

# TO HELP A FRIEND WHO IS IN NEED



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When a friend feels sad, desperate, hopeless, and ambivalent, you may feel inadequate and incapable of helping him/her. In some cases, you may not know how to talk to your friend who struggles with problems.

### How do I know if my friend has a problem?

- Stay away from friends and social activities.
- Reluctance and indifference towards the school.
- Sudden changes in behavior, physical appearance, and emotional mood.
- Symptoms of depression: crying, feeling of despair, sleep and eating problems, lack of energy, low self-confidence, feeling guilty.
- Not paying attention to personal hygiene.
- Alcohol and substance use disorder.
- Talking, joking, writing about suicide and death.

- His/Her mind is too busy with death and dying.
- Engaging in dangerous behaviors.
- (If any) Expressing previous suicide attempts.

\*Just having one of these symptoms does not mean that there is a severe problem. However, if more than one of these symptoms came up suddenly and excessively, you can suspect that there is a critical problem. You can contact the Koç University Counseling Service (KURES) to be sure of the seriousness of the problem.

### When helping a friend who has the mentioned symptoms:

- Take these symptoms seriously.
- Indicate that you want to talk to him/her.
- State your concern for your friend and count the symptoms causing it.

- Be a good listener. Your friend will get help as he/she speaks rather than listening to what you say.
- Indicate that you respect him/her as an individual, even if you disagree with your friend`s behavior or thought.
- Avoid reacting astonished, shocked, surprised. or stunned.
- Do not make decisions on behalf of your friend. The solution you find may not be the best one for your friend.
- For social and cultural reasons, your friend may be unwilling to ask for help. State that it is natural to ask for help in such a temporary situation.
- If you think you cannot provide your friend with the support they need, encourage him/her to get advice from someone else he trusted (such as family elders, relatives, psychological counseling service).

- Always be with your friend emotionally. **If you feel worn out, because of your friend's problem, come to the psychological counseling service and talk about these feelings.** Thus, you will protect yourself while helping your friend.
- If you suspect that your friend will commit suicide, ask him/her directly, "*Do you think about harming yourself?*". Asking questions about suicide will show that you value it.
- If there is suicidal ideation, do not promise that this will remain utterly secret among you. Explain that you need to talk to someone to make sure that your friend is safe. Explain that you cannot take that responsibility alone.
- If your friend attempts to commit suicide, do not leave him/her alone. Ask someone to immediately call the **Psychological Counseling Service (KURES), the Dean of Students, or the Health Center.**

### What can I do for my friend who does not agree to get help?

- Sometimes, you may find yourself trying to help someone who does not define his/her problem, avoids producing options, always talks about the same problem, but does not take steps to solve it. In such cases, it is useful to recommend to your friend to seek help from a specialist.
- "We have been talking about the same problem for weeks, but we see that nothing has changed. I know this is a difficult time for you, but I don't know how to help you. I think it would be wise to talk to someone who has been trained on this issue and get your help."
- After making this speech, you can suggest your friend go to the Psychological Counseling Service. If your friend refuses to get help, you can come to the Psychological Counseling Service to share your feelings and get support.

For More Information:  
KURES: Guidance Service  
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