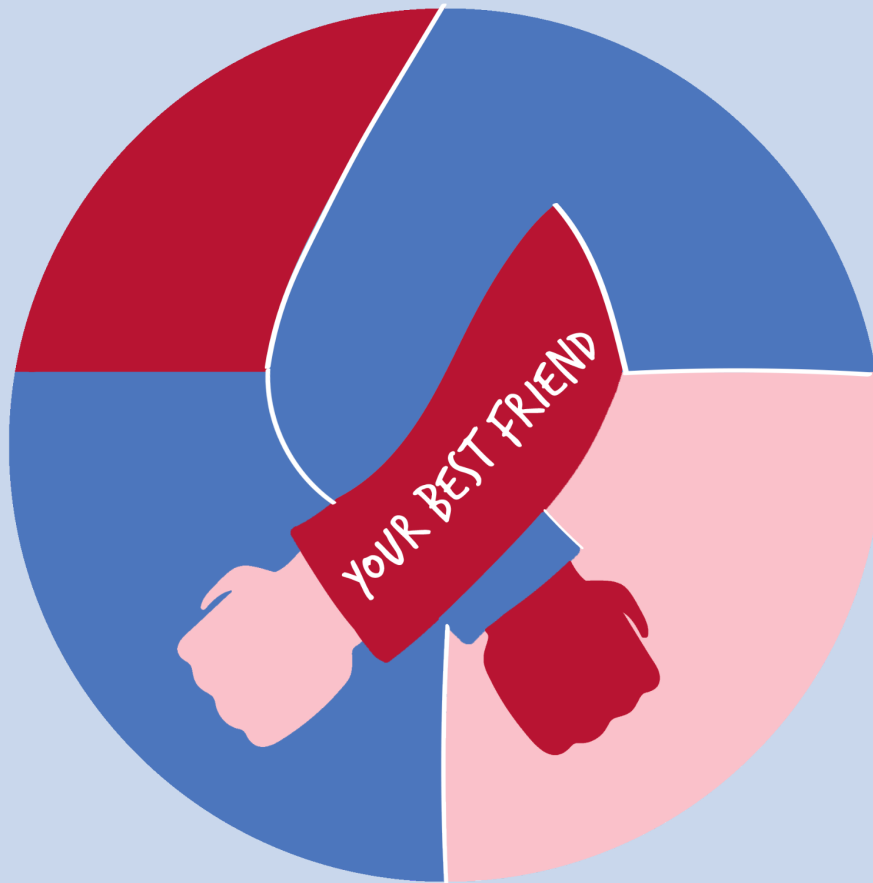


# Friends Can Tell

## Peer Supporter Facilitation Pack

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## **About Your Best Friend**

The Your Best Friend project aims to empower young women, girls and non-binary young people with knowledge and confidence to keep themselves and their friends safe.

Girls, young women and non-binary young people seek help from each other and online, not traditional services. The project aims to place what they need where they already are.

We co-created resources and social media content with young people and subject experts, which you will see through these sessions. These have reached millions of young people on social media, raising awareness of red and green flags in relationships.

As we were working together on this project, young people told us that as well as raising awareness they wanted spaces to talk to and learn from each other. We hope these sessions plans help you create those spaces.

## **How to use this facilitation pack**

We hope that this will help people who don't have previous experience of leading groups or aren't part of a formal organisation to still run peer support spaces.

You should use it alongside the peer support session plans. Those lay out the content and these give some tips on how to deliver sessions to a group.

There are also tips at the end for how to evidence your achievements and the achievements of other people who have contributed to the group.

## Getting Started

### **Support Contact**

When you're learning a new skill it's always good to have someone to check in with. Which adult or adults could you go to if you were in a challenging situation, wanted to talk through something that had happened in the group or wanted to tell about how proud you were about something that went well?

Name:.....

Contact Details:.....

What you'll both do if there's an emergency, like someone in the group telling you they're unsafe:

.....  
.....  
.....

Regular meetings for mentoring?

- Yes
- No

If so, when? .....

### **Group Agreement**

A group agreement is a list of things everyone in the group agrees to do to make the sessions run well. Some things that are commonly in a group agreement are:

- Be open and accepting of other people's opinions.
- Listen to people rather than talking over others.
- Leave space for everyone to speak - try to notice if you are talking a lot!
- Keep anything said in the sessions private, unless someone says they or someone else is in danger. Then the support contact for the group will be told, in order to keep everyone safe.
- Keep personal stories that others might find upsetting for different space.

What others might you want to add?.....

.....

How will you ask other people to agree to it? .....

.....

How will you make sure everyone can make changes so everyone has a say in what makes the space comfortable?

.....

.....

