

Being Your Own Best Friend

10-11 Year Olds

Day 3 of 3

Objectives

To understand the ineffectiveness of covert communication.

To explore the effect of lying.

To explore the range of what kids can and cannot handle alone.

To consider the possibility of breaking promises under some circumstances.

Introduction for adult

Children classically attempt to get the adults around them to notice that they have a problem. They covertly communicate what is happening to them, hoping we will figure it out. It is important for children to understand that this simply does not work. They must take responsibility for communicating to get the help they need.

There are other times when children are blamed for things they had nothing to do with. It is extraordinarily difficult to stand up for themselves under these circumstances. By role-playing and discussing what it takes to stand up to someone in authority, they gain valuable skills.

Finally, sometimes children of this age confide in a friend about abuse, making the friend promise not to tell. Children need to know that it is both permissible and responsible to tell a trusted adult about what is happening. It is also useful to share with children that most kids tell other kids about their problems as a way to get help when they're unable to help themselves. In this case, being a real friend means telling an adult who can help.

No Questions Asked

In my family we have a "No Questions Asked Rule." This means that our son can call us anytime, anywhere and ask to be picked up.

We agree to do so, no questions asked! On the way home, we can discuss what happened and agree how to handle it, but he knows that he will not be in trouble for having made a smart choice to get out of a bad situation.

We extended this offer to all of his friends for many years never thinking I would get the call. But I did get the call, multiple times, from him and from his friends.

This rule can save a child's life and is an excellent way to end this series of lessons. Even though this series of discussions is over, these skills are important in every single day of your child's life. Keep talking about how your child can be more effective and more capable in managing his/her life.

Introduction for children

When it's really hard to tell about a problem, some kids act in ways that they hope their parents will notice and ask about. They do things like cry, or mope around, or get angry. Let's see what the kids on this video do.

Watch videotape

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jXi5Fb1TI4Y&list=PLSrCYUKewj4dF58wxBmPx0QayhpO6d34T&index=18>

Role-play

Have you ever done anything like that?

RP: What if something really upsetting happened at school? When you come home, you storm into the house, throw your books on the table, run up to your room and slam the door? Would your parents know what is wrong?

What if later that evening you come to the dinner table with a long face, refusing to talk or eat? Would your parents know what is wrong?

What if they thought you were just being moody and sent you from the table back to your room? Would that make things better or worse?

What choices do you have?

What would be the responsible thing to do?

Do you think your family would want to know what you are upset about, even if it is something hard to talk about or embarrassing?

RP: What if you were faced with a situation where you said one thing and an adult said another? Do you think I would believe you or the adult?

You want to have a discussion about believing a child over an adult. Children need to know they will be believed.

RP: What if your best friend told you a secret and you promised not to tell, but the secret was about something that had happened to your friend and you knew your friend needed help?

Would you be breaking your promise of secrecy if you told an adult about the problem?

What are your choices?

What would be the responsible thing to do?

Would you be afraid your friend might get angry with you for telling the secret?

Maybe telling you is the only way your friend can ask for help.

Who are some people that you could tell in order to get help for your friend?