Ask the Expert

I Can’t Make Friends By Myself: How To Improve Social Interaction for Teens with ADHD
A partnership between CHADD and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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Resources, Information & Support

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Why Will No One Play With Me?

The Play Better Plan
To Help Children of All Ages Make Friends and Thrive

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With Teresa Barker

I Can’t Make Friends by Myself: How to Improve Social Interaction for Teenagers With ADHD

Presented by Caroline Maguire, PCC, M.ED
Anything that....

- Keeps your child from engaging with a group, making friends and keeping them, having a good relationship with peers, and navigating social situations as they arise is a social problem
- Ability to scan a situation and adapt
- “Adopt the social skills needed to manage conflict, coordinate their work, and otherwise work in a more cooperative and integrated fashion with others.” Zingoni, p. 1, 2000
- Consider the workplace and their future
Friendship is:

- The basis of all friendship is to have close bonds, friendship privileges, compatibility, emotional connection, persistent contact, shared activities, trust and loyalty

- “Someone who has a relationship unprompted by anything other than the rewards that the relationship provides” (Wells, 2004, p.5)

- Traditional friendship versus online friendship - online no trust was expected (Wells, 2004)

- 1978 study Reisman and Shorr found ages 13-14 had 7 friendships
• Peer group is everything so if you do not have one it hurts
• Thin social network
• Social dynamics
• I don’t know how so I resist
• Choosing friends you don’t like
• Sticking with friends who don’t treat them well
• Friends by proximity
• Friends and common interest—but activities are canceled
• Pods
• Lunch and afterschool
• Kids doing things that are unsafe
To reach out to friends with a very thin network is not a big deal to you but it's an epic ask for them.

Consider the steps involved:

- Anxiety
  - It's better to stay where I am than risk losing everything.
  - Being vulnerable is hard.
  - Every teenager feels like they are the “only one”.

IT MAY NOT FEEL LIKE AN EPIC ASK BUT IT IS
Look at *What Is In It For Me*

Tie daily actions to larger goals

What do you want?

Create a daily WIFM activity or reminder

Ability to graduate from some program or support
THE PROCESS TO BECOME FRIENDS

Meet a potential friend
Think how they are similar but different than other peers
Engage in small talk
Try to learn more about them
Share information about yourself
Try to share common experiences and situations with potential friends
See potential friends more and bridge from your shared experience to one on one activities

Where Do Things Go Wrong?
You must take action steps to reach out and become closer to someone.

Often teenagers struggle to connect, schedule, and see friends.

Join in

A specific job or role may help make meeting people easier.

Create shared experience and time to be in proximity with potential friends.
FORMULA FOR MOVING FROM SMALL TALK TO CONVERSATION

Tip—During Small Talk:
- Ask questions
- Try to learn about the other person
- Ask questions about their interests and shared experiences
- Comment on that and share something related to their interest
- Ask them more questions about the topic
**Comments You Can Make to Bridge:**
Oh, interesting.
Mmm, I don’t know about that.
I would love to know more.
I hear ya.
Tell me more about that?
Interesting.

**What Can You Say?**
How is your day going?
Do you like (insert teacher, situation, activity, coach)?
How was that (insert situation)?
What was that like?
Hey, I noticed (insert something you noticed that is public and not going to lead them to feel weird).

**Topic the Speaker Brings Up:**
Sports
Teachers
Time of day
Games
Hobbies
Favorite food
I don’t love our teacher.
I think coach was mean last game?
I am so done with school it’s time for vacation

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• Coaching made up of two key skills **open-ended questions** and **reflective listening**

• By asking open-ended questions, you can encourage your child to talk about his friendship situation fully and candidly

• Open-ended questions use the words:
  • Who, what, when, where, how
  • Ask, rather than tell
  • Ask questions, instead of using “you were rude”
  • What did your friend feel when you walked away from him?
  • How come?
  • What happened?
  • What do you believe about why it happened?
  • How do you feel when someone behaves that way toward you?
TIPS USING REFLECTIVE LISTENING

Word Choice
Use you and I statements, such as “You are overwhelmed” and “I am sad you are lonely.”

Express
Express empathy to your child: “I hear you,” “I get it,” “That must be hard.”

Accept and validate
Accept and validate your child’s sentiments

Clarify
Clarify your child’s thoughts and feelings by asking questions

Confirm
Confirm with your child that you captured his thoughts and feelings accurately

Repeat back
Repeat back your child’s statement without giving an opinion. By reiterating your child’s statement, your child also hears what he has said.
SAYING CRANKY MAKES ME CRANKY

• Saying someone is cranky to friends and over and over may seem funny but it triggers her
• Shift your communication style
• Remember where they are developmentally
HOW ENJOYABLE IS THE FRIENDSHIP

Discuss with your child

Friendships are supposed to be a two-way street.

You enjoy someone, and they enjoy you.

You treat them well and they treat you well.

You show interest in them and they show interest in you.

You invite them over to your house and they invite you to their house.

Thinking about your friendships can be tough but can also help you figure out who is treating you well and who is not.

Friendship should be enjoyable, and it should be fun for you.

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FREE VIDEO

LESSON: GOOD WINNER, GOOD LOSER

Watch my video to help the child who struggles with self-regulation to expand his or her self-awareness.

Sometimes when the child’s emotions bubble up they can become too much for their playmates. This lesson helps the child learn to recognize their warning body signals when emotions begin to get out of control. This lesson, disguised as a game, will provide strategies to help your child prepare for, and manage, big emotions so she can change her approach.

Cheers to you!
xoxoxo Coach Caroline

P.S. Feel free to email me with questions at caroline@necoaching.com

Please follow me on social media at @CoachCarolineCM

https://www.carolinemaguireauthor.com/good-winner-good-loser-video/
Any Questions

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
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