### **Building a Group**

To start a group, you need to think about who will be in it. We designed this pack with young women, girls and non-binary people in mind so if you are going to open it out to people of all genders, think about how that might feel for everyone. We did this because domestic abuse affects women and girls disproportionately. You can find more statistics about this on the Your Best Friend website [here](#). There are some different resources we developed specifically for working with boys [here](#). Other things to think about when building a group are:

- How many people will be in your group? Three is normally the smallest number you can have to have a group discussion and fifteen is normally the absolute maximum - more than that and people don't all get a chance to speak or connect.
- Do you want everyone to have to come to all the sessions?
- Will people be able to join later than the first or second session if they want?
- Do you want it to only be people you know, like people in your football team or your form class, or open to everyone?
- If you want boys to be able to come, how can you make sure everyone feels welcome and able to talk?
- How will you let everyone know it is happening and they can come?
- Do you want to offer incentives, e.g. free food to encourage people to come?
- How will you make sure not more than fifteen people come to one group?

### **Finding a Place to Meet**

You might choose to meet in person or online. Either way you need to think of what place/platform you will use. Ask yourself these questions to think about what you need.

- How many people does it need to fit?

- What time does it need to be open?
- How much can it cost (or does it need to be free)?
- How private does it have to be?
- What times does it have to be open?
- What safety considerations do you need to think of?
- Can everyone get into it, for example if someone who is coming uses a wheelchair?

What sort of places can you think of that fit this? Who could you ask if you could use this space?

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Some places that might be options are Zoom (free for 40 mins) or Google Hangouts for online places, but you will have to make sure that the link is private and doesn't get shared with people outside the group - for example, that it doesn't get put on a public social media page.

You could meet in person in an empty classroom after school or see if there is space at a community centre. Sometimes cafes will let you use them after they have closed but you have to get permission. The space you need will be different depending on what you are doing. If you are running this group with three other friends, you might all be able to fit in your bedroom and run it there. If you are doing it with a group of people you don't know very well, it would be a good idea for it to be in a school with a teacher nearby (or in the room) in case you need help.

### **Planning for Challenges**

What might be difficult about running this group?

Some things we thought of are below. Think about how you might approach them. Add more challenges you can think of below and plan for them too.

#### No one speaking

Three things I can do if this happens are...

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

People speaking over each other

Three things I can do if this happens are...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Someone taking up all the conversation or being disruptive

Two things I can do if this happens are...

- 1.
- 2.

Someone getting upset

Two things I can do if this happens are...

- 1.
- 2.

Getting locked out of the building by accident

Two things I can do if this happens are...

- 1.
- 2.

Someone saying they're in danger

If you are talking about toxic relationships, the most likely danger you will hear about is danger in a relationship like them saying their partner has shown lots of the red flags you've been talking about or makes them feel scared. However, if people trust you from being in the group with you, they might also confide in you about other types of danger or worries they have in their life. If this happens, try and stay calm.

If they are in danger of getting hurt right that second, you should call the police on 999.

If there is time to talk to them, you should tell the person you are going to have to tell the support contact for this meeting - the person whose name and number you put right at the top of this booklet. It can help to make it clear that this isn't because you're trying to get people into their business, but because you care about them and think their safety is important and want to make sure they get all the support they need. If it's possible, you should speak to the support person together so the person in danger can explain the situation in their own words and stay informed about what is happening.

Is there anything else that feels important for you to think about to prepare for if someone is in danger?

## **Signposting**

Sometimes someone might not be in danger of harm but might need help beyond what the group can offer. This might be if they have some feelings they're finding distressing or if they need practical help. Here are some places you can signpost them to so they can get the help they need.

You might feel like you want to be the one to help them out of kindness and care. Try to resist that as these organisations are experts and will be really good at helping them quickly and to a high standard!

### **Galop**

Support for LGBT+ people experiencing domestic abuse  
0800 999 5428/ [help@galop.org.uk](mailto:help@galop.org.uk)

### **The Mix**

Essential support for under 25s, including a phone line, online 121 chat and forums  
0808 808 4994/ [themix.org.uk](http://themix.org.uk)

### **Muslim Youth Helpline**

Free and confidential faith and culturally sensitive support services for young people  
0808 808 2008

### **Refuge**

The national 24 hour domestic abuse helpline  
0808 2000 247

### **Childline**

Call, chat or email about any problem big or small  
0800 1111

## **Some Tips From Young People Who Have Already Run The Sessions**

We did a trial run of the session plans and asked the young people who took part: What advice would you give to someone else about to run the sessions? This is what they said...

