



## **Lesson Plan:**

### ***There's Nothing Better than a Good Friend***



**Title:** There's Nothing Better than a Good Friend  
**Theme:** Considering the Characteristics of a Good Friend  
**Time:** 120 minutes (approx. 2 hours)  
**Materials:** Want Ad for a Friend - Assignment  
Friendship Stoplight - Laminated Game  
Ball (beach ball or object that can be tossed between students)

## Objectives:

- to teach students about the concept of positive, healthy friendships
- to acknowledge the links between healthy friendships and positive self-esteem
- to consider the reasons it is important to have good friends
- to allow students to think about their own criteria for healthy friendships
- to discuss the healthy signs, warning signs and unhealthy signs in friendships
- to have students explore strategies to deal with difficult situations in friendships
- to identify the effects of social influences on gender roles and equity

## Background Information

This lesson focuses on the issues young people face surrounding friendships during adolescence. This topic is important because while friendships are vital throughout life, peer groups and social relations among friends gain increasing importance during puberty and adolescence. As the peer group becomes a more significant source of influence, friendships begin to take on new meaning. During puberty, children will be making new friends at school and in social settings, and many will also be coping with evolving friendships from their earlier childhood. Friendships are often put to the test during senior elementary and secondary school. Children struggle to maintain relationships with peers who may be changing in a variety of ways. In addition, adolescents may be subjected to peer pressure, which can influence their choices and make lasting impacts on their life experiences.

This lesson is designed to compel students to think about their own criteria for positive friendships, to discuss ways to evaluate friendships and to explore ways to deal with difficult situations in their friendships.

## **Activity One: Class Discussion Regarding Friendships - 30 minutes**

Tell your students that you will be discussing friendships during today's lesson. Encourage students to participate frequently during the discussion, as their input on this topic is very important.

**Here are some ideas you may use to guide your discussion.**

### **What kind of things can we do to begin and keep friendships?**

Join a club or a team. Meet a neighbour. Seek out a friend at school. Make contact with the person you would like to know better. Find ways to spend time with them. Talk about yourself, sharing more information as time goes by. Talk on the phone, write text and/or instant message or e-mail notes to your friend.

### **What is a friend? Friends are people ...**

...we feel close to. Friends are people who have similar interests, people who care about us, and people we can trust. Friends offer support and understanding when we really need it. Friends are people we feel comfortable around. Being around them makes us feel good about ourselves.

### **Self-esteem is how we feel about ourselves. Having a good self-esteem means that we feel good about ourselves.**

When we feel good about ourselves, we are more likely to choose friends that are good for us. There is a saying that says, "we teach people how to treat us". In other words, how we behave toward ourselves and other people gives them clues as to how they should behave towards us. If we feel good about ourselves and respect ourselves, and treat others with respect, we are showing people how we would like to be treated.

### **Why is it important to have good friends?**

True friendship is important. Friends support one another, listen to each other and give advice. When you and your friend share personal information about yourselves, you can learn from each other and explore what you have in common and what makes you different. Friends can teach us many things like how to play a game or how to make a craft. Friends can introduce us to exciting things like delicious new foods and interesting customs or celebrations. You can also learn about acceptance by appreciating the different qualities that make us unique individuals. When you accept people for who they are, you are being a respectful friend.

### **What kinds of things do you like doing with your friends?**

Ideas might include: playing games (video) and sports, hanging out, having lunch together, attending community groups, going to classes together (e.g., dance, martial arts, music lessons), watching television/movies, using the computer, working on projects and/or doing homework together.

## How can we be good friends?

- Share our interests and activities
- Trust each other and be honest
- Share our thoughts and feelings
- Respect each other's opinions and beliefs
- Try to relate to how the other person feels
- Be sincere with each other
- Accept each other for who we are
- Encourage and support each other
- Commit to the friendship

## ActivityTwo: (2 parts)

### *Part A: Ball Toss – 10 minutes*

This is a warm-up activity to help students explore the qualities of healthy relationships. Have the students stand up behind their desks or in a circle at the front of the room.

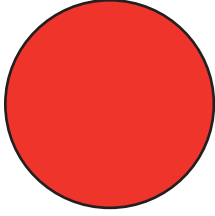
Toss the ball to someone in the group, and ask them to call out a word that represents qualities of a healthy relationship (for example; trust, supportive, kind, fun...). Ask that person to then toss the ball to someone else. Each time a new student catches the ball, ask them to share a new quality... and so on.

### *Part B: Want Ad for a Friend - 20 minutes*

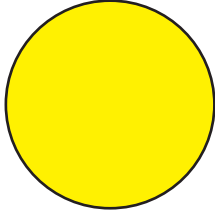
Tell your students that you would like them to think about the characteristics that are most important in a friend. Distribute the assignment entitled, "Want Ad For A Friend". Ask your students to complete this assignment individually. Allow students ten to fifteen minutes of quiet writing time. Once students have written the advertisement, ask some students to share their work by reading aloud to the class. (Friendship Want Ad handout can be found following this lesson)

## Activity Three: Friendship Stoplight Game - 30 minutes

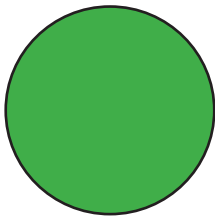
**STOP! These are unhealthy/bad signs in a friendship!**



**CAUTION! These are warning signs in a friendship!**



**GO! These are healthy/good signs in a friendship!**



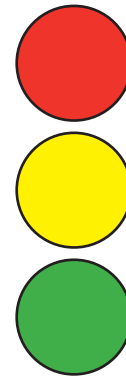
Here are the instructions to set up the Friendship Stoplight Game. (*The Stoplight game cards can be found following this lesson*).

On the top left corner of your board or wall space, use tape or magnets to attach the red stoplight card that reads, "These are bad signs in a friendship".

Place the corresponding yellow and green stoplights underneath, like in a street stoplight.

Shuffle the stoplight scenario cards to ensure that they are not in order.

The graphic shown below appears on each scenario card.



The object of this game is to decide which scenarios are most compatible with each of the following three statements: "these are bad signs in a friendship", "these are warning signs in a friendship" and "these are good signs in a friendship".

Attach the appropriate answers to the board/wall beside the corresponding stoplight with tape or magnets.

There are several ways that you can play this game. You can read the scenarios aloud and ask students where they think they best belong. You can give scenarios out to groups of students and they can arrive at a consensus. You can place the scenarios on overheads or on the document arm and ask volunteers to give suggestions. You might also consider placing the scenarios around the room and asking for volunteers to place them beside the proper stoplight on the board.

No matter what pedagogical strategy you use to play this game, be sure that you ask students for explanations regarding their choices. The most important part of this activity is the discussion around whether each scenario constitutes a good, a warning or a bad sign in a friendship. It is in this arena that students will be able to discuss their various points of view. Your role in this game is to facilitate and mediate the conversations of your students. When there is disagreement, you might choose not to place the scenario beside one statement, but rather choose to set it aside for further debate and discussion. If the scenario clearly represents a bad or warning sign, be sure to make this clear for your students.

There are fifteen scenario cards. Five scenarios correspond with each coloured stoplight: red(unhealthy/bad signs), yellow(warningsigns) and green (healthy/good signs).

While there may be some discrepancies, the following is a list of suggested correct answers.

