

Teen Friendship Workbook

**Reproducible Self-Assessments,
Exercises & Educational Handouts**

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Using This Book *(For the professional)*

Teenagers choosing healthy friendships is of monumental importance! As children enter middle school and high school, they will be experiencing changes in friends, personal style, social life, movies, music, emotions, etc., in fact in all aspects of their lives. They will also meet new friends who are experiencing these same changes. Teens want to spend more time with friends of their own age without supervision. With peers they can feel independent and connected as they develop and experience identities of their own. They will challenge authority, unable to see the value of advice from parents or other adults.

Peer pressure, positive or negative, directs their choices and decisions. The thoughts and actions of peers usually carry more weight than those from parents or other adults. Teenagers may question their family and/or household's rules and values.

Friends can be a positive force for teens. As people mature, they choose friends who share their tastes and values. Good friends influence each other to keep sound values. They will talk each other out of, rather than into, troublesome situations. Positive role modeling in friends affects social behaviors, understanding and acceptance.

Teenagers' social circle may have different thoughts on what's okay and acceptable. Going along with the crowd may be "cool", even though it may involve disobeying parents, not doing schoolwork, risk-taking, and/or keeping up with their friends' material values.

Teenagers who have friends that engage in problem behavior, delinquency, substance abuse, violence, are much more likely to behave the same way. Negative role modeling in friends will influence and encourage poor judgment, bad habits, risky, and possibly illegal behavior. The *Teen Friendship Workbook* will serve as a guide to assist teens in choosing their friends wisely, thus avoiding potentially risky situations. Being able to say "no" and not be negatively influenced by peers is one of the goals of this book.

Choice of friends can make a huge difference. Healthy friendships are full of joy, fun, caring, empathy and mutual support. Friendships grow with time and require a variety of skills that often need to be developed. The goal of this workbook is to help participants explore the skills they are using in their friendships. It incorporates interesting and eye-opening assessments to encourage participants to explore their own personal friendship behavior, as well as that of their friends.

(Continued)

Using This Book *(For the professional, continued)*

The *Teen Friendship Workbook* contains five separate sections to help teens learn more about themselves and the skills that are fundamental to developing and maintaining healthy friendships. Participating in these exercises will help teens discover and better understand the importance of these skills to live in harmony with a friend or a set of friends.

SECTIONS OF THIS BOOK

Characteristics of Friends Scale

helps teens explore the types of positive and negative qualities their friends possess.

Friendship Skills Scale

helps teens identify the strengths and weakness they possess in interacting with their friends.

Friend Communication Skills Scale

helps teens identify and explore how well they are communicating with their friends and develop better friendship communication skills.

Friendship Personality Scale

helps teens understand their own personality and the personality of their friends to better accept each another for the ways they are different.

Peer Pressure Scale

helps teens identify the ways in which they feel pressured or influenced by their friends to do things they may or may not want to do.

By combining reflective assessment and journaling, participants will be exposed to a powerful method of combining verbalizing and writing to reflect on and solve problems. Participants will become more aware of the strengths and weaknesses of their specific relationship and friendship-building skills.

Preparation for using the assessments and activities in this book is important. The authors suggest that prior to administering any of the assessments in this book, you complete them yourself. (Think back to your teen years.) Working on each assessment yourself will familiarize you with the format of the assessments, the scoring directions, the interpretation guides and the journaling activities. Although the assessments are designed to be self-administered, scored and interpreted, this familiarity will help prepare facilitators to answer questions participants might ask about the assessments.

The Assessments, Journaling Activities and Educational Handouts

The Assessments, Journaling Activities, and Educational Handouts in *The Teen Friendship Workbook* are reproducible and ready to be photocopied for participants' use. Assessments contained in this book focus on self-reported. Accuracy and usefulness of the information provided depends on the truthful information that each participant provides through self-examination. By being honest, participants help themselves to learn about unproductive and ineffective friendship patterns, and to uncover information that might be keeping them from being as happy and/or as successful in friendships as they might be.

Advise the teens using the assessments that they should not spend too much time trying to analyze the content of the questions; their initial response will most likely be true. Regardless of individual scores, encourage participants to write and talk about their findings and their feelings pertaining to what they have discovered about themselves. Exploring teen friendship exercises will be helpful to the teens now and as they mature into adulthood.

Use Codes for Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a term for any action that preserves the privacy of other people. Because the teens completing the activities in this workbook will be asked to answer assessment items and to journal about and explore their relationships with their friends, you will need to discuss confidentiality before you begin using the materials in this workbook. Maintaining confidentiality is important as it shows respect for others and allows the participants to explore their feelings without hurting anyone's feelings or fearing gossip, harm or retribution.

In order to maintain confidentiality, explain to the participants that they need to assign a code name for each person they write about as they complete the various activities in the workbook. For example, a friend named Joey who enjoys going to hockey games might be titled JHG (Joey Hockey Games) for a particular exercise. In order to protect their friends' identities, they may not use people's actual names or initials – just codes.

Thanks to the following whose input in this book has been so valuable!

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Kathy Liptak, Ed.D.

