

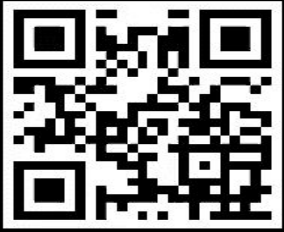
**Helping children to  
navigate friendships and keep  
them in the healthy zone**

**Tuesday 14th November 2023**

# The aims of this presentation

- What's needed for a healthy friendship?
- The skills and language needed to solve friendship problems.
- How to respond to unkind behaviours within a friendship group.
- How to help children resolve friendship problems - with support
- Knowing when to step in, and when to step back.

[HTTPS://URSTRONG.COM/PARENTS/](https://urstrong.com/parents/)



## Questions from the sign-up sheet

1. What to do when your child won't tell you what's wrong?
2. What should my child say to a friend who threatens to unfriend them if they disagree or say no to their demands/requests?
3. What to do when my child is being mistreated by a close friend? They still want to stay 'best friends' with them.
4. What to do when my child's friends have made a plan and left my child out? They find out about it from someone else.

## Questions from the sign-up sheet - for us

1. What to do when my friend won't tell me what's wrong?
2. What should I say to a friend who pushes me to agree with their demands/requests?
3. What should I do when my friend doesn't treat me with respect and kindness, but still wants to stay friends with me.
4. How should I respond when I learn that my friends made a plan and didn't include me - I only found out about it when they posted the pictures.

**I am a conflict avoidance person.**

**I don't really know how to resolve conflict in a healthy way.**

**This could make it hard for me to help my child when they are in the same situation.**

# There is no magic friendship wand.

Learning to navigate friendships is difficult.  
Don't expect children to be automatically good at it.

Have you had honest conversations with  
friends about tensions or problems in your relationship?

Have you ever ghosted a friend – or been ghosted?  
Have you stopped seeing a friend in order to avoid a confrontation?  
Do you tolerate a friendship for other reasons?  
Do you evaluate whether your own friendships are good for you?



# Protection versus resilience

## To encourage **resilience**

- Help to solve the problem with them, not for them.
- Independence
- Autonomy
- Advocating for self
- Recovering from an upset
- Social conflict is normal!







# Key facts about friendships

***No friendship is perfect.***

In real life, every friendship has its ups and downs. Some conflict is normal, and often healthy.

***Every friendship is different.***

Some friends you see every day. Some only once a year. They all have a place in your life.

***Trust and Respect are vital.***

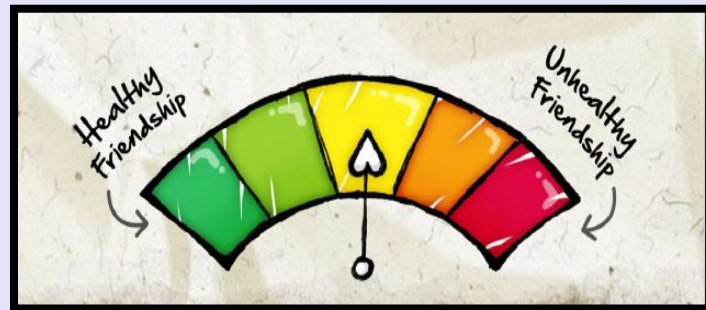
If the friendship is healthy, you will each respect and trust the other person.

***Friendships change and that's life.***

Some friendships just fizzle out.

Sometimes you outgrow a friendship.

**The BFF myth. Friendships don't stay the same.**



# Normal cycle of healthy friendships

Children can learn to solve many friendship problems – but need some guidance as they learn these skills.



# Evaluating friendships with the Friend-o-meter

Think of a friendship.



**Healthy friendships** should make you feel happy and give you a sense of belonging.

If your friends make you feel happy and good about yourself, that relationship is in the **healthy zone**.

We teach children that some friendships are **healthy** and that some are not.

If their friendship makes them feel sad, excluded or unhappy, that's in the **unhealthy zone**.

# Friendship Fires (normal fallouts)

Often, one friend will have **no idea** that they have upset their friend in some way.

Pete has made up a special nickname for Nicky.

At first, she liked it, but now she wants it to stop.

She is cross at Pete for using it.

She hasn't said anything to him.

Pete doesn't know that Nicky is cross about it.

Is Pete thoughtless, mean, a bully?



**Putting out Friendship Fires.**



## Thoughtless – possibly rude – unintentional

When someone says or does something hurtful without meaning to cause an upset:

## Mean-on-purpose

When someone says or does something that they know is hurtful or unkind:

## Bullying behaviours

When someone does something to cause you harm and distress **several times on purpose**:

# Putting out a **friendship fire**

This works well for thoughtless / unintentional behaviours.

Talk face to face. May need some adult support - not always.

- (1) Clearly share what the problem is.
- (2) Explain how it is making you feel, and what you would like to change.
- (3) Be respectful and honest.

