

# SOLUTION.

## COPING WITH FRIENDSHIP CHALLENGES

*Helping your teenager cope with difficulties with their friends*



Experiencing conflict with peers in high school can be challenging for some young people to deal with. In high school, many young people are still learning about themselves and how to cope with stress and conflict, so it can be difficult to know how to cope when faced with peer conflict. As teenagers spend a large amount of their time at school with their peers, experiencing peer conflict can be a highly stressful time for some. Here are some tips which might help you and your teenager cope with friendship conflicts.

### TALKING IT THROUGH

Support your teenager by encouraging them to talk through the situation with you. Encourage your teenager to identify how they are feeling. Hear them out, and help them make a plan about what they would like to do next in the situation. Encourage your teenager to spend some time thinking about the situation before making big friendship decisions, and to weigh up pros and cons of choices. It can be helpful to remind your teenager that many people make mistakes sometimes, and to encourage your teenager to reflect on aspects of the situation that they could learn from for the future. Telling your teenager a story of your own experience with peer conflict in high school and how you got through it may help to normalise your teenager's experience.

### EXPLORE COPING SKILLS

Discuss times in the past when your teenager has experienced a similar conflict with their peers, and talk about the skills your teenager used to help them get through that difficult situation. Brainstorm a list of their favourite activities which help them feel calm and relaxed. Some activities might be doing deep breathing exercises, listening to calming music, taking walks outside, taking hot baths, progressive muscle relaxation, writing about their stress, or chatting to you about how they're feeling. Check in regularly with your teenager throughout these difficult periods. Reminding your teenager of these coping skills and how they used them in the past can strengthen their sense of hope that they will make it through.

### YOUR TEENAGER'S STRENGTHS

During difficult times with peers, sometimes teenagers can experience low confidence difficulties, and be left wondering whether there is something wrong with them that led them to be experiencing peer difficulties. During these times, it can be difficult for young people to remember the qualities that they love about themselves that make them unique and special. Encourage your teenager to think about their strengths, and remind your teenager of the qualities you admire in them. Encourage your teenager to reflect on the qualities they value in a friend, and the qualities they feel they show to their friends. Ask your teenager to reflect on whether they feel that they and their friends displayed these friendship qualities throughout the peer conflict your teenager is involved in.

### STANDING UP

Sometimes it can be difficult for your teenager to feel confident enough to stand up to others when they feel they are not being treated fairly or with respect. Support your teenager to stand up for themselves by role playing situations at home where your teenager would need to stand up for themselves, and rehearse sentences your teenager could say to their peers. This can help to provide structure and guidance to boost your teenager's confidence to stand up to others.