Layout of the Book

This book includes the following reproducibles in all 5 sections:

- **Assessment Instruments** – Self-assessment inventories with scoring directions and interpretation materials. Group facilitators can choose one or more of the activities relevant to their participants.
- **Activity Handouts** – Practical questions and activities that prompt self-reflection and promote self-understanding. These questions and activities foster introspection and promote pro-social behaviors.
- **Reflective Questions for Journaling** – Self-exploration activities and journaling exercises specific to each assessment to enhance self-discovery, learning, and healing.
- **Educational Handouts** – Handouts designed to supplement instruction can be used individually or in groups. They can be distributed and converted into masters for individual copies, transparencies for overheads, scanned for other digital presentations or written down on a board and discussed.

Who should use this program?

This book has been designed as a practical tool for helping professional therapists, counselors, marriage and family therapists, psychologists, teachers, group leaders, etc. Depending on the role of the professional using *The Teen Friendship Workbook* and the specific group's needs, the sections can be used individually, combined, or implemented as part of an integrated curriculum for a more comprehensive approach.

Why use self-assessments?

Self-assessments are important in teaching various life skills. Participants will . . .

- Become aware of the primary motivators that guide behavior.
- Explore and learn to identify potentially harmful situations.
- Explore the effects of messages received in childhood.
- Gain insight that will guide behavioral change.
- Focus thinking on behavioral goals for change.
- Uncover resources that can help to cope with problems and difficulties.
- Identify personal characteristics without judgment.
- Develop full awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses.

Because the assessments are presented in a straightforward and easy-to-use format, individuals can self-administer, score, and interpret each assessment independently.

Introduction for the Participant

You and your friends can influence each other in positive and negative ways; your choice of friends is important. By choosing wisely, you and your friends will benefit from your each other. One of the most important aspects in building your friendships is that you always need to be yourself – and true to yourself. You do not need to change who you are, nor should your friends expect you to change for them.

Before you make new friends, or evaluate your present friends, it helps to know what kind of person you want as your friend. It helps to have friends who like to do the same type of things you do and who share the same values that you do. That doesn't mean you have to be exactly like each other, just that you enjoy some of the same things. Sports, books and music are some examples of activities that might be good to have in common. Values might be the importance of family, honesty, good grades, being safe, etc. Without compromising, and sticking to your decisions by being true to yourself, you're bound to find and have friends who are excited about the same things that excite and interest you.

Your friendships may be changing because you and your friends are changing. Teenage years are a time of physical, emotional, and social growth and change. These changes happen at different times, or at different speeds, for each person. You might not need to end old friendships, but these relationships may need to change. You may find that you don't have as much in common with some friends as you used to. It's important to pay attention to your feelings, and to know what you enjoy doing. If your friends seem to be spending more time in actions and activities that you don't enjoy, you might benefit by finding some new friends who share your interests.

Choosing and being a good friend definitely requires a set of skills you can use throughout your life. The *Teen Friendship Workbook* is designed to help you learn more about yourself, identify the effective and ineffective aspects of your friendships, and find better ways to use newfound skills to develop and maintain healthy friendships that bring out the best in you – that help you to be true to yourself.

IMPORTANT

You will be asked to respond to assessment items and to journal about and explore your relationships with your friends. Everyone has the right to confidentiality, and you need to honor the right to privacy of others. Think about it this way – you would not want someone writing things about you that other people could read about. Your friends feel this way also.

In order to maintain the confidentiality of your friends, assign people code names based on things you know about them. For example, a friend named Sherry who loves to wear purple might be coded as SWP (Sherry Wears Purple). Do not use people's actual names when you are listing your friends.

(Continued)

(Introduction for the Participant continued)

Specific Signs of a Healthy Friendship

- Adaptability
- Pride in each other
- Trust in each other
- Positive peer pressure
- Respect for each other
- Listening to each other
- Shared decision making
- Support in times of need
- Reliability and dependability
- Support of each other's goals
- Caring treatment of each other
- Fun without the need of substances
- Sense of feeling safe with each other
- Acceptance of responsibility for actions
- Encouragement of each other's interests
- Communication is open, honest and direct
- Ease in talking to each other about feelings
- Ability to see from each other's perspective
- Acknowledgement of the need for alone time
- Arguments solved without hurting each other
- Important matters discussed openly and freely
- Laughter and enjoyment of time with each other
- Willingness to listen to and respect the rights of each other
- Apologies sincerely offered when you know you were wrong
- Awareness about how one is treated and how each treats the other
- Encouragement of each other's daily problem-solving and decision-making

Teen Friendship Workbook

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My Friends

Your friends probably fall into several categories. You probably have people who are: acquaintances (you know them to say hello, but you do not hang out with them socially), friends (people you know and may hang out with, but you may not share personal secrets), and true friends. When responding to the questions, use your friends' codes.

Who are your acquaintances?

Who are your friends?

Who are your true friends?

(Continued on the next page)

My Friends *(Continued)*

What are the current trends among your peers (dress, food, things to do, etc.)?

Which of these trends do you follow?

List the codes of your friends. Where do you like to go with each one?

List the codes of your friends. What you like to do with each one?

(Continued on the next page)



My Friends *(Continued)*

What do you **not** like to do that your friends do like to do?

What do you like to do that your friends do **not** like to do?

How would you define a *True Friendship*?

List the codes of the friends that you consider to be *True Friends*.

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____