

Having people around that care about you can help to keep you from getting really stressed out, depressed, angry or frustrated.

4

Having good people around you can help to keep you from getting really stressed out, depressed, angry, and/or frustrated. Your friends, family, and boyfriend/girlfriend can help you through the tough times and celebrate in the good times.

A good relationship, whether it's a friendship, romantic relationship or family, is based on:

- **Respect**
- **Having fun**
- **Feeling like you can be yourself**
- **Being able to have different opinions and interests**
- **Listening to each other**
- **Trust**
- **Being able to compromise and say sorry**
- **Not having to spend all your time together**

Friends can be one of your best sources of support when you're having trouble coping. A lot of the time they have experienced the same problems and can relate to what you're going through. When you're really upset and your thoughts are all over the place, talking to a friend can put things into perspective for you. If it's a more serious issue, though, you should also approach your parents/carers/teacher/school counsellor for help.

“Understand that friends come and go, but with a precious few, you should hold on.”

*Mary Schmich and Baz Luhrmann,
Everybody's Free to Wear Sunscreen (1997)*

RELATIONSHIPS

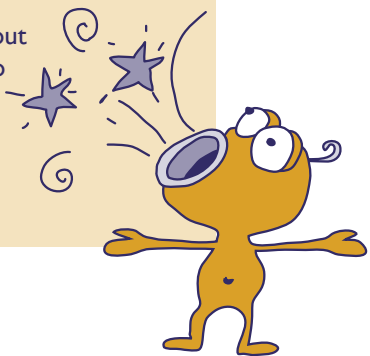
Friends

I was over at a friend's house one afternoon. We were just eating junk food and watching TV when there was a knock at the door. Standing there in the rain was one of our schoolmates, looking really upset. She asked to come in and sit down. We let her in and as she told us about how she and her boyfriend had split up, she broke down. We sat with her until she calmed down and rang her parents to tell them where she was and ask if she could stay over. She really felt like she needed a friend to talk to.
<http://www.girl.com.au/importantfriends.html>

I'd been getting hassled by my friends at school because I don't go and wag classes with them. When all of your friends are doing it and telling you to do it – well – you start feeling like you HAVE to just to fit in and keep your friends.

Anyway, I was talking to an older friend of mine - he finished school a couple of years ago and went through the same stuff when he was in school. He said he actually failed some subjects coz he was always pressured into wagging. He convinced me to stand up to my friends and tell them that I didn't want to wag class and that I didn't like feeling pressured into doing it. It turns out a few of the other guys didn't really like doing it either; they were just sort of going along with the crowd.

I'm glad I talked to my mate about it and didn't end up caving in to peer pressure. Everyone gets along better now and they don't hassle me or make a point of the fact that some of us don't go wagging classes.



You might not always get along with your friends, but if you try to sort out any issues you may have with each other you might end up being closer in the end. When you are upset or angry with a friend, try talking to them about how they make you feel and/or that you don't like the pressure they are putting on you.

If your friends are always making you feel bad or pressuring you into doing things that you know are a bad idea, it may be time to rethink your friendship.

Friendship isn't someone who gives you the most chocolate (but admit it, you wouldn't mind them sitting next to you). Nor is it someone who is the most popular. Friendship is someone who will drop everything to come around to make sure you're okay, or someone who might not have all the answers but will still listen anyway. <http://www.girl.com.au/cr-leavingsschool.htm>

Making Friends

If you are really shy or just worried about being rejected when trying to make friends you could try:

- Getting involved in a team sport or social group. This sort of activity involves talking to people, and could help you to open up and show what a great person you are to other people; **or**
- Working up the courage to talk to someone in class or at work. After talking for a few minutes you might find you have at least one thing in common and have made a new friend.

Family

Sometimes it can seem like your parents or carers come from another planet. They don't get the way you dress, the music you listen to, the TV shows you watch, the friends you choose and the way you feel.

But when you think about it, for many of us our parents or carers are the people who are going to be there when it's really tough.

Just try and remember:

- They do **TRY** to act in your best interests
- Changes you are going through can make you overreact sometimes
- To discuss issues you have with them and try to reach a compromise
- Your parents/carers probably went through similar things when they were your age, even though sometimes they might not be great at remembering this when they are trying to stop you from doing something.

Relationships

Having a boyfriend/girlfriend is tricky sometimes, especially if you're young and it's kind of a new thing.

The first thing to remember is **respect**; respect for yourself and respect for the person you are with. Neither of you should feel pressured into doing things that you're not ready for. You should be able to feel confident that you won't be dumped, rejected, or be in the bad books for not feeling ready to do certain things and saying so.

Relationships should be built on **trust**.

Having your **own opinions and interests** and not feeling like you have to change them to match those of your boyfriend/girlfriend is really important. This doesn't mean you can't be interested in things they love; just make sure there's room left for you.

Make **time** for yourself too. As much as you like spending time with your boyfriend/girlfriend, try to avoid spending **ALL** your time with them. This might create stress in other areas of your life – with your friends, family, and your schoolwork.

