

CONVERSATION HOW-TO'S: TIPS FOR INTERACTING WITH NEW FRIENDS

Meeting new people can be hard, especially when you're trying to make friends. It can be tough to think of things to say, recognize verbal and non-verbal cues, and know the difference between a person who wants to be friends and someone being polite. Here are some tips that you can use when trying to make new friends.

SAYING 'HI'

When meeting a person or group of people for the first time, it's important to wait for a break in the conversation to say 'hi'. Speak clearly, tell them your name and ask for theirs. If you've met before, say 'hi' and ask how they've been doing. This shows that you are interested in getting to know them.



TALK ABOUT YOUR INTERESTS

It's important for the person to get to know you. If the other person brings up a topic you find interesting, don't be afraid to share your thoughts. You can also share funny stories, so they can get to know more about you. Just don't get too personal, it may make them feel uncomfortable.



ACTIVELY LISTEN

This can be tough, especially if you're not interested in the topic. However if you want to be friends, you need to listen to what they're saying and respond to what they're talking about. Asking questions and relating it to yourself shows you're interested in them.



PRACTICE

If the thought of talking with someone you don't know scares you, it can help to practice your conversation skills. Ask a person you trust, like a parent or friend, if you can have a practice conversation where you will be able to act as if you're meeting for the first time.

EXIT IF NECESSARY

If you're feeling overwhelmed or uncomfortable, it's okay to excuse yourself. Wait for a pause in the conversation, let them know it was nice talking to them and that you have to leave. A good example is: "It was great talking to you, but I have to go now. Bye!" Don't feel pressured into staying in a conversation.

THINKING OF WHAT TO SAY

If you are having trouble thinking of things to say, look for ideas around you. For example, if they are wearing a sports t-shirt, ask them about the team. For more ideas, check out the resource "Starter Topics for Conversations"

CONNECTING WITH NEW PEOPLE

If you felt the conversation went really well, don't be afraid to ask to connect with them by setting up a place to meet, or asking for a way to contact them like by email, phone or social media.

*This information sheet was developed by the Autism Services, Education, Resources, and Training Collaborative (ASERT).
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ASERT is funded by the Office of Developmental Programs, PA Department of Human Services.*