**RED LIGHT: These are unhealthy/bad signs in a friendship.**

1. You are afraid of your friend's temper.
2. Your friend criticizes you or people you care about.
3. Your friend threatens to hurt you.
4. Your friend bullies and makes fun of you or other kids at school.
5. Your friend pressures you to do things you do not want to do.

**YELLOW LIGHT: These are warning signs in a friendship.**

6. You are nervous that if you tell your friend something personal, they will tell other people at school.
7. Your friend sometimes makes fun of you.
8. You rarely get to plan what the two of you will do together.
9. Your friend tells you not to hang out with certain people.
10. You say that you agree with your friend, even when you really don't. You are afraid they won't be your friend anymore if you disagree.

**GREEN LIGHT: These are healthy/good signs in a friendship.**

11. You usually feel happy when you are with this person.
12. Your friend respects your feelings and your opinions.
13. Your friend talks to you about their feelings.
14. Your friend is happy when good things happen to you.
15. You enjoy being with this person, but you also enjoy spending time with other friends.

# Assignment

## Want Ad For A Friend

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

We are a young couple who is looking to adopt a puppy. We would like to add a golden retriever to our family. The puppy should like children and should enjoy going on long walks.

I am eleven years old looking for a friend who is also in grade six. I would like my new friend to play volleyball with me. This person should be funny, honest and a good listener.

Have you ever seen a want ad in the newspaper or online? Sometimes people who are looking to adopt a pet write ads describing the type of pet they are hoping to find. Other times, adults write want ads if they are looking to find a friend. Pretend that you are trying to make a new friend. Write an ad that describes a friend you would like to find. Think about what age you would like this person to be. What personality traits are you looking for in a friend? What kind of person do you think would make a great friend? Are there any activities that you would like to share with this new friend? If you spend a lot of time rollerblading, you might want a friend to share this activity with you. Think about all the things you need in a good friend. Today, you will be writing a want ad for a friend. This is how your written assignment will be marked.

Criteria	poor	fair	good	very good	excellent
Student completed at least five full sentences					
Response shows evidence of careful consideration of characteristics desired in a friend					
Quality of written work including spelling and grammar					

Grade out of 15 .....

