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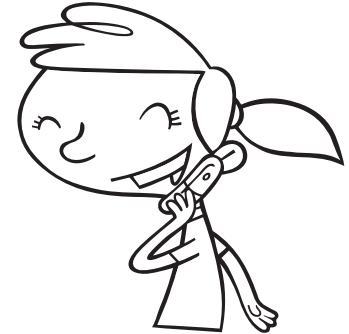
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Giving Advice – A Social Skill

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Giving advice is an important social skill for students. Being able to give (and take) advice helps them to develop and maintain friendships. Having discussions about problems others are facing and ways to cope with those issues also helps students to learn more about the world in which we live. To teach students about giving advice, provide them with a simple definition/explanation—for example, *“Sometimes we have difficult choices to make or we find ourselves in tough situations and don’t know how to handle them. If a friend is in this position, he/she may ask you for advice. Your advice is your opinion about how your friend should deal with the situation.”* Then have students practice helpful strategies for giving advice to others. Use the “tips” below for suggestions!



Listen to the problem.

Instruct students to *listen for details* such as: who is having the problem; what the problem is; when the problem happens; where the problem occurs; why it is a problem; how it became a problem. Inform students that once they have gone through these problem-solving steps to learn about an issue, they will be better informed and able to give appropriate advice.

Determine if the other person is looking for advice.

Have a discussion about the time and place for advice. Talk about how sometimes people don’t want advice—they just want to talk about a problem to get it off their chests. Students can practice self-talk (statements we say or think to ourselves); such as, *“I will listen to find out if my friend wants my advice or if he/she just needs to talk.”*

Put yourself in the other person’s shoes.

Talk about role reversal with your students to help them understand the problem from the other person’s perspective. You can advise students to put themselves “in the other person’s shoes.” They can practice the self-talk statement, *“I will think about what I would do if I were in the same situation”* to help with this.

Take your time.

Ensure that students understand the importance of *thinking before speaking* when giving advice. Talk about the fact that the other person is looking for *help*, and

that it is best to think about what advice to give instead of blurting out the first thought that comes into your head. Tell them that this approach can assist them in providing advice that is appropriate and helpful.

Think about the consequences of your advice.

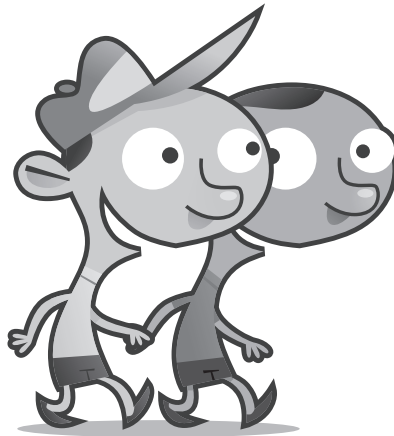
Make sure that students understand the consequences of their advice. Tell them that they need to think about the *consequences of the action* they are suggesting. They can practice saying (aloud or silently), *"I will think about whether my advice will help the situation or if it will make things worse"* before giving any advice.

Stick to the point.

Remind students that sticking to the point helps them to focus on their friend's situation and a possible solution. *"I will not ramble, go off topic, or start talking about my own problems when giving advice"* is a good self-talk statement to help with this.

Know that the other person may not take your advice.

Tell students to keep in mind that their advice is just their *opinion* of what the other person should do. They need to understand that after they give their advice their friend will decide to do what is best for him/her in the situation.



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