

THE PRACTICE PACKS / PK02

Tweens: Friendship and Emotions

Make room for feelings. Choose your next move.

Seven resources for ages 10-12 explore peer moments, assumptions, and support. A fictional group-chat example, response rehearsal, and optional connection practice build a sequence that respects privacy.

Tweens ages 10-12 | 7 original resources

A sequence you can adapt

Explore an explanation or fictional example. Choose an activity, rehearse, try an optional practice, and review what helped. Use the facilitator guide to adapt the sequence; every page is optional.

Choose with care

Use fictional peer situations until a tween chooses otherwise. Distinguish uncertainty or ordinary disagreement from harassment, discrimination, threats, or a power imbalance that needs adult action.

Large print fillable edition

Type into response areas and save a separate copy in a PDF reader that supports forms.

Inside this pack

1. A Peer Moment Has More Than One Part

Separate events, feelings, guesses, and choices in an everyday peer situation.

2. Jordan and the Unanswered Message

See a fictional tween check a guess and choose a manageable response.

3. Facts, Feelings, and My Next Choice

Sort a manageable friendship moment and choose a response within your control.

4. Try the Conversation Before You Need It

Practice a clear request and a safe exit from a low-stakes peer conversation.

5. One Low-Pressure Connection

Plan a small, optional friendship action that leaves room for a no.

6. What Kind of Connection Fits Me?

Review a peer interaction or a missed plan and identify a useful adjustment.

7. Facilitating Tween Peer Work

Support reflection about peer relationships while protecting choice and privacy.

Tweens: Friendship and Emotions | Understand

A Peer Moment Has More Than One Part

Tweens ages 10-12 | 5 to 8 minutes | Handout

Separate events, feelings, guesses, and choices in an everyday peer situation.

A friend can matter a lot, which can make a small moment feel big. A short reply, changed plan, or seat saved for someone else may bring several feelings. You do not have to pretend it did not matter.

How to use this page

Read the four parts below. Think about a made-up example or a situation that feels manageable. You can keep names and details private.

Event and feeling

The event is what you could describe without guessing a reason: "My friend did not reply today." The feeling might be disappointed, worried, annoyed, or unsure. You can have mixed feelings. Neither a feeling nor a guess proves what another person meant.

Guess and choice

Your mind might say, "They are replacing me." That is one possible story, not a fact you have to accept. You can wait, ask a small question, do something else, or ask a trusted adult to help you decide.

PK02-01 | continued

When an adult needs to help

Repeated humiliation, threats, discrimination, or pressure are not problems you must solve by finding a nicer explanation. You can step away and tell a trusted adult. You do not need to confront someone, prove you are brave, or share a private message with a whole group.

1. One part I want help sorting out

Facilitator notes and adaptation

Validate the tween's account and investigate safety concerns. Do not use alternative explanations to dismiss bullying, racism, disability-related mistreatment, or exclusion. Support requests for adult help.

About this resource

AI-assisted original draft for More Than Therapy. Version 1.0. Source and editorial checks: 27 October 2026. Independent clinical review pending; no human clinical reviewer is recorded. The references below inform concepts and do not validate or endorse this original page.

Conceptual references

PA02 | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | Positive Parenting Tips: Middle Childhood

https://www2c.cdc.gov/podcasts/media/pdf/PosParenting_MidChildhood.pdf

PK02-01 | continued

PA03 | StopBullying.gov / U.S. Department of Health and Human Services | What Kids Can Do

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/kids/what-you-can-do>

PA04 | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | Tips for Coaching Teens to Recognize and Manage Emotions

<https://www.cdc.gov/parenting-teens/tips-coaching-emotions/index.html>

Tweens: Friendship and Emotions | Example

Jordan and the Unanswered Message

Tweens ages 10-12 | 5 to 8 minutes | Handout

See a fictional tween check a guess and choose a manageable response.

This is a fictional example. Jordan, age eleven, asks two friends about sitting together at lunch. One friend sees the message but neither replies that evening. Jordan thinks, "They do not want me there."

How to use this page

Read the example without deciding what Jordan should feel. Pause to notice which parts are known and which are guesses. You may disagree with Jordan's choice.