/15

**In the space provided below, write a want ad for your new friend.**

**Make sure that you write at least five full sentences.**

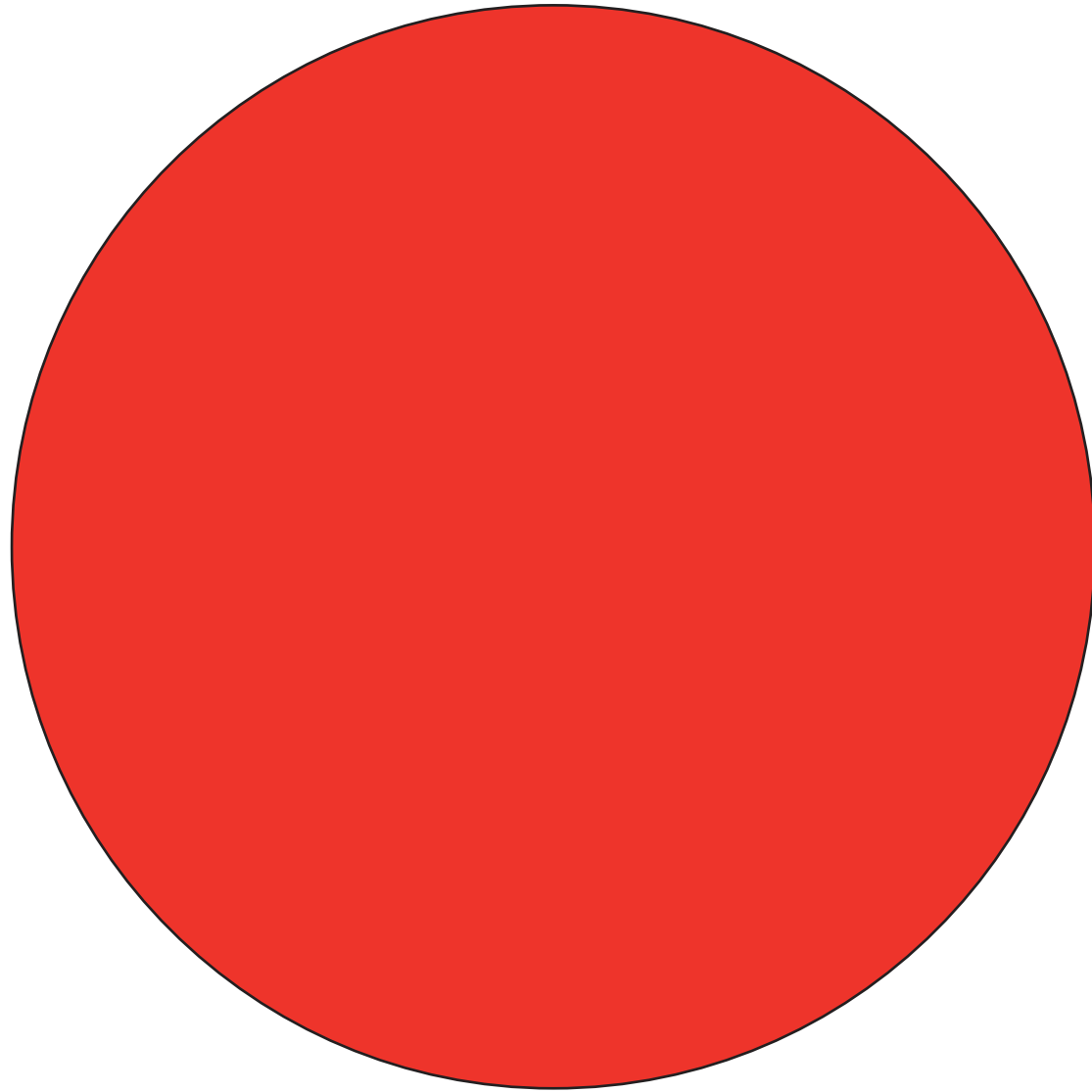
**Use your best spelling and grammar.**


**Total Grade out of 15 .....**

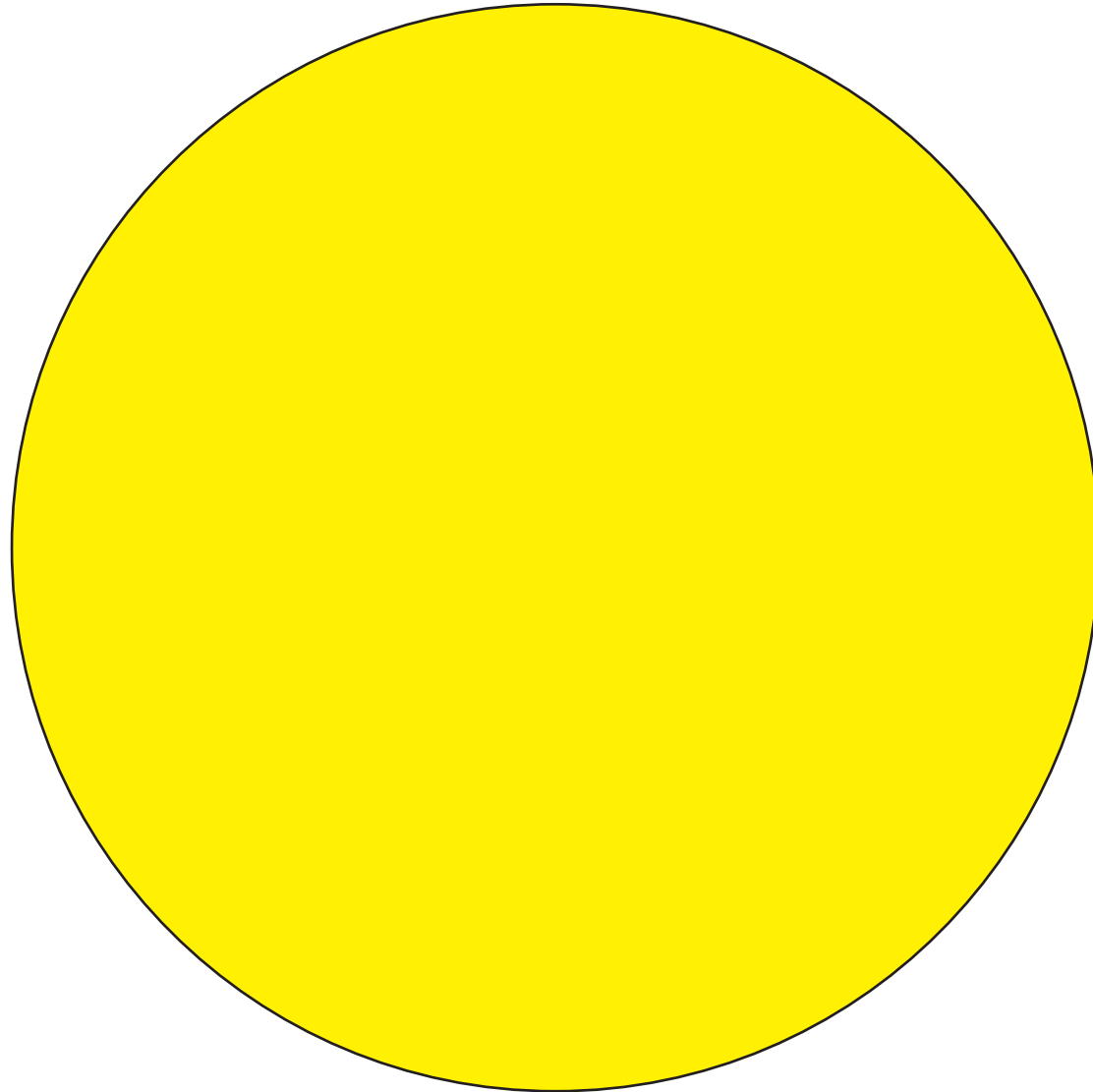
**/15**



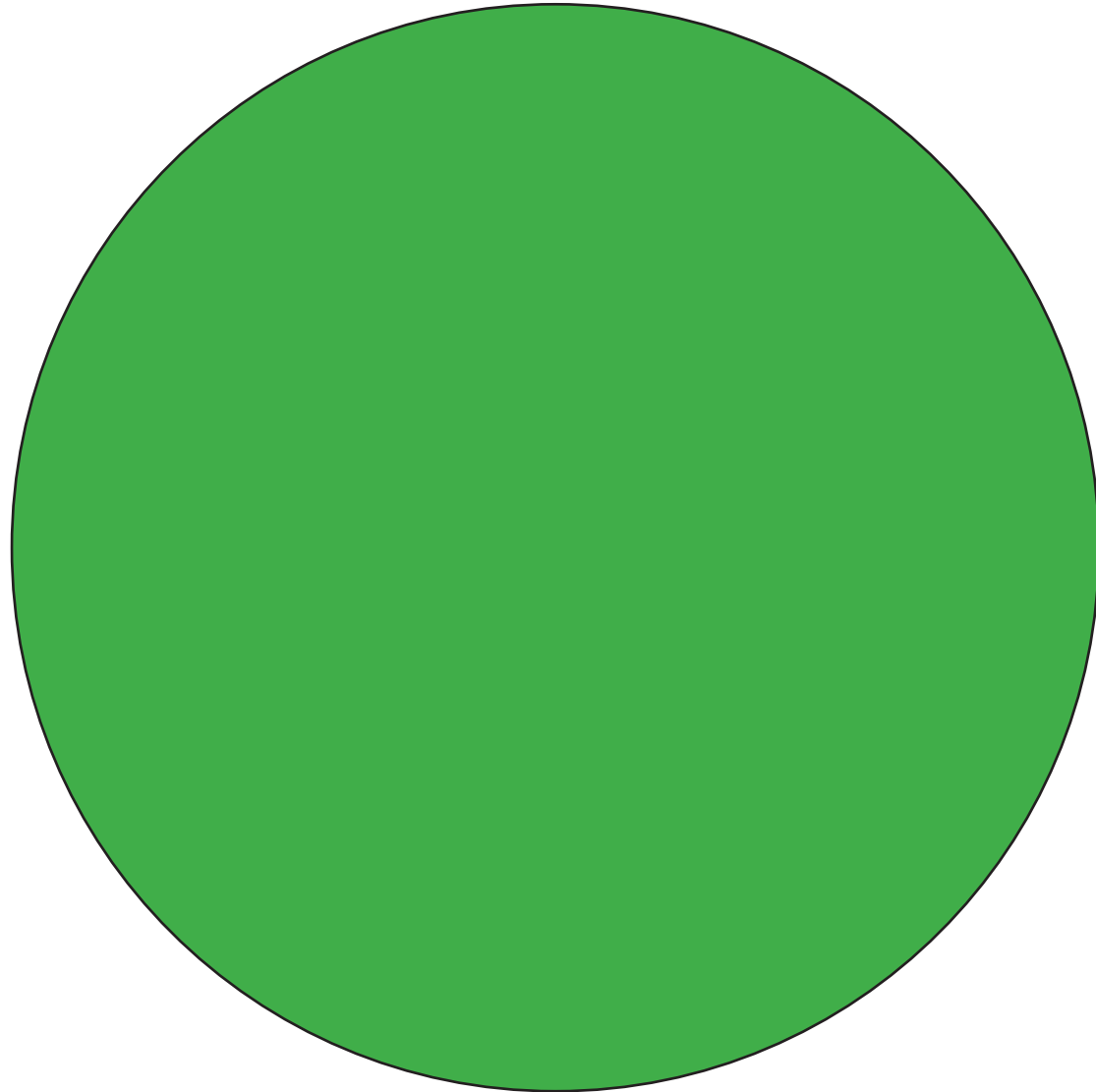
**STOP! These are unhealthy/bad signs in a friendship!**

