

# Caring for Yourself When Friends Are Hurting

**Carry one another's burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2**

It is wonderful when we see our children have a heart for their friends. Encourage them to be good listeners. Remind them of the power of empathy but to also take care of their own emotional well-being. Supporting a friend can be emotionally taxing, and it's crucial for them to have outlets for self-care, like talking to you or someone they trust. Let them know it's okay to set boundaries, and they don't have to carry the weight of their friends' struggles alone.

## ➤ conversation starter

I've noticed that some of your friends are going through a tough time. How do you feel about being there for them? Can we talk about ways you can support them without taking on all of their emotions.

Let's discuss how you're handling situations when your friends are hurting. It's important to be supportive while also taking care of yourself. Have you considered what helps you during these times?

## ➤ navigating the conversation:

- **Express Your Concern:** Begin by expressing your concern. Help teens see your concern for their friends and them as you communicate clearly.
- **Encourage Open Communication:** Stress the importance of open communication with friends while maintaining emotional boundaries. Emotional boundaries will not create themselves.
- **Integrate Scripture:** Use Galatians 6:2 to highlight the biblical call to support and care for others. Affirm that what they are doing is good, but there is a healthy way of helping.
- **Encourage Prayer:** Suggest praying for friends in need, fostering a sense of God's comfort. This is something you and your teens can do together that will help them as well.
- **Normalize Seeking Help:** Reinforce the idea that seeking help, both from friends and trusted adults, is a positive step. Your teens are not therapists, and they don't need to carry that burden.
- **Establish a Supportive Routine:** Work together to establish routines that promote emotional well-being.
- **Reiterate Unconditional Love:** Remind teens of your love and commitment to helping them navigate challenging situations.

