

How to be a good listener if someone is upset

Do you know how to listen to your friends if they have problems? In this video, find out what you can do to help your friends and be a good listener.

Tasks

Do the preparation task first. Then watch the video and do the exercises. Remember you can read the transcript at any time.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

Vocabulary

1. to confide in someone
2. to keep an eye on someone
3. mental health
4. to judge someone
5. a habit
6. to reassure someone
7. a counsellor
8. issues

Definition

- a. to watch someone to make sure they aren't in trouble
- b. the condition of a person's mind
- c. a particular way of acting that you do regularly
- d. to share your feelings with someone, because you trust them
- e. someone whose job is to listen to people and give them advice
- f. problems or difficulties
- g. to express an opinion about someone's behaviour
- h. to comfort someone and stop them worrying

Task 1

Are the sentences true or false?

	Answer	
1. It's always easy to see when someone has a mental health problem.	True	False
2. If your friend's habits or behaviour change over a period of time, it's possible that they're having difficulties.	True	False
3. Chris and Xand often tell each other about their problems.	True	False
4. Caroline's job is to help students who have difficulties.	True	False
5. Xand says that he's sleeping too much.	True	False
6. Xand feels better knowing that other people have worse problems than him.	True	False
7. Caroline tells Chris that he needs to find an answer to each of Xand's problems.	True	False
8. Caroline says it's a good idea to talk to someone who is not part of the situation.	True	False

Task 2

Put the words and phrases in order to make sentences.

1. your friend or sleeping not at all? all the time Is
2. too much. be eating enough might not or maybe Your friend eating they're
3. There tone messages a change of might be in their or posts.
4. and behaviour a sign Changes in isn't right. that something can be habits
5. best The to them. can do to talk is to help thing you
6. to give listen jump advice. and don't Just to your friend
7. judge, just reassure you're your friend Don't them. there for
8. help from Get an adult like a counsellor. trust, you

Discussion

What do you do to help your friends?

Transcript

It's essential we keep an eye on our family and friends because it can be easy not to notice when someone has a mental health problem. But we've got some simple signs to look out for.

It might be a change in sleeping habits. Is your friend sleeping all the time or not at all?

Have you noticed a change in eating habits? They might not be eating enough. Or maybe they've started eating too much.

It could even be a change in behaviour. Has your mate stopped hanging out with you like they used to? Do they have sudden outbursts of anger? Sometimes it might just be a change of tone in their message or a post.

Any change in normal habits and behaviour over a prolonged period of time can be a sign that something isn't right and the best thing you can do to help is to talk to them.

Chris: So you may spot that a friend's having difficulties or they may come to you with a problem, but either way, what should you do next?

Xand: And this is a thing that actually happens to me and Chris all the time. We do bring our problems to each other and confide in each other and it's very hard to know what to say.

We've come to meet Caroline. She's been a school counsellor for over 25 years, supporting hundreds of students.

Chris: Caroline's gonna listen in as I try to help Xand with some issues in his life.

Tell me about it.

Xand: I'm just not getting enough sleep. I'm always tired and irritable.

Chris: So why don't you go to bed a bit earlier?

Xand: There are too many things to worry about.

Chris: It is difficult, but there are a lot of people who are struggling more than you.

Xand: I know that there are people having a worse time than me, but that doesn't make me feel any better. I like this girl and she just stopped answering my texts.

Chris: Why don't you show me the texts?

Xand: I don't want to show you the texts.

Chris: Well, I can't help you with the texts if you don't show me the texts.

Xand: It seems to me you're just getting annoyed at me. You were the one that wanted to hear my problems. I don't find what you're doing now very helpful. I can't quite see how anything's gonna, gonna get better.

Chris: So what I'm feeling now is I don't know what to do. Caroline, what should I be doing?

Caroline: Why do you want to fix him? You're very much wanting to have answers, and some problems don't have answers.

Chris: So I should just listen to Xand, not jump to give advice.

Xand: I didn't feel like you were listening. It did feel judgy.

Chris: I judged you and felt that you should do some things or that you shouldn't do other things.

Caroline: You can't know how he's feeling.

Chris: I got this wrong. Don't judge, just reassure your friend you're there for them.

Caroline: I think it also really helps to talk to somebody who's not involved.

Xand: The temptation is to go, 'If I'm a really good friend, I can also be your counsellor', and those two things are not necessarily true together.

Chris: So don't be afraid to get help from an adult you trust, because someone like a counsellor may be the best person to deal with the situation.

Answers

Preparation task

1. d
2. a
3. b
4. g
5. c
6. h
7. e
8. f

Task 1

1. False
2. True
3. True
4. True
5. False
6. False
7. False
8. True

Task 2

1. Is your friend sleeping all the time or not at all?
2. Your friend might not be eating enough or maybe they're eating too much.
3. There might be a change of tone in their messages or posts.
4. Changes in habits and behaviour can be a sign that something isn't right.
5. The best thing you can do to help is to talk to them.
6. Just listen to your friend and don't jump to give advice.
7. Don't judge, just reassure your friend you're there for them.
8. Get help from an adult you trust, like a counsellor.