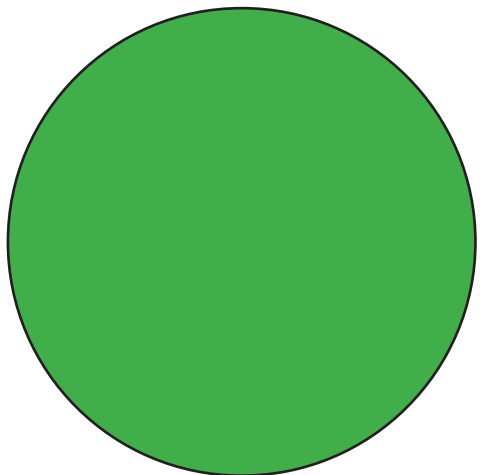
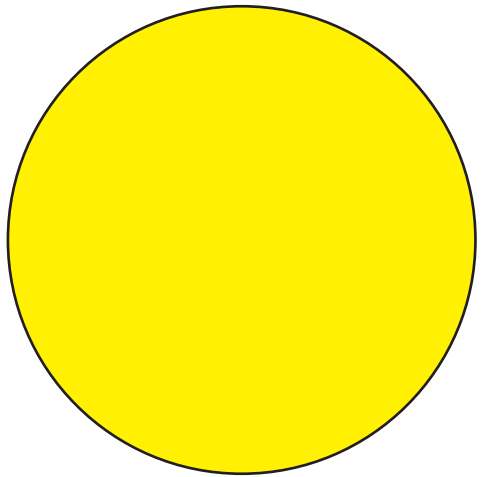
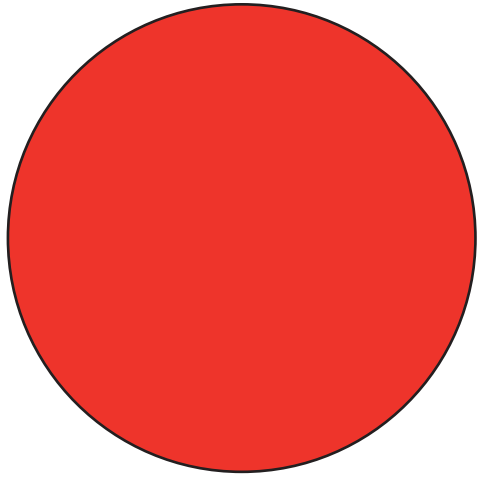


**CAUTION! These are warning signs in a friendship!**

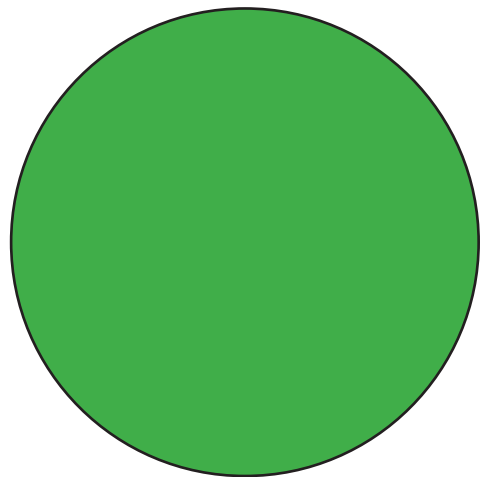
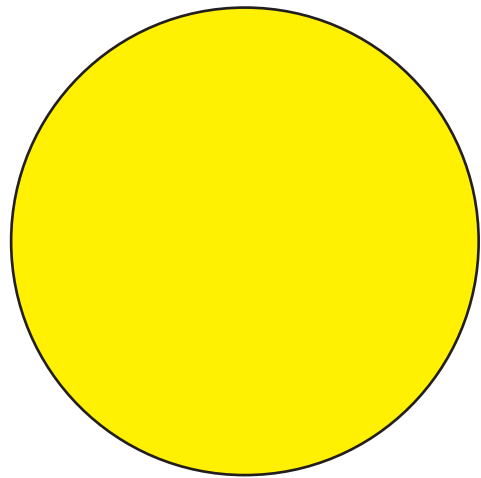
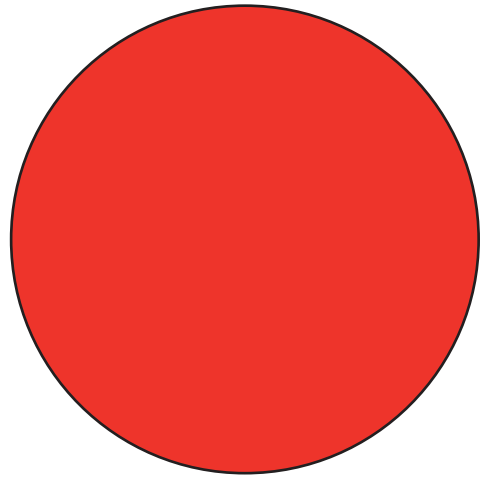


**GO! These are healthy/good signs in a friendship!**

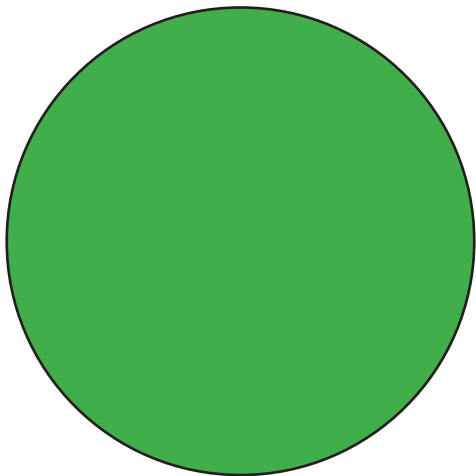
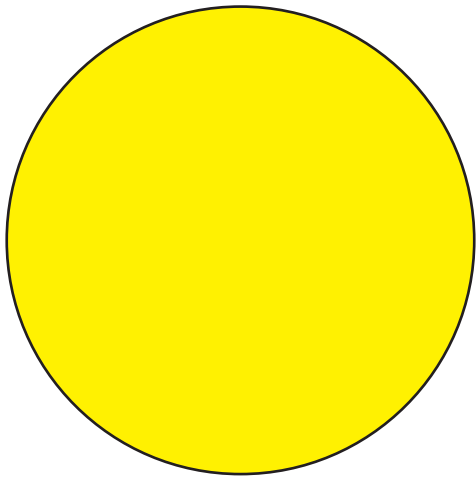
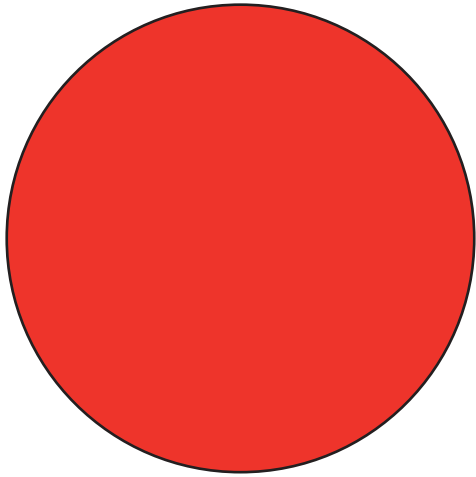