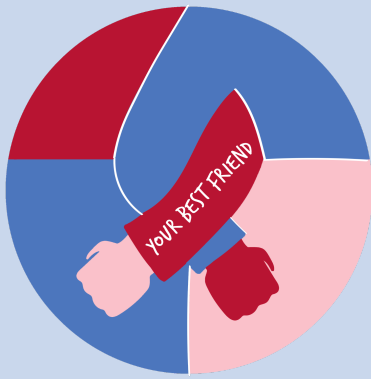
- Don't always go along with your own thoughts, listen to other people's opinions as well
- Be aware not to laugh and be professional
- Make it interactive, e.g. games and drawing so people are engaged
- You should run it, even if you have to be brave to do it
- Be comfortable with speaking
- Listen carefully and think about what is actually being said

- Be careful of what other people's feelings can be because you might hurt them
- Include different types of abuse in your discussions like emotional or financial
- Describe things in detail and watch videos
- Build strong relationships with the group
- Think about making changes to language to make everyone comfortable, e.g. a group of young Muslim women didn't feel comfortable talking about nudes but did feel OK talking about inappropriate pictures

As a team, we've run a few workshops in our time and think this advice is great. We'd also say:

- Even if it's just scribbled on an old bus ticket, have a session plan so you know what time you have for each activity.
- Some groups will respond really well to a professional and serious approach and sometimes it's totally fine to be a bit more informal and casual. Laughing at someone isn't right but laughing together can help you feel closer as a group and help people relax around a difficult topic.
- Make sure descriptions are detailed enough that people understand but don't add graphic descriptions or pictures of violence in case people find that upsetting.
- Silence in a group can be awkward but sometimes it is just because people need time to process. If people are thinking quietly, it's OK to have a bit of silent time for that and you don't need to fill the silence.
- If someone is doing something you feel is annoying and disruptive, have a think about why that is and speak to them about it kindly one-to-one rather than assuming they are trying to be a pain.
- Reflect after every session to think about everything you're learning - working with groups is an art not a science and you will both make mistakes and find your own way to do it well!





## Wrapping Up

Congratulations!

You've successfully reached the end of these sessions! It's an amazing achievement to have seen this through and created a space for a group to talk about issues that are important to them. Thank you.

After 6 weeks sharing your thoughts, you might all want to do something to celebrate the friendships you've built and the things you've learnt together.

You might feel like you don't want to stop meeting! Perhaps you all start something new together, inspired by the conversations you've had. Maybe this is a less formal movie group or a book club to keep talking, maybe it is to keep meeting socially as friends, maybe it's about taking forward a campaign based on an issue you all care about. Even if you're carrying on, it might be nice to do something to celebrate this phase of your work together.

- How will you make the decision to end the meetings or carry on together?
- Do you want to do something to celebrate the end of working together as a group?
- If you do, what sort of celebration would be right for the group?
- If it is something that involves money, how can you make sure no one feels left out?
- How will you celebrate yourself, and give yourself time to be proud of what you've done?

## Giving yourself credit

What you've done is the sort of thing people get paid for, so make sure you make a noise about your new skills.

To help you, below is a letter to certify that you all took part in the sessions. Get the adult who supported you to run these sessions to sign it, to verify you did them.

There is also a job description to help you add these skills to your CV or LinkedIn.

To whom it may concern,

The holder of this letter has successfully taken part in the Your Best Friend peer support group. This has involved holding a supportive, non-judgemental space for other young people to share their thoughts around healthy relationships and how to support friends who might be in unhealthy relationships. This covered the following themes:

- The Power Gap - looking at power in relationships
- Blinded By The Butterflies - reflecting on romance in society
- Treading a Fine Line - learning how to gently challenge people with other opinions
- The Time to Step In - practicing decision making in complex situations
- Feeling Helpless - learning self-care skills
- It's Not Normal - identifying areas to make social change for other young people

In this role, this person:

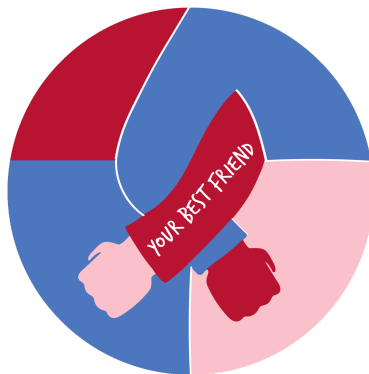
- established a group agreement to make the space safe and inclusive for everyone
- facilitated discussions on sensitive topics
- encouraged conversations where everyone could be heard
- followed up any safety concerns with a trusted adult
- engaged critically with social issues

This was a role undertaken to support peers and push for social change, showing a high level of self-motivation, responsibility and dedication to helping others.

Yours faithfully,

.....

(Point of Support for this Peer Support Group)



Job Description

Your Best Friend Peer Support Leader

In this role I facilitated a group discussing healthy relationships. This involved contracting with a group agreement to ensure the space was safe and inclusive for everyone. I also prepared session outlines and prompted discussion, to help empower and inform my peers.