

Friends



TIPS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

What role should friends play in your life?

Sometimes it can be hard to know how to balance our friendships with the time we spend with a partner, or with our family members.

We might worry whether these different relationships are in competition with one another and whether this will cause trouble, heartache or conflict.

Although making time for all those relationships and working towards a healthy balance can sometimes be difficult, it's definitely worth it in the end.

Learning to communicate in a kind and honest way, and manage the different relationships in your life will help you learn more about yourself, your relationship style and what you value in your relationships.

What do the experts say?

True friends do not evaluate us according to worldly criteria, it is the core self they are interested in: like ideal parents their love for us remains unaffected by our appearance or position in the social hierarchy.

Really? It's a nice idea, but let's face it, discovering friendship groups can be easy or it can be tough. Not all friends remain friends for life.

Finding your place, being accepted and feeling like you belong is a real challenge sometimes.

What happens when you like someone in another social group? Rules apply, there's pressure to conform, or maybe pressure to break the rules. It can be pretty intense. Maybe you don't want to get stuck in just one group?

Whether your best friends or mates are skaters or musos, footy or basketball players, gamers, artists, drama kids or a mixture of all of the above, you, like everyone else, are on a journey through life.

Life can be both risky and comfortable and may bring up questions like:

- who am I?
- where am I going?
- who is coming with me?

If you don't have all the answers right now, that's completely okay!

What is a 'good friend'?

A 'good friend' might look different to different people or at different times in your life.

Friendships can involve:

- doing new and fun stuff together
- laughing and sometimes crying together
- exploring things that you like together
- sharing stories about your adventures, successes and disasters
- being bored and excited together
- being embarrassed
- being sensible and sometimes being stupid
- making time and space for work and play
- taking turns to lead and follow
- spending time apart from each other when you need to.

Sometimes it's important to make a big fuss and do something monumental with your friends, while at other times it's good to take it easy and not make a big deal out of things.

Whoever you're friends with, and whatever your friendship involves, it's important that your friends make you feel safe and happy, and that you can trust them.

Sometimes friends fight, and that's okay, but most of the time you should feel good about yourself when you're with your friends.

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Useful resources

- **ReachOut Australia:** au.reachout.com/relationships/friendships
- **headspace:** headspace.org.au/young-people/life-issues

Need more help?

Remember that you don't have to deal with things on your own.

If any of the information we've talked about here has concerned you, or you'd like to chat to someone about what's going on for you, help is available.

You can start by talking to a trusted adult such as a parent, carer, family member, teacher or school counsellor and telling them how you're feeling.

If you feel unsafe at any time, call 000 (triple zero). For 24/7 support, call Lifeline on 13 11 14.

To make an appointment to chat to one of our counsellors, visit www.rav.org.au/counselling

To find other organisations that can help, visit www.rav.org.au/resources/youth-services

About us

Relationships Australia Victoria has over 70 years' experience providing family and relationship support services across Melbourne and Victoria.

We are committed to providing safe, inclusive and accessible services for all people.



We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waterways of Australia and we support Aboriginal people's right to self-determination and culturally safe services.

We recognise the lifelong impacts of childhood trauma.

We recognise those who had children taken away from them.