

# Helping a Friend Brainstorms

**Recommended Age: 14+**

## Goal

- To validate the importance of caring for one another.

## Have Ready

- Space for youth to face each other for the quick-change game.
- Write 'Helping a Friend' on two flipcharts or a white board.

## Instructions

- Tell youth, **"Everybody, find a partner and sit facing each other. Take a quick look at what your partner is wearing, what their hair is like, and what shoes they are wearing. Now, turn around and quickly change 3 things about yourself: you could pull out a pocket, untie your shoes, tuck your hair back, roll up a sleeve, etc. Now turn around and your partner will try to notice what you have changed."**<sup>i</sup>
- After the debrief for the game, break the youth into two groups and flipchart helping a friend. Ask what are some ways we can help a friend going through a hard time.

## Game Debrief

- **Why do you think we would have you do this activity?** We played the quick-change game to try to notice changes in our partner. It is important to pay attention to the people in our lives and notice if we see any changes in the ways that they are acting. This is just a game, but changes in people can show us signs that they are having a hard time. Also, noticing positive changes in people is a good way to show that we value them and can be encouraging. For example, "That's a sharp haircut, my friend."

# Sample Flipchart

## Helping a Friend

- Listen to them
- Don't judge them or make them feel bad
- Bring them food
- Hang out with them
- Have fun together
- Ask them how they are doing
- Play sports with them
- Compliment them
- Try to cheer them up
- Be nice
- Go with them to talk to an adult they trust (if needed)
- Help them call a crisis line (if needed)
- Play video games with them
- Spend time with them
- Give/make them treats

## Debrief

- **There are many things we do/can do to support each other. Listening, being there for someone, and showing them that you care can be very helpful.**
- Part of helping a friend is doing regular friend stuff. Sharing food, laughter, and fun.
- **If your friend is really struggling, they may need help and support from a trusted adult (counsellor, teacher, guidance counsellor, coach, uncle, auntie, Elder, etc.).** It is important to tell an adult you trust and to not keep the information to yourself. You can let the person know you are seeking outside help, and if possible, ask the person you are supporting which adult they would like to go to for help, and offer to do it with them. **You could say something like, "This is bigger than the both of us and I need to make sure you get all the help you need."** The more supportive people we have when helping someone who is really struggling, the better.

- **Taking care of yourself is also important when supporting a friend through a hard time.** It can be helpful to set a boundary and get support for yourself from someone you trust if it is too much for you. For example, you could say, “You need to make arrangements for other supports and here are some helplines you can call, because today I need time to myself and will be turning off my cell.” **It is very important to continue to do the things you like and care for your own needs so that you have the energy to keep being helpful to others.**

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<sup>i</sup>Sources of Strength. (n.d.). *Sources of Strength: Trainer program guide*.

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