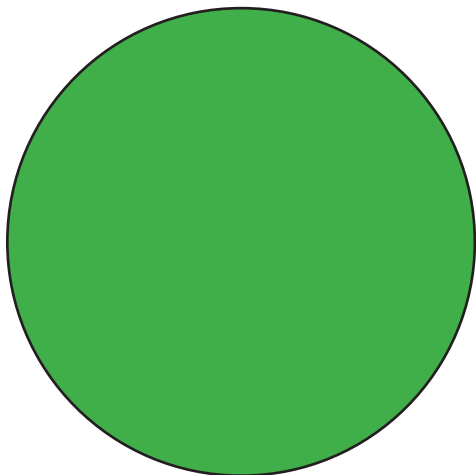
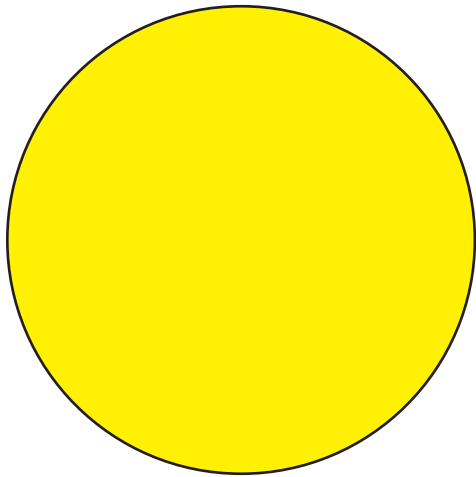
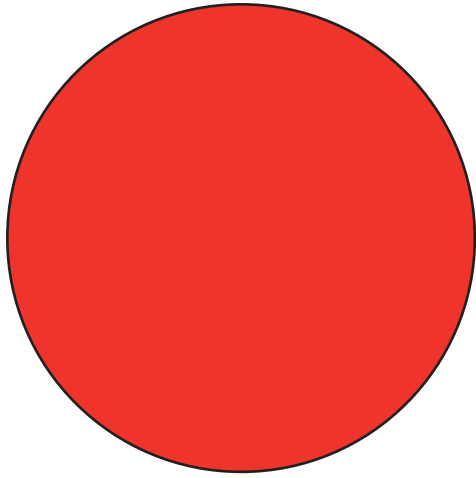
**You are  
afraid of  
your friend's  
temper.**



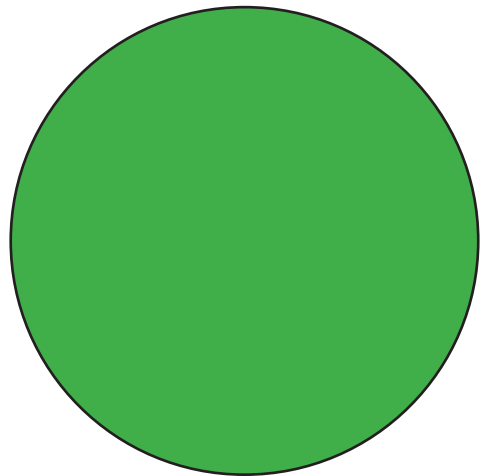
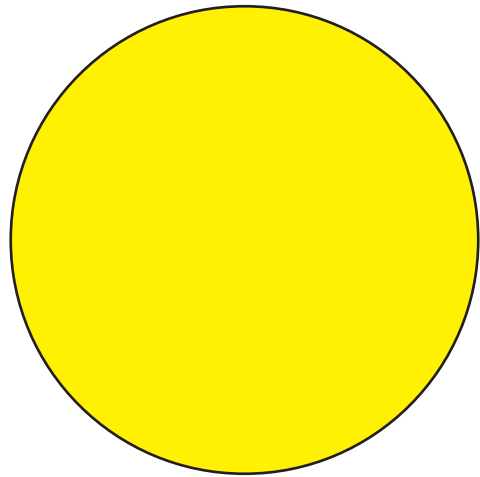
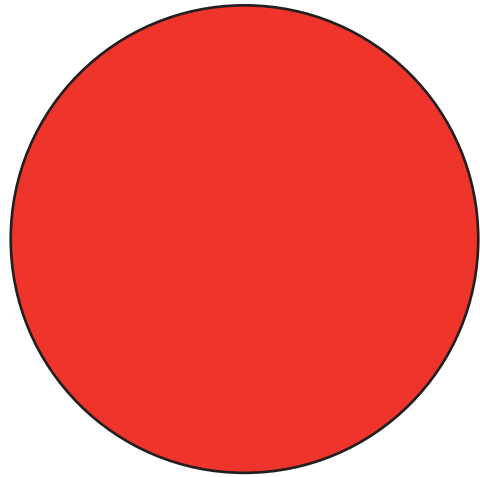
**Your friend  
criticizes you  
or people  
you care  
about.**



**Your friend  
threatens to  
hurt you.**

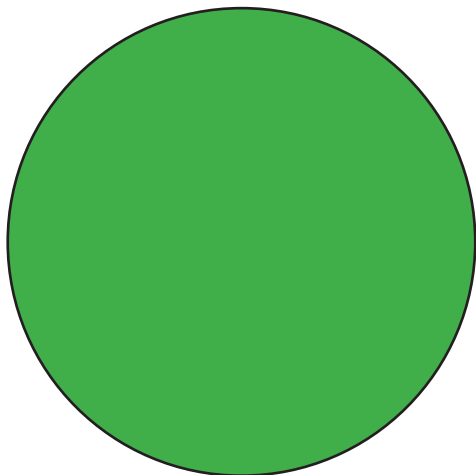
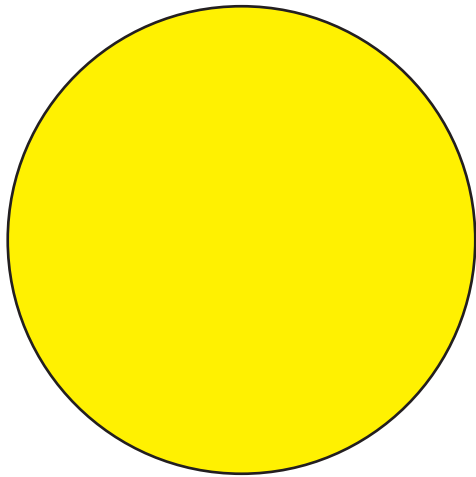
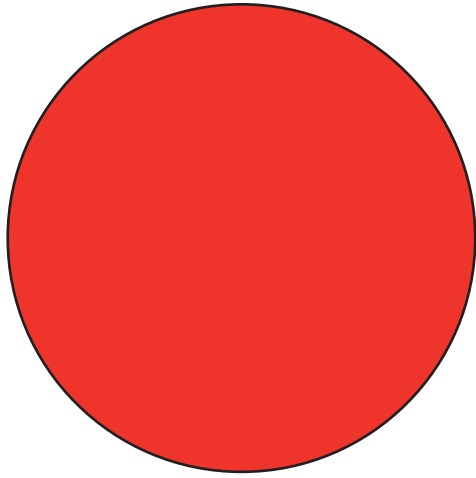