Sorting the moment

Jordan writes: Event: no reply tonight. Feelings: embarrassed and worried. Guess: they do not like me. Other possibilities: someone was busy, forgot, or did not know the plan. Jordan still feels worried after making the list.

Making a plan

Jordan decides to ask one friend privately the next morning: "Are we still sitting together?" Jordan also asks a trusted adult where to sit if plans change. The adult listens without demanding to read every message.

PK02-02 | continued

An ordinary ending

The friend says they had not checked the plan and suggests a table. Jordan chooses to go but asks for clearer plans next time. This ending is only one possibility. If the reply had been hurtful or there had been a pattern of exclusion, Jordan could ask an adult for more support instead of trying to solve it alone.

1. Which choice could Jordan change to fit a different situation?**Facilitator notes and adaptation**

The example illustrates uncertainty, not bullying. Clearly distinguish it from repeated or targeted mistreatment. Do not promise that asking a question will lead to reassurance or acceptance.

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PK02-02 | continued

PA03 | StopBullying.gov / U.S. Department of Health and Human Services | What Kids Can Do

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/kids/what-you-can-do>

PA04 | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | Tips for Coaching Teens to Recognize and Manage Emotions

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Tweens: Friendship and Emotions | Explore

Facts, Feelings, and My Next Choice

Tweens ages 10-12 | 8 to 10 minutes | Worksheet

Sort a manageable friendship moment and choose a response within your control.

Choose a small peer moment or invent one. This page is not asking you to prove that everything is fine. It helps you sort the parts before choosing what you want to do.

How to use this page

Use brief notes, symbols, or a conversation. Leave out names and screenshots. Skip the exercise and ask for adult help if the situation includes threats or feels unsafe.

Describe without mind-reading

Write what happened and what you do not know. "They changed the game" describes an event. "They wanted to embarrass me" is a possible interpretation. It could be right or wrong; you do not have to settle it immediately.

Make room for your response

Name a feeling or a need: space, fairness, clarity, company, or help. You can feel hurt even when someone did not intend harm. You can also decide that a behavior is unacceptable without knowing its intention.

PK02-03 | continued

Choose a next step

Pick something you can control: ask one question, take a break, make another plan, or involve a trusted adult. Consider where and when it would feel easiest. The other person's reaction is not something you can guarantee. Have a support option if the response is unkind.

1. What happened, what I am guessing, and what I do not know

2. My feelings and what matters to me here

3. My next choice and who can support me

PK02-03 | continued**Facilitator notes and adaptation**

Keep the focus on agency and support, not persuading the tween to tolerate poor treatment. If a pattern of harm emerges, move from reflection to appropriate adult-led protection.

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Tweens: Friendship and Emotions | Rehearse

Try the Conversation Before You Need It

Tweens ages 10-12 | 8 to 10 minutes | Session guide

Practice a clear request and a safe exit from a low-stakes peer conversation.

Rehearsal lets you hear words before using them. You can practice with an adult, a willing peer, or an empty chair. Choose an ordinary disagreement, not a threatening situation.

How to use this page

Pick a pretend problem, such as a changed game rule or interrupted turn. Agree that either person can stop. Reading from the page is welcome; acting is optional.

Make one request

Try: "When the plan changed, I felt left out. Can you tell me the new plan?" Change the words so they sound like you. You can use a shorter sentence or a written note. You do not need a perfect speech.

Practice two possible replies

First, the partner gives a reasonable reply, and you decide what to do. Next, the partner says, "Not now." Practice pausing or asking when to return. Do not practice insults or humiliation. You are learning choices, not training yourself to endure them.

PK02-04 | continued

Rehearse leaving and getting support

Try: "I am going to take a break," or "I want an adult to help us." You can leave without winning an argument. Finish by naming one part that sounded natural and one word you would change.

1. My request, my pause line, or my help request

Facilitator notes and adaptation

Only use mutually respectful role-play. Never ask a child to reenact bullying or pressure another child to reconcile. Make nonverbal and written participation equally valid.

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PK02-04 | continued

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Tweens: Friendship and Emotions | Practice

One Low-Pressure Connection

Tweens ages 10-12 | 5 to 8 minutes | Worksheet

Plan a small, optional friendship action that leaves room for a no.

Connection can start with a small action: asking about a game, sharing a joke, or inviting someone to sit nearby. Choose an action because you want to try it, not to prove your popularity.

