



## Teaching Youth: Self-Care While Helping a Friend

After viewing the **Lifeguard Workshop video** and completing the **Empathy Building Activities**, your students may still have questions about how to support their friends.

### **Remind them:**

1. Even if you do your best to support a friend, you can't control the choices they make. You are never alone or responsible for anyone who chooses to take their own life.
2. Your feelings are important too. These topics can be difficult and scary to talk about. It is a great idea for you to reach out for support from a trusted adult or counselor or **The Trevor Project** while helping a friend.
3. Practicing self-care is important for everyone. You may have a lot on your plate from school work to relationships. Make sure to check in with your own physical, emotional, and mental health on a regular basis. It's okay to let the people you care about know when you are feeling overwhelmed and need support or a break.
4. You don't have to help someone all by yourself. Remember, you are empowering a friend to connect to resources and a trusted adult. If you are worried for your friend's life, it is okay to call 911.

### **Continue the Discussion:**

Read the following scenarios to your class.

#### ***Scenario 1***

*Alex and Riley are best friends. Last year, Riley helped Alex go through a difficult time with balancing classwork and sports. Riley listened and accepted Alex's feelings of being overwhelmed and worried about failing.*

*Now, Riley is going through a difficult break-up. Riley is heartbroken and wants to know what went wrong. Alex told Riley to text anytime day or night. Riley has started texting Alex at two in the morning to talk several times a week. Alex is tired in class and at practice. Alex even failed a quiz. Some mornings, Alex even feels upset when Riley texts.*

*Alex wants to be a good friend to Riley, but regrets saying “you can text me whenever.” Alex feels guilty about not being available 24/7 because Riley has been so supportive in the past.*

**Questions:**

- What can Alex do?
- How might Riley respond to those actions?
- Do you know what a boundary is? Do you have friends who have told you about their boundaries?

**Scenario 2**

*Shawn and Dylan work on the school newspaper together. Shawn wants to talk to Dylan about something very important at lunch. Shawn seems nervous and Dylan suggest they meet up in a quiet place where they won't be overheard. Dylan also makes sure to mention that they can talk about anything.*

*At lunch, Shawn comes out to Dylan as being asexual. Shawn is worried about being misunderstood and treated differently if people knew. Dylan is not sure what asexuality means and is afraid of saying the wrong thing. So, Dylan thanks Shawn for trusting their friendship. Dylan also talks about wanting to learn more about the asexual spectrum and identity.*

*Shawn sends Dylan some links to videos and websites about asexuality and being an ally. Dylan watches those a few of those videos that day and calls Shawn that evening. Dylan and Shawn decide together to join their school's Gay Straight Alliance.*

*Shawn is a great artist so Dylan suggests that they create a comic together for their GSA about asexual identity. Some days Shawn still feels upset and stressed out about other people's comments and misguided assumptions. Dylan makes time to listen to Shawn's feelings. Shawn also asks about how Dylan is doing and listens to Dylan's feelings. Some days, they talk about the paper, school work, and their favorite graphic novels.*

**Questions:**

- What did Dylan do well? How do you think that made Shawn feel?
- Sometimes learning more about what a friend is going through can help expand our horizons and help us grow as a person. How does feeling uncomfortable because you are in a new situation different from feeling uncomfortable because you don't have time for your physical, mental, or emotional health?
- What resources are available at our school to help us support ourselves and our friends?

**Journal Questions:**

Brainstorm some boundaries that might work well for you. For example, maybe you let your friends know that you turn your phone off at 10PM and check your messages at 6AM the next morning but if they need help before then they can call **The Trevor Project** or check out other

resources you've found. They can also explore [The Trevor Support Center](#) for lots of links on everything from healthy relationships to bullying to self-harm.

Write about how you might be able to let the people in your life know about your boundaries and why they are important to your wellbeing.