

# Understanding mental health

## Friendships are good for us

- Spending time with friends, either in person or online, is a natural 'stress buster'
- Having good friends helps our physical and emotional wellbeing
- It's important friends make time for each other
- 25% of young people have said friendship issues affect their emotional wellbeing sometimes.

This week we are looking at  
**Stay Connected**  
 and  
**being a good friend**

## Stay Connected - being a good friend

The quality of our friendships is more important than how many we have.

Things to look for in a friend include: how trustworthy they are, how kind they are to you, whether you feel safe with them, and whether you can smile together.

You might have different friends for different things - sport, having a laugh, someone to talk to, school work.

All friendships have their ups and downs and it might be even harder at the moment. See if you can use the following friendship tips:

- **Reach out:** Don't be afraid to reach out to someone you haven't heard from in a while, there might be all sorts of reasons why they haven't been in touch and they will appreciate you are thinking of them
- **Have fun:** It's so good for us to have a laugh. Could you host a quiz night online or set a challenge for your group?
- **Be kind:** Sometimes we just don't know what people are struggling with.
- **Be supportive:** Just being there is usually enough – you don't have to have all the answers. If you think your friend is struggling with something give them time to talk it through so they can work out what is at the root of their concerns.
- **Repair:** Falling out is a normal. It's important to talk openly and acknowledge each-other's feelings; we can all make mistakes, apologise if necessary; forgive, rather than holding that grudge, and learn from our mistakes.
- **Check in:** Communication on social media can cause trouble - its easy to misinterpret someone's tone or feel you haven't been included - if you're feeling confused and need to sort something out - find a way to talk to them directly
- **Be real:** its important that you feel good about yourself when you are with your friends, sometimes we might need to accept that its time to seek out new friends.
- **Be safe:** ThinkUknow website has lots of useful information to keep you safe online

### Emotional Check-in

**Notice your emotions**  
 Notice your mood and what makes you feel better or worse

### Build Skills

**Set yourself a challenge – now is a great time to learn a new skill**  
 Choose a set time and place to complete school work

### Be Healthy

**Keep to a healthy routine**  
 If you're feeling sluggish and tired you probably need to move!

### Stay Connected

It's really important to stay connected with friends, social groups and family - online, phone or post  
 Check out *Thinkuknow* or *Own It*

### Be In the Moment

**Calm your body and mind - it's important to take a break from our thoughts even only for a few minutes**  
 The more you practice the more it will help when you most need it

**Please contact your GP if you are concerned about your own mental health or someone within your family**

Also visit [www.epicfriends.co.uk](http://www.epicfriends.co.uk)