**Your friend  
bullies and  
makes fun  
of you or  
other kids at  
school.**

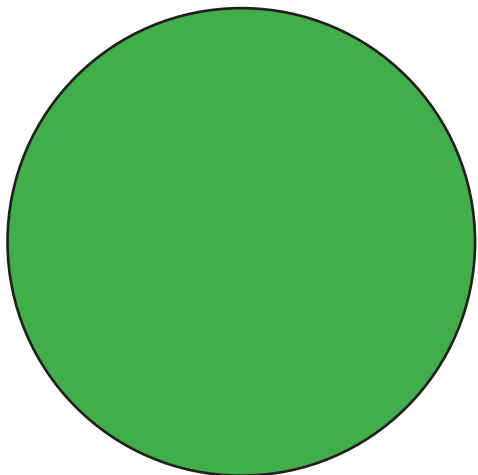
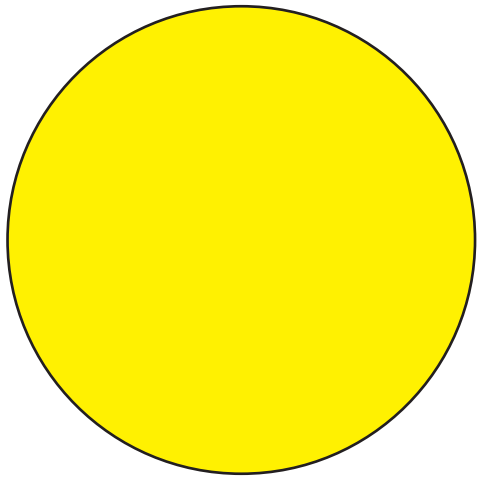
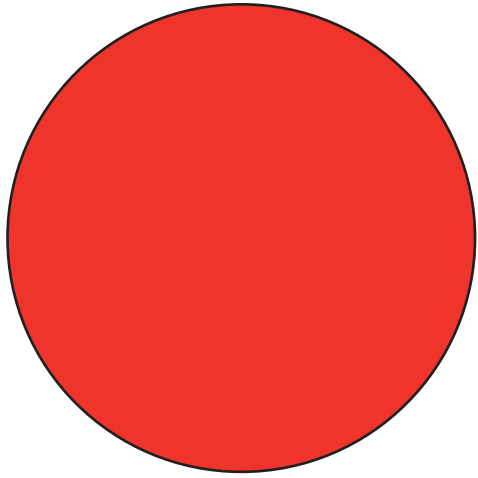


**Your friend  
pressures you  
to do things  
you do not  
want to do.**

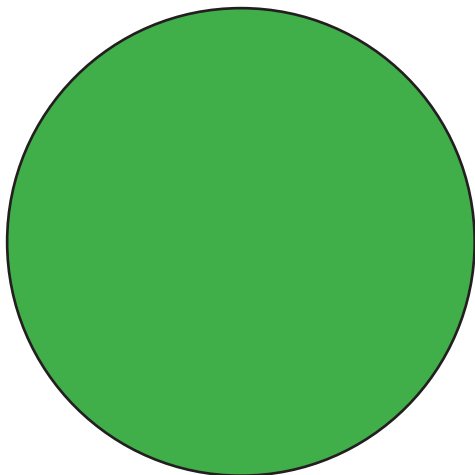
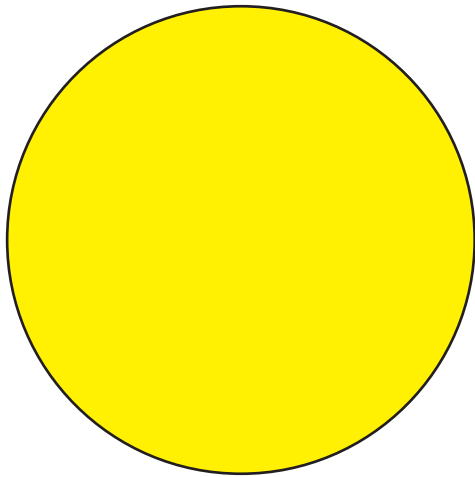
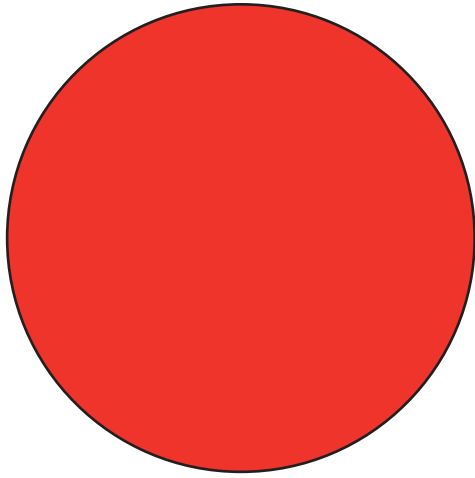




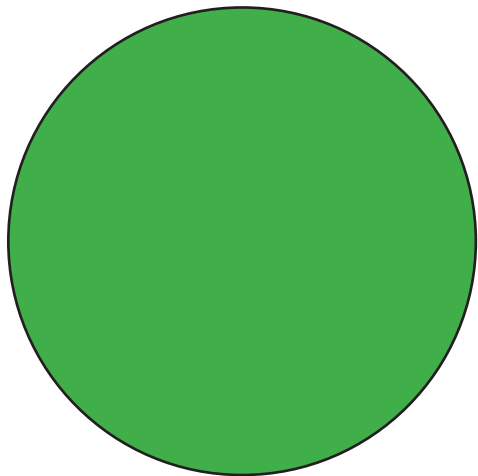
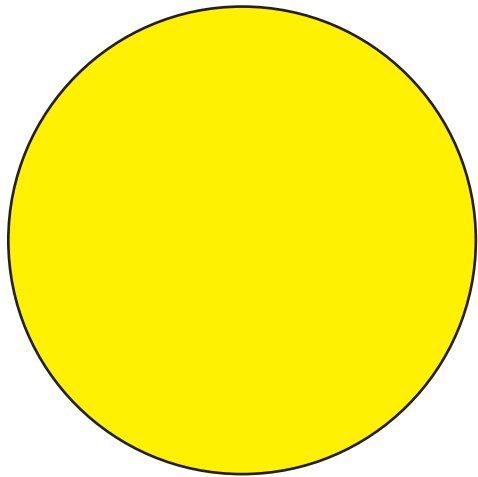
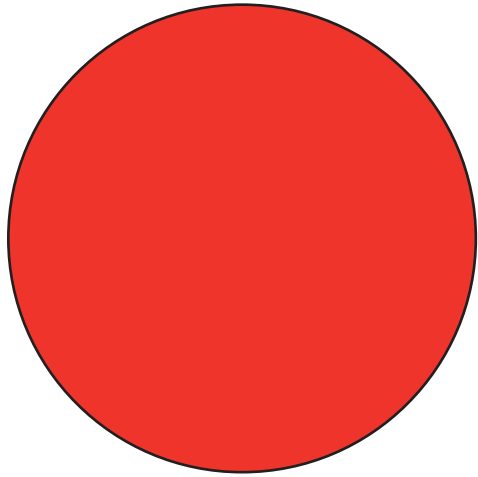
**You are nervous  
that if you tell  
your friend  
something  
personal, they  
will tell other  
people at  
school.**



