

# Young people and friends



Supporting friends can be hard and if you are worried about them it can be difficult to know the right things to say. This toolkit provides some ways for friends to approach conversations about healthy relationships.

It is really important that you remember that you do not have to support a friend alone and if you are worried about someone then it is important that you get advice.

This doesn't mean you are breaking their trust, by getting advice you can ensure your friend gets the support they need.

You can speak to an adult you trust or contact **Childline** on **0800 1111**, visit **childline.org.uk** or you can contact **Cool2Talk** at **www.cool2talk.org**

## ♥ Why should we talk about relationships?

As a young person, it isn't always easy to know what a healthy relationship is or what to do if it feels wrong. By having conversations about relationships with our friends we can normalise asking for help and advice. For many young people, friends will be the first place they turn to with any worries and you can be a valuable source of support.

### ♥ Let's talk!

Speak somewhere privately where you both feel safe and comfortable. The first time you speak about this subject it might only be for a few minutes but it should be in a space where both of you feel able to speak openly.

Let your friends know you are there for them if they need you – remind them that you aren't there to judge them but are there for support.

You might want to start the conversation by talking about something relevant you have seen recently on TV or in the media.

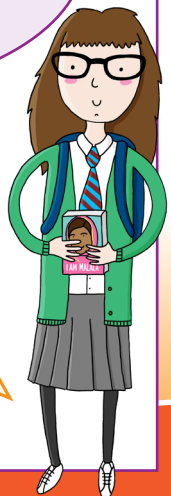
Listen – if your friend wants to talk, listening to them will help you understand what they are going through.

Go at their pace – if your friend isn't ready to have this conversation, don't force it.

Signpost – if your friend is worried or upset about something you should let them know how they can get support. This might be through speaking to a parent/carer or teacher, or they can contact **Childline** on **0800 1111** or **Cool2Talk** **www.cool2talk.org**.

Make sure that you are looking after yourself. While it's good to look after your friends, make sure that you are also taking care of your own mental health.

If your friend discloses abuse or is in any danger it is important that you tell someone.





## ♥ Conversation Starters

Everybody is different and how you approach these conversations will depend very much on your relationship with the person. Below are some conversation starters which you might find helpful.

Ask how they are feeling.

Ask what a healthy relationship means to them.

Talk about examples in films or TV of unhealthy relationships and what 'red flags' are.

Let them know that you are there if they ever need to talk about something.

If you are worried about someone, you might want to:

Let them know that they deserve to be happy/safe.

Reassure them that they have not done anything wrong.

Ask what their advice to someone else would be in this situation.

Let them know where they can get help.

You should avoid telling them to end a relationship as this may mean that they don't open up to you in the future.

## ♥ Get advice/support

If you are worried about yourself or a friend, it is really important that you speak to someone. This could be a parent or carer, a teacher or you can contact **Childline** on **0800 1111** or visit **Childline.org.uk**.

Childline is there for all young people up until their 19th birthday. If you suspect someone is in immediate danger you should call the police on **999**.

You can also contact **Cool2Talk** – a safe space for young people aged 12 or over living in Tayside. <https://cool2talk.org/>

