



Finding friends

The need for love and belonging has long been established as one of our basic needs as human beings and it has been well documented that having strong, healthy relationships improves our self-esteem and wellbeing.

However, being a teenager is not easy (we hear you!). It's hard work trying to fit in with everyone else. It isn't always as easy as just going and making a friend. There are social media platforms to navigate, reputations to maintain and disconnections to overcome.

Here are a few tips to consider:

- **Look for friendships in a range of places.** It's okay to have a group of friends for when you are at school but perhaps you don't see much of them outside of school, a group of friends from your football team, gymnastics team etc and a close group or an individual you feel you can trust and open up to. They are all important for your wellbeing.
- **Make real connections.** Try putting your phone away for a while and connect with someone in person. Start with a smile and work up to engaging in conversation.
- **Think about the people in your peer group that you know.** Is there someone you would like to get to know a little better? Take the risk and ask them if they want to hang out with you, perhaps suggest a walk or grab a Starbucks.

- **Try something new.** Join a new club, visit a new place or try a new activity. You might discover more about yourself and find something you enjoy. It is also a great way to meet people with a shared interest.
- **Don't make the assumption that everyone dislikes you.** Instead assume that people are good and want to have friends.
- **Are you sure that person hates you?** What are the facts? Remember thoughts and feelings are not always fact. Maybe you will find that you didn't have all the facts and misread a situation.
- **Some people are popular but only because others are afraid of them.** That is not a healthy way to have friendships. Look out for people who are friendly but not super popular this is where you are likely to find your people.
- **Invest some time in yourself.** Think about the things that are important to you, the things you enjoy and the unique things that make you, you. Spend time enjoying your own company. Sometimes in life you have to be your own best friend!