

offer a Helping Hand

We all run into problems that seem too hard to handle. These problems can cause us to feel sad, angry, scared, hopeless, and worthless. If you have friends with any of these emotions, support them and let them know there are caring people who can help.

2

Reach out for help:

Encourage your friend to talk with a trusted adult like a school counselor, family member, family friend, teacher, clergy member, or health care provider. Adults may have experience dealing with the problem.

- ◆ Make a list of people your friend can go to for help.
- ◆ Offer to go for help with your friend.
- ◆ If there are no adults who can help, encourage your friend to call a talkline/hotline.

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Listen: Listen to how your friend feels without interrupting or judging him/her.

3

Find solutions: Help your friend come up with a list of things or ways to improve the situation. Encourage him/her to start taking action.



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Maintain safety: If your friend does not get help from an adult quickly enough, talk about it with an adult you trust. Contact an adult right away if your friend is being harmed or talks about death, suicide, or hurting other people. It is very important that your friend is safe and that other trusted people are assisting him/her. It is better for a group of people to help your friend.

5

Continue to Give Support: Keep in touch with your friend to see how he/she is doing. Include your friend in activities. Let your friend know it's OK to talk to you about her/his feelings or concerns.

REMEMBER:

- ★ You **CAN** support your friends, cheer them on, and encourage them to seek help from others.
- ★ You **CAN NOT** solve all of your friend's problems. Each person must take responsibility for themselves and their own actions.

Resources:

- ◆ Helping Others and Getting Help. National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center: www.safeyouth.org/scripts/teens/helping.asp
- ◆ Dealing with Problems. TeensHealth: www.kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind

Do you have any comments or questions about this handout? Please contact Adolescent Health Working Group by emailing feedback@ahwg.net or calling (415) 554-8429. Thank you.