

# HOW TO HELP A FRIEND

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

## Listen. Be There.

**Let them know you care and you're 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, like watching a movie, going for a walk, or having dinner.

**When your friend is ready to talk in person or online, listen to them, let them know you hear them.** Don't interrupt, give advice that they don't ask for, or judge – instead, just try to listen. Feeling heard and supported can be very helpful, and talking to you might be the first step your friend takes to getting professional help.

**Provide hope** - let your friend know that things can often get better, and change is a part of life.

**Share how you're feeling:** tell your friend how honoured you are that they reached out to you as a first step.

## Learn More.

**Educate yourself about mental health and wellness.**

Knowledge helps us challenge misinformation, stigma, judgements and assumptions, provide helpful support, and begin to recognize the signs that someone might be struggling. To learn more about different topics related to mental health, visit Kids Help Phone's [Info Booth](#).

## Involve Others.

**Encourage your friend to talk to someone who can provide assistance.** This could be a teacher, a residence don, a family member (older sibling, aunt, uncle or parent), school social worker, an on-campus health professional, counsellor or spiritual leader.

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



## Connect with Kids Help Phone.

Kids Help Phone isn't just for kids – counsellors are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to support young adults with whatever they are going through. You can connect with us and we can talk through with you how to best support your friend, or you can recommend that your friend contact us.

- » Encourage your friend to call Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868. If they prefer, you can call Kids Help Phone together.
- » If they don't seem ready to make a call they can [Ask Us Online](#)
- » [Live Chat Counselling Pilot](#) is also available on a limited basis – Thursdays to Sundays from 6pm to 11pm EST.
- » Stay connected on the go for free: [The Always There Mobile App](#)

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

## Take Care of Yourself.

**Remember you are not responsible for your friend's wellness.**

In order to recover from mental ill-health, 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 is 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.

KidsHelpPhone.ca  
1 800 668 6868

Kids Help Phone