

Friendship Problems

What You Can Do

Friendships aren't always easy and fun. In fact, even best friends can go through tough times. Do you know what to do when you and a friend aren't getting along? Friendship problems are a part of life, but there are ways to overcome them.

Shifting friendships

As people grow and change, friendships often shift. This is normal and it's OK. Students develop new interests, join different activities, and make friends with new classmates. Friendship shifts can also happen for no reason at all.

What can you do? If you feel a friendship shifting, and it's a friendship you want to keep, you can try the following:

- ▶ Talk to your friend and let them know that their friendship is important to you. They may not realize that they have been leaving you out or hurting your feelings.
- ▶ If your friend has a new interest or activity, give it a try. You might find that you enjoy it, too—and it will be something else you'll have in common.
- ▶ Let the friendship go. If a friendship is no longer making you happy or seems like too much work, it may be time to move on.

To have good friends, you need to be a good friend! Good friends are trustworthy, loyal, willing to help in a time of need, and ready to listen when a friend has a problem. Regularly check in with yourself to make sure you are being the best friend you can be.

Disagreements and arguments

Friends don't always agree on everything—and sometimes this leads to problems.

What can you do? If you and a friend are stuck in a disagreement, try the following.

- ▶ Stay calm. You'll have a better chance of solving any argument if you're calm. If you're upset, take several deep breaths to help you calm down.
- ▶ Talk about it. Disagreements are often the result of misunderstandings. Ask questions to make sure you understand your friend's point of view, and if you feel like you aren't being understood, try explaining yourself a different way.

Being excluded

It hurts when friends leave you out, whether it's on purpose or not.

What can you do? If you notice that you are frequently being excluded from activities by a friend or group of friends, try these ideas:

- ▶ Be upfront with your friend and ask why you aren't being included. There might be a good explanation. Remember to stay calm.
- ▶ Think about how you have been treating your friends. Have you been talking behind others' backs? Have you been stressed about something and taking it out on them?
- ▶ If a friend isn't supporting you and making your life more enjoyable, perhaps it's time to let that friendship go and focus on your other friends.

When you're having friendship problems, your self-esteem can take a hit. Watch this short video to learn some ways you can improve your self-esteem during hard times.