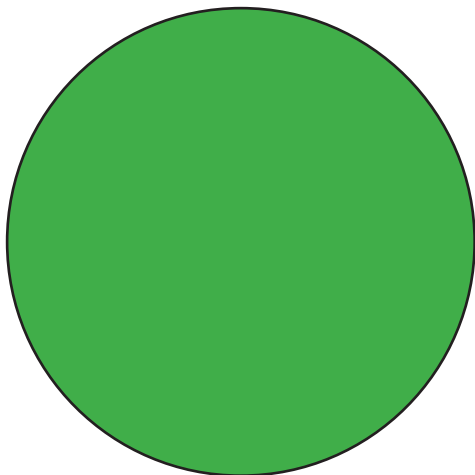
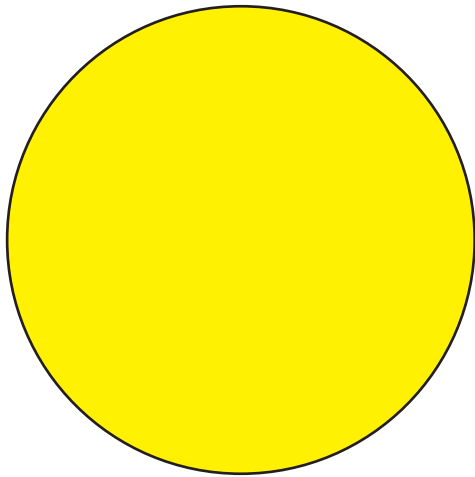
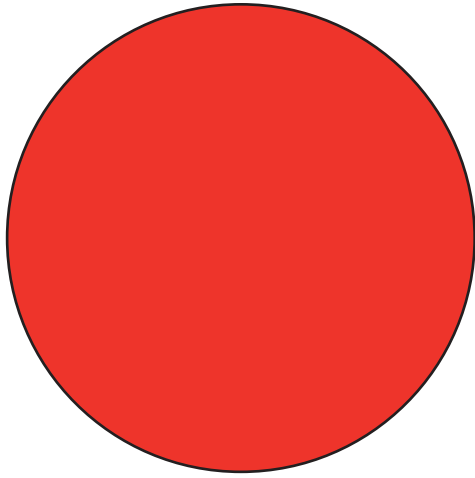
**Your friend  
sometimes  
makes fun of  
you.**



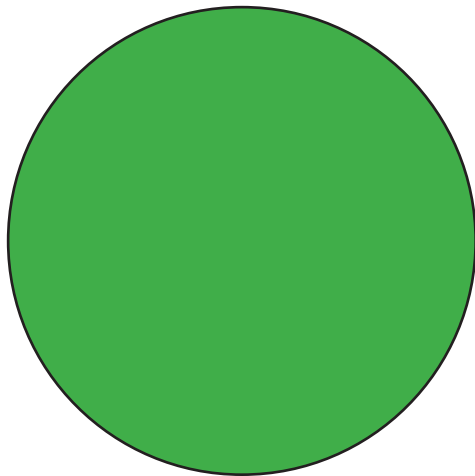
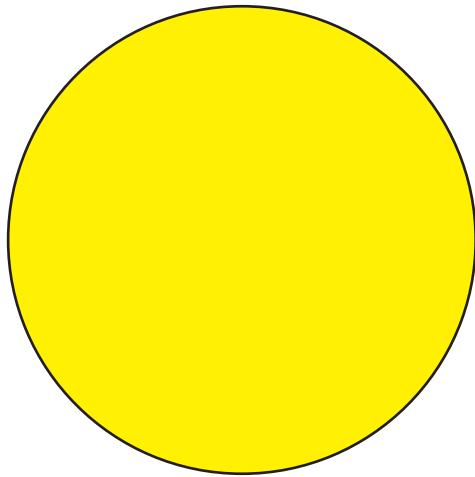
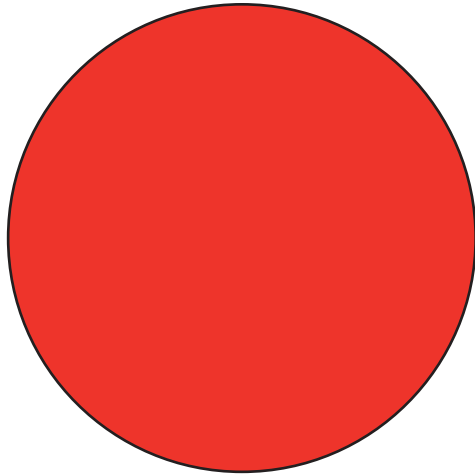
**You rarely  
get to plan  
what the two  
of you will do  
together.**



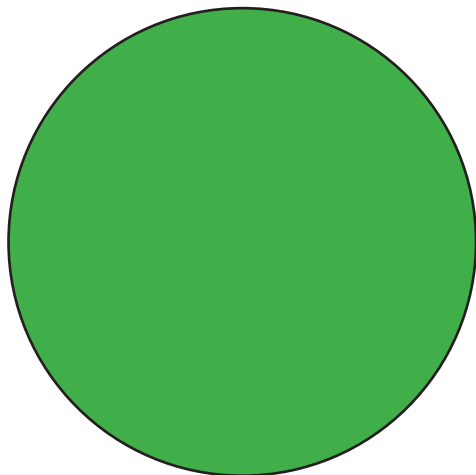
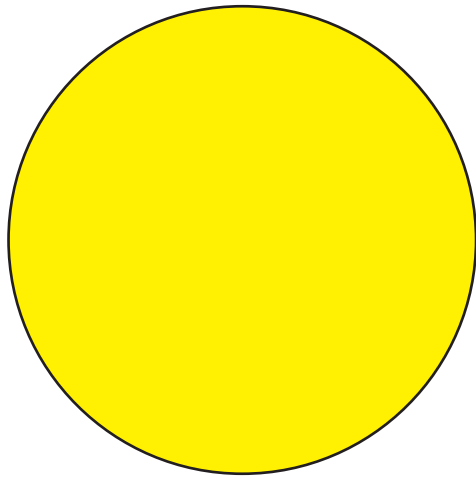
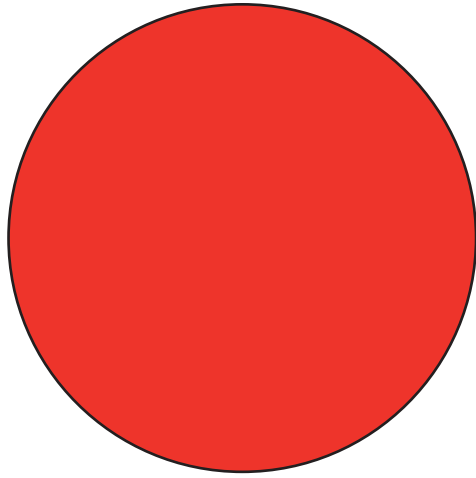
**Your friend  
tells you not  
to hang out  
with certain  
people.**



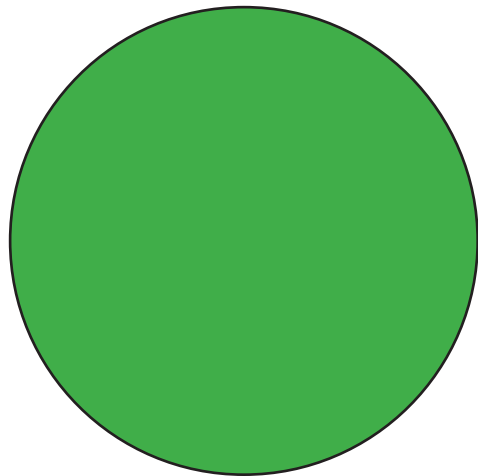
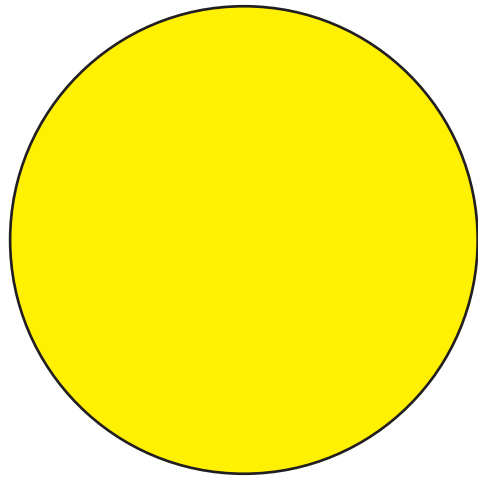
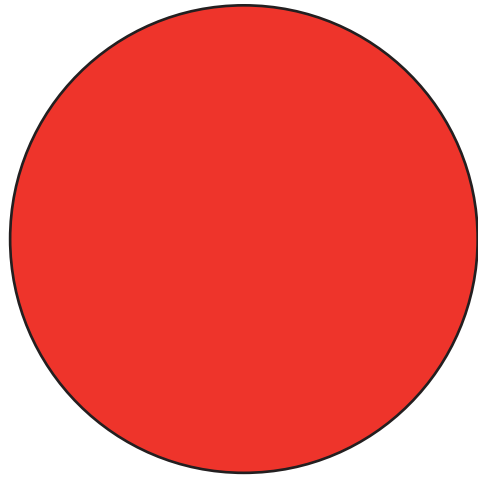
**You say that  
you agree  
with your  
friend, even  
when you  
really don't.**