**Using her calm, serious voice, Nicky explains that the nickname makes her feel cross.**

**Nicky asks Pete not to use the nickname anymore.**

**Pete is confused/surprised but agrees to stop.**



# What about mean-on-purpose?

Most **mean-on-purpose behaviour** happens within a friendship group.

Children often respond in an emotional way when a friend is mean on purpose.

They then end up being the one getting into trouble.

**Pete now knows that Nicky doesn't like the nickname but sometimes uses it anyway.**

**Nicky gets cross. She shouts at Pete and hits him.**

**They both get sent to see Miss Battram.**

## Supporting children with MOP - Peaceful Problem solving

We want children to advocate/stand up for themselves when faced with mean on purpose behaviours.

We also want good outcomes for everyone involved.

They need to resolve the problem – but don't yet have the skills to manage this.

Sometimes, they need teacher help with

**Peaceful Problem-solving.**

# Supporting children to stand their ground

We want children to stand up for themselves – but to minimise the drama.

We don't want them to get drawn into an argument or a fight.

**Pete now knows that Nicky doesn't like the nickname, but he teases her anyway.**

**Using her strong voice, Nicky uses her QUICK NINJA COMEBACK.**

**“I've already asked you to stop calling me that. Stop it. ”**

**She then WALKS AWAY.**

**If she needs more help, she should let her teacher know.**

# Quick comebacks

Stop. I don't like it.

I've already asked you not to say that.

That's not kind.

I've asked you to stop – so please stop.

It's not ok to talk to me like that.

That's not being a good friend.

**THEN WALK AWAY – POINT MADE**



# Healthy or unhealthy zone?

In a **healthy friendship**, Pete will respect Nicky's request and stop using the nickname.

If he continues using the nickname, this friendship is no longer in the healthy zone. He is being mean on purpose. It may even be bullying behaviour if he does it several times, clearly with intent to cause hurt and upset.

Nicky needs help to put a stop to Pete's behaviour.

How will you support your child?



# Managing those first responses

**Empathy? Pah! I'll ....**

- **solve the problem myself**
- **share on the line group**
- **demand swift action**
- **name and shame**
- **track down the child at school**
- **phone those parents and give them a piece of my mind.**



# Daily dig for pain

- Did you see that boy today?
- Did he say anything to you?
- What did he say?
- Did the teacher hear anything?
- Did she see anything?
- Did she do anything about it?
- I'm going to call her right now.



# Support your child – agree the size of the problem

Be curious, respectful and calm

*'Tell me more.'*

**Actively listen** until your child says something that ends with a question mark.

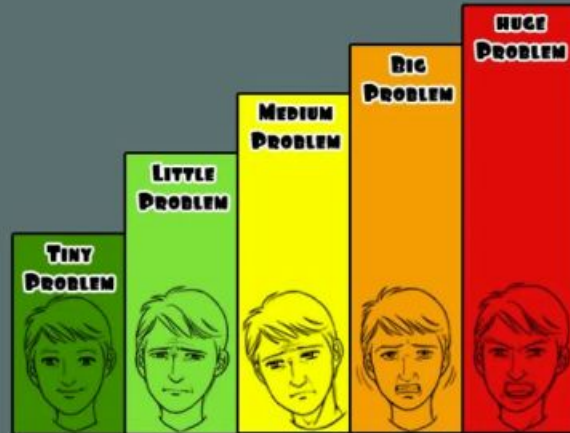
Then you can ask or prompt.

- Is this something that you can solve yourself?
- Would you like me to help you?
- How big is this problem?
- **Should we share this with your teacher?**

Size of My Problem	Size of My Reaction
<b>Big:</b> Adults need to solve	<b>WHAT I did</b> EmoTion Words
10 _____	10 _____
9 _____	9 _____
8 _____	8 _____
<b>Medium:</b> Someone needs to help me (often adults)	
7 _____	7 _____
6 _____	6 _____
5 _____	5 _____
<b>Small:</b> I can solve myself	
4 _____	4 _____
3 _____	3 _____
2 _____	2 _____
1 _____	1 _____



## Size of the problem



Size of the problem is a tool used to figure out how big a problem is and how big your reaction should be.



## Thoughtless – possibly rude – unintentional

When someone says or does something hurtful without meaning to cause an upset:

## Mean-on-purpose

When someone says or does something that they know is hurtful or unkind:

## Bullying behaviours

When someone does something to cause you harm and distress **several times on purpose**:

# Here to help.

If you need our support, first contact the class teacher.

Leaders of Learning and Welfare are also here to support.

**Sophie Riley FS**

**Patrick O'Connor Y1**

**David Walton Y2**

**Diana Jones Y3**

**Sarah Weaver Y4**

**Miranda Cawley Y5**

**Sarah Dibley Y6**