

Words Matter, Actions Speak!

Choosing your words and actions carefully can make a world of difference in relationships.

Picture a challenging moment with a friend, significant other, family member, teacher, or coach

How will you be your best self?

Listen actively.

Use active listening by ignoring distractions, maintaining eye contact, asking clarifying questions, keeping your body language open and neutral, and using encouraging words.

Hey, can we talk?

Sure.

Stay open.

Keep an open mind. Hearing someone out can help you better understand the issue at hand. Remember that everyone experiences the world differently, and welcoming different points of view can help build relationships with people from different backgrounds and experiences.

Why haven't you responded to my messages? I really needed you, and you ignored me.

Take a deep breath.

While it can be tempting to quickly respond with your first reaction, try taking one deep breath to pause and process what the other person just said. Gather your thoughts and feelings first so that you can better express them.

I can't believe he just said that! I'm always there for him!

Speak with kindness.

It's not always what you say, but how you say it. Approaching a conversation with kindness and empathy can inspire others to do the same.

Alex just broke up with me, and I haven't been checking my phone. I feel hurt that you said I was ignoring you.

Use **"I statements"** to share your feelings about the conflict. Saying **"I feel _____, when you _____"** lets them know how you feel, without making them feel like they're being attacked.

Take action ... with your best foot forward.

Sometimes all it takes to move forward is the right attitude. If the relationship is important to you, try thinking through different solutions and choose one that works best for everyone involved.

Oh wow. I didn't know. I'm sorry.

It's OK. Do you wanna hang out?

Even if you don't have all the answers, small actions like going for a walk, making dinner together, or talking about something else can help lessen a conflict.

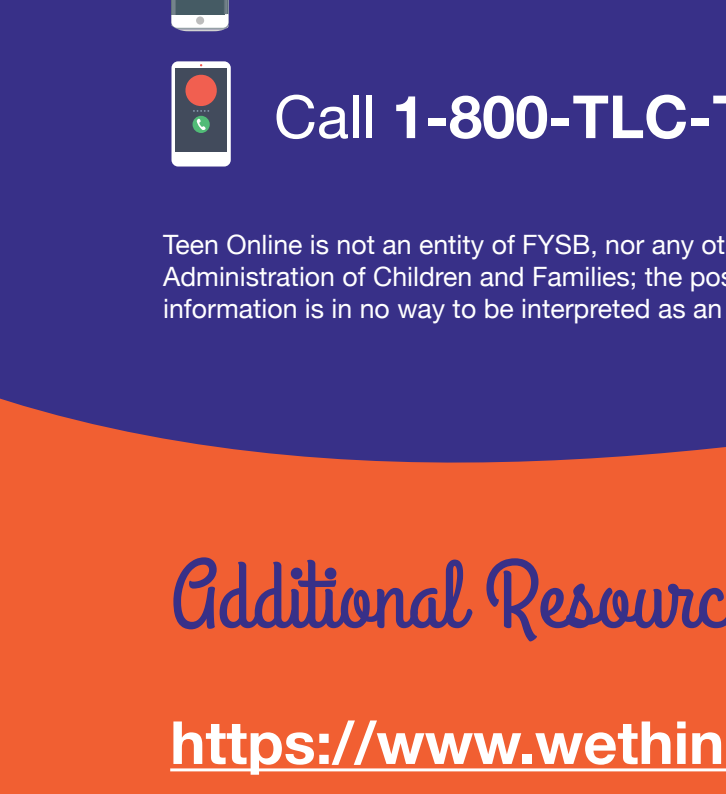
Embrace a growth mindset.

Mistakes are a normal part of life, and conflicts can be opportunities for growth. Be kind and considerate to yourself and others. How do you talk to yourself? Are you gentle and forgiving, or a harsh critic? No one is perfect! Talk to yourself like you would talk to your best friend: with compliments and encouragement.

I guess I shouldn't have been so quick to accuse. She must be having a hard time.

I'm glad he isn't mad at me. I'll be sure to check in with him even when I have a lot going on.

Remember ...
Being your best self is a journey ...
NOT a destination.



Vent, share, and get support from a trained teen.



<https://teenlineonline.org>



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Call **1-800-TLC-TEEN**

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Additional Resources

<https://www.wethinktwice.acf.hhs.gov>

<https://engage.youth.gov>

FYSB Family & Youth Services Bureau