How to use this page

Make one optional plan for the next few days. Pick someone who has treated you respectfully. You can choose a trusted adult or a structured group activity if a peer plan does not fit.

Keep the invitation small

Ask one clear question, such as "Want to draw for five minutes?" The other person can say yes, no, or another time. A no can feel disappointing without being a verdict on your value. Choose an activity you can still enjoy another way.

Protect your energy and privacy

You do not need to share a secret, lend something valuable, or agree to a risky dare to connect. Plan a stopping point. If the situation feels uncomfortable, you can leave and talk with a trusted adult.

PK02-05 | continued

Notice the experience

Afterward, remember whether you felt respected and whether the activity suited you. You do not have to count friends or rate yourself. If the plan never happened, bring that information back; we can make it smaller or choose a different setting.

1. My small invitation and where it could happen

2. My alternative if the answer is no or the plan changes

3. What I want to notice about respect and comfort

PK02-05 | continued**Facilitator notes and adaptation**

Do not assign interaction with peers who bully or exploit the tween. Consider disability access, transport, cost, language, and available safe spaces before suggesting an activity.

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Tweens: Friendship and Emotions | Review

What Kind of Connection Fits Me?

Tweens ages 10-12 | 5 to 10 minutes | Worksheet

Review a peer interaction or a missed plan and identify a useful adjustment.

You do not have to report a happy ending. A plan may have felt good, awkward, disappointing, or impossible. This page helps you notice what the experience says about the plan and the setting.

How to use this page

Choose one interaction or one reason a plan did not happen. Keep personal details private if you prefer. You may describe an imaginary version to get ideas.

Look for respect

Could you say no, ask a question, or leave? Did the other person listen? Did you have to hide an important need? These questions can tell you more than whether the activity looked successful from the outside.

Notice the conditions

Maybe the group was too large, the room was noisy, the timing was rushed, or the invitation was unclear. Maybe the person was not kind. You do not have to turn every difficulty into something wrong with you.

PK02-06 | continued

Choose what comes next

You can repeat a useful action, choose a different person or setting, ask an adult for support, or take a break. If no practice happened, rehearse one small sentence here instead. A next step should leave room for your preferences and the other person's choice.

1. What happened, or what prevented the plan?

2. Where I felt respected, and where I needed more support

3. A part to keep, change, or stop

PK02-06 | continued**Facilitator notes and adaptation**

Follow up privately on signs of coercion, harassment, or isolation. Do not make forgiveness or reconciliation the required outcome. A preference for fewer or different social contacts is not a failure.

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Tweens: Friendship and Emotions | Facilitate

Facilitating Tween Peer Work

Professionals and caregivers | 10 to 15 minutes | Session guide

Support reflection about peer relationships while protecting choice and privacy.

Tween peer work benefits from a clear agreement about what can stay private and when an adult must act for safety. Explain these limits in words the young person understands before inviting personal examples.

How to use this page

Preview the selected page, ask whether a fictional example would be easier, and offer writing or discussion. In groups, require respect and allow passing without an explanation.

Separate uncertainty from harm

A delayed reply and a repeated campaign of humiliation need different responses. Ask enough to understand context without interrogating. Do not assume every interpretation is inaccurate. Racism, ableism, exclusion, and identity-based harassment require appropriate action and support, not simply another perspective exercise.

PK02-07 | continued

Coach without taking over

Ask what the tween wants from the conversation: listening, ideas, or help contacting someone. Practice wording together only with agreement. Avoid promising secrecy you cannot keep or demanding access to private communications as the price of being heard. Follow your role's safety and safeguarding duties.

Evaluate fit, not popularity

Look for increased choice, usable support, and respectful interactions rather than a target number of friends. Adapt for communication differences, sensory needs, and cultural meanings of friendship. If a practice did not happen, examine opportunity, adult availability, and the tween's preference before changing the task. End with a mutually understood next step and a way to seek support sooner.

1. The privacy agreement, access adaptation, and adult follow-up I will provide

Facilitator notes and adaptation

These activities are not social-compliance training or a bullying investigation protocol. Independent clinical review is pending. If distress substantially affects daily life, arrange appropriate assessment rather than extending worksheets indefinitely.

PK02-07 | continued**About this resource**

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