

Targeted session: Dealing with change in a relationship

Session overview

Building on the core session of "Dealing with Change" this session looks specifically about when relationships change. When someone doesn't support you in a way you thought they would or behaves differently towards you. Accepting and knowing that relationships can change and sometimes people change too.

 **Choose this session if the young person is struggling with how their friends have been with them following the Technology-Assisted Child Sexual Abuse (TACSA) event.**

Information for practitioner

Select a "*Looking after yourself*" exercise in advance for the close of the session.


Session

Check in with the young person as to how they are since your last session together. Are there any thoughts or feelings that you may need to reflect on and address before you begin this session?

Inform the young person what we are going to do in this session, sharing the overview.



Begin by talking to the young person about the friends they had in primary school or even before. Have their friends changed over the years. It may be that their first friends came about because their parents were friends; then friends often come from your class at school or even who you sat next to on your first day. And you may meet other friends from different hobbies that you do. Acknowledge from this that friendships naturally change over the years and this is normal.

 During the following discussions the practitioner is to add their thoughts from their own experiences where appropriate.

Discuss some of the reasons why a friendship changes.

Elicit some of the following examples (and any others that come up):

- You grow apart
- You or they move away
- Something happens to change the dynamic (for example moving to secondary school or another person joining the group)
- Something happens that changes the way you see someone or how they see you
- You or they start dating
- You disagree about things that are important to you both.

Sometimes people don't support you when you thought they would and this session is specifically about when this happens.

Can you think of examples, both in person and with technology, when someone has responded to something in an unexpected way.

This might include:

- Not laughing at a joke you told
- Being upset about something you didn't realise would upset them
- Choosing a different friend over you to do an activity
- Not inviting you somewhere when previously they would
- Avoiding or ghosting you
- Not wanting to talk about something you want to talk about
- Talking behind your back
- Saying mean things about you in a group chat
- Not responding to messages even though they have read it
- Sharing pictures they have of you that they know you don't like
- Creating jokes that you aren't part of



Practitioner to reflect that all of these things can be very hurtful and can make us feel as though we have done something wrong.

What are some of the things we can do when this has happened?

The below examples could be used if needed. Be aware that these different approaches won't all work in the same way or be appropriate for every situation. This is about looking at different things you can do at different times.

- Talk to the person and tell them how they made you feel
- Apologise if you realise you have upset them (for example an insensitive joke)
- Call them out for being mean
- Ignore them
- Leave or mute the chat group
- Block them
- Do some grounding techniques, such as 54321 (see Looking after yourself exercises) to help when upsetting things happen.
- Seek support from a trusted adult or friend
- Check in with your own values – being true to yourself and knowing that you are not stooping to their level can help you manage difficult situations.
- Find something else to do to keep yourself busy – join a lunchtime club, read a book, write in a journal, remove yourself from their presence

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- Spend time with other people who make you feel happy and who don't treat you in a way that causes you upset or hurt
- Find an activity or club where you can meet people with similar likes and values to yours



Reflection on this session

You can't change or control other people and how they behave, you can only choose your response. Everybody deserves to be treated with care and respect. Be honest and true to yourself. It can feel very lonely when people have let you down. Look at what the young person has in place to reduce this and to cope with how they are feeling, acknowledging that this isn't always something that is easy to do but something that will help them in their recovery.



Closing activity

Looking after yourself exercise to close