

How to be a Better Friend

Learning and knowing how to be a good friend can make a world of difference to someone who has been bullied. Knowing what to say and how to say it, how to listen and how to support a friend or someone you just met is an invaluable tool.

1. Be a good listener

- Don't interrupt when she is talking to you about what has happened.
- Keep good eye contact.
- Give thoughtful and supportive advice, but only when asked.

2. Be honest

- Keep what she says to you private.
- If she asks you to help her or do something and you don't feel comfortable doing it, be honest about why you don't feel comfortable doing it.
- If she talks to you about what happened or tells you why she is being bullied, don't tell other people, not even your best friend! Being a good friend is about being trustworthy when your friend is in need.
- The only time you should ever reveal what she told you is if you think she is in danger.

3. Be loyal

- If someone tells you something in confidence, keep that confidence! She may not be ready to tell an adult about the bullying or to have others know what happened.
- If you hear people talking about your friend or saying something bad about her, stand up for her. Don't be a part of the problem by letting rumors start.

4. Be supportive and offer advice

- If you feel like she needs some advice, but she has not asked for any, say something like:
 - a) *“Would you like some advice or suggestions on what to do?”*
- Offer comments that specifically address that she did not deserve to be bullied or that the bully is wrong. For example:
 - a) *“She’s the one who looks stupid, not you.”*
 - b) *“It’s not you. She says mean things about everyone.”*
- Some things may seem supportive but they can also make the victim feel like she is to blame for what happened. Don’t say things like:
 - a) *“You should be more careful about getting into these sorts of situations.”*
 - b) *“You must feel really embarrassed that they were laughing at you.”*

5. Be proactive

- If you know the person who has been bullied doesn’t have many friends reach out to her.
 - a) Offer to let her sit with you at lunch.
 - b) Introduce her to your own friends.
 - c) Offer to walk to class with her or plan a place to meet up later.
 - d) Sit with her on the bus.
 - e) Say nice things about her to other people.

6. Extra ideas

- Call her, message her, text her, write her a note and ask how she is doing.
- Tell her you are sorry she is going through this and that you are available to talk at any time.
- Post positive comments about her on your Facebook wall for all to see.

7. If you think someone might be getting bullied, but you are not sure

- If your friend is acting out or being mean to you, it is possible that something is going on. Ask her! Don't just assume you know what is happening.
- Tell her why you think something might be going on and ask her if there is anything she wants to talk about.
- Be nice and respectful when talking to her. Remember that being bullied can be embarrassing and the victim may be reluctant to talk about it.
- If she doesn't want to talk, reassure her that is fine. But also let her know if or when she does want to talk that you will be ready to listen.