

What kind of help would help?

Suitable for:	Upper primary and secondary
Time:	15–30 minutes
Format:	Small-group discussion / decision-making
Evergreen:	Yes

The idea

Adults often tell young people to “tell someone”.

But that raises another question:

What would you actually want that person to do?

Different situations need different responses. This activity helps young people think about what useful support might look like.

1. Give the group a fictional situation

For example:

A pupil has been receiving cruel messages in a group chat. They are worried that if they tell a teacher, everyone will find out and things will get worse.

Ask:

What might make this person hesitate to ask for help?

2. Offer possible responses

Give groups a set of possible adult or peer responses, such as:

- listen without interrupting
- immediately confront everyone involved
- ask what the young person wants to happen
- tell them to ignore it
- save the messages as evidence
- contact home straight away
- check whether they feel safe
- ask who else knows
- promise to keep everything secret
- agree a next step and check back later

Ask groups to sort them into:

Likely to help

Might help, depending on the situation

Could make things worse

There does not have to be complete agreement.

3. Change the situation

Now alter one detail.

For example:

- there has been a threat of physical violence
- the person being targeted does not want their parents contacted
- the messages have stopped but the pupil is still frightened
- another pupil has screenshots
- the person asking for help is worried about being called a “snitch”

Ask:

Does the kind of help needed change?

4. What would you want someone to say?

Ask groups to create one useful first response from a friend or adult.

For example:

“Thank you for telling me.”

“What would help right now?”

“Are you worried about what might happen next?”

“We may need to involve someone else, but I’ll explain what is happening.”

5. The difficult bit

Ask:

Should adults always do exactly what the young person asks?

Explore the difference between **involving someone in decisions** and expecting them to carry responsibility for safeguarding.

Sometimes an adult may need to act because somebody is at serious risk.

The important thing is to explain what is happening, listen and involve the young person wherever it is safe to do so.

Final reflection

Complete:

“Asking for help is easier when...”

and:

“Help is more useful when...”

Key message

Telling someone is only the beginning. What they do with what they have been told matters too.