

Help-a-Kid Cards

OVERVIEW

These cards encourage students to discuss ways they could help other kids their age to resolve various day-to-day challenges. In the process, players learn empathy and become more insightful about common issues young people face, and possible strategies that might be helpful in each. Through discussing about helpful strategies for others, students also gain insights to help themselves.

Help-a-Kid cards also encourage students to become “upstanders” to their peers. All students in the school should learn that they have a personal responsibility to be helpful, not harmful to one another. School climate can be transformed through initiatives that promote kids-helping-kids activities.

FIVE WAYS TO PLAY

1. Draw and Share

Shuffle deck, then draw one card at a time and have students discuss:

- What ideas do you have for this kid that might be helpful?
- What suggestions might not be so helpful?
- What else do you think might be happening in the story?
- Has something like this ever happened to you or someone you know? If so, what happened?
- Is this a case where you should encourage the kid to tell an adult? If so, who?

2. Deal Three

Deal out three cards per group member. Players look at the cards in their hand and pick the one that they would like the group to discuss (for any reason).

Players take turns showing and reading the card they selected. The group discusses the kid and story on the card using questions like in “Draw and Share.”

3. Deal Five

Deal out five cards per group member. Players look over their cards and pick two to discard (or pass to the player to the left). Then players each choose three cards to discuss. Next, each player takes a turn showing and discussing one of these cards. Once everyone has shown one card, continue with a second, and finally with a third card from each player.

4. The Most Challenging Issue

Deal out three to five cards to each player. Kids look over their cards and select the one that they think would be the most challenging issue for a kid to face. Then have each player show and read their card. The group votes which one they think would be the most challenging of all and brainstorms suggestions for helping that kid.

5. The Most Common Issue

This game is played similarly to #4. Except that in this game students look over their cards and select the one they think occurs most frequently in their school. Then have them brainstorm their suggestions for helping the kid. In addition, ask students to think of possible ways that several kids with this issue might be helped E.g., a support group with the counselor or a school-wide project that helps others to understand and help with this issue.

TIPS

You should caution students that if they ever notice an issue that involves danger, or is intense and uncomfortable for any reason, they should not try to handle it themselves. Instead, they should immediately tell an adult.

Help-a-Kid Cards also provide an opportunity to give lessons about the importance of being a good listener to someone before giving quick advice, unless danger or intense feelings are involved. Immediate advice is often not so helpful. Caring, patient listening is almost always the best first step you can take in trying to be helpful to someone who is upset. Once the person feels you really understand, your suggestion(s) will more likely be considered.