using the film, watch this first, then discuss; why do we say “I’m fine” when we are not? Do the students agree that it’s hard to say how you are really feeling?
3. Hand out a small piece of paper or card to each student. On one side they write ‘I’m fine’ and on the other, something else the person might be thinking but did not want to say.
4. Why would we say “I’m fine” when we are not? Go around the class and ask students to volunteer to read out some of the cards. Discuss these. It’s not easy to tell someone how you feel. Ask the class what they said when you asked them how they were? Tell them how many “I’m fine’s” you counted. If we don’t know when someone is not fine, we can’t be sure how to support them.
5. With students in pairs give out role cards. **A** is the role on the card and **B** starts the conversation, for example: **B**: How are you? **A**: I’m ok thanks...Have a chat as you would outside class.
6. Discuss how did this go? Did anyone find out what was really going on for the character?



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7. Hand out hint cards and swap scenarios with another pair, also swap roles so everyone has a turn at asking. **A** now asks and **B** responds. Play out using the 'hint list' to help. Allow a few minutes.
8. Feed back as a class – How did that go? What was the most helpful thing that was said?
9. Hand out large pieces of paper. In small groups think about clues that mean that someone might need support. How would you know when to be concerned? Draw and write in a body outline all the things you might see or hear. Allow ten minutes for this. Ask each group to feed back.
10. Summary: there are times when it is difficult to ask for help. It's good to be aware of how others are feeling. Being there and showing you care can really help. If you feel worried about someone, don't feel you have to take it all on yourself – talk to someone.
11. Discuss REG – respect, empathy, genuine. Explain what it means and how it can help. Sometimes we don't know what to say, but that's ok. We can tell someone we care and that we're sorry they feel bad.

What are the top tips that students have picked up from this lesson about what to do – or not to do, to get a friend to talk to you?

Reflection

Do I feel able to help my friends to seek help if they need it?

Note

Sometimes, a loss or change in someone's life may make it difficult for them to cope – they may even have thoughts of suicide. This can be a sensitive topic, so please talk to someone if you are worried about yourself or someone else. Remind the students about who is available to talk to them in schools and out of school, using the information slide. Sometimes we have to go on our instincts when we think others may need help or support. Many people feel shame or shyness about asking for help and try to cope alone. Many also suffer from depression and may not realise that help is available.

Links to: [What is emotional health?](#) | [Self-harm myths and facts](#) | [Open questions](#) | [Developing listening skills](#)

Make sure young people know what support is available and how to access this support.

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