**You usually  
feel happy  
when you  
are with this  
person.**

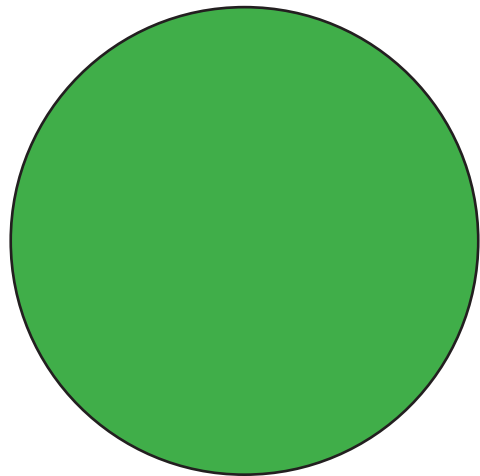
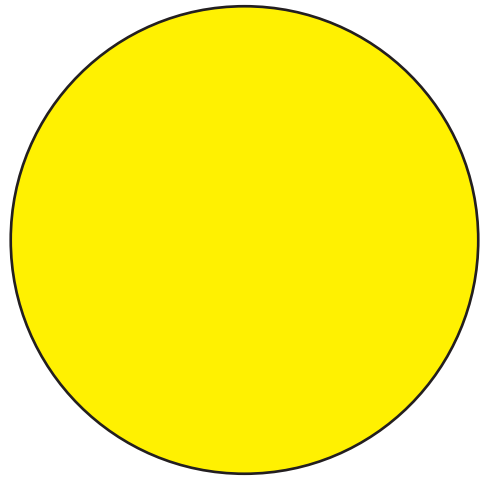
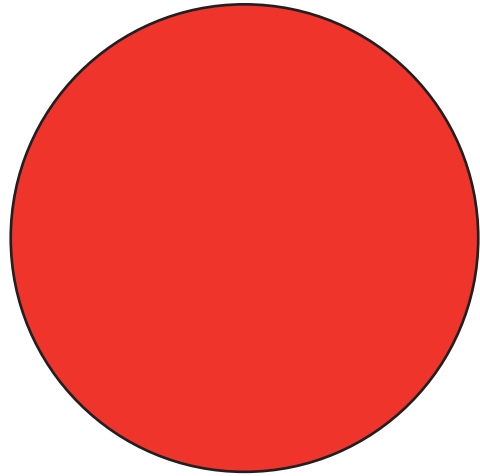


**Your friend  
respects  
your feelings  
and your  
opinions.**

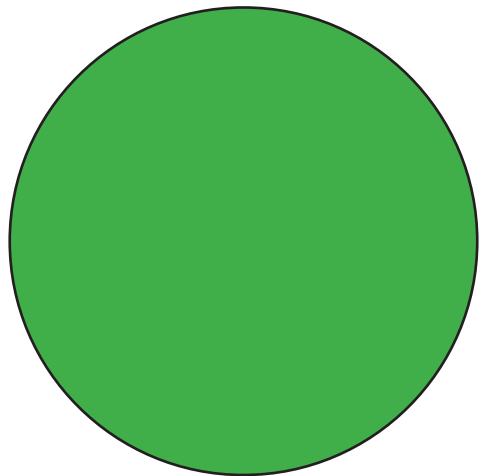
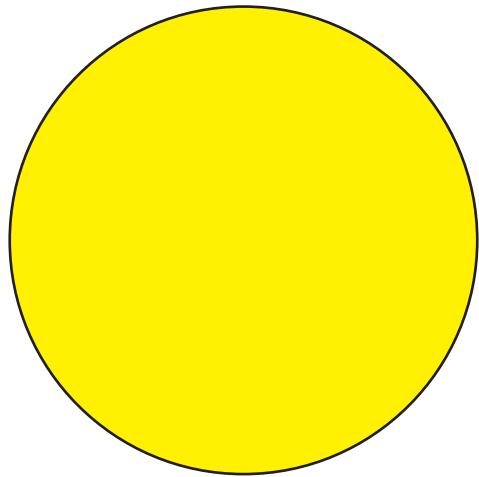
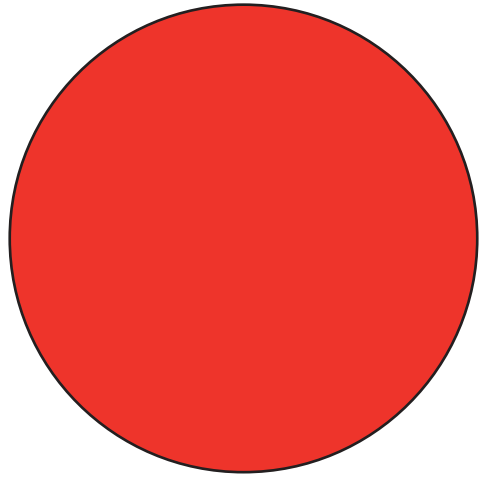


**Your friend  
talks to you  
about their  
feelings.**





**Your friend is  
happy when  
good things  
happen to  
you.**



**You enjoy  
being with this  
person, but  
you also enjoy  
spending time  
with other  
friends.**

# Homework Assignment

## *Solving Problems In Friendships*

Everyone will have some difficult times in their friendships. Even in the best of friendships, problems do arise. It is important that you are able to know the difference between good friendships and not-so-good friendships. One way you can do this is to decide if the problems you face with your friend are “warning signs” or “unhealthy/bad signs” in your friendship. By now, you have played the Friendship Stoplight Game with your class. Remember that “warning signs” make you feel a little worried about your friendship, while “unhealthy/bad signs” make you feel very uncomfortable.

Think of a time when you had a problem with a friend. For this homework assignment, you will be writing a solution to a problem in a friendship. The solution can be something you actually did to solve a problem, or it can be something you might do if the problem came up again. If you cannot think of a problem in your own life, please provide a solution to either Caitlin’s or Taylor’s problem which are listed on the following page.

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**On a lined piece of paper, complete all three tasks below.**

**Task # 1:** In one or two sentences, describe the problem you faced with your friend OR write down that you will be trying to solve Caitlin’s or Taylor’s problem.

**Task # 2:** Explain why you think the problem is a “warning sign” or a “unhealthy/bad sign”.

**Task # 3:** Write a solution that you used, or that a person could use, to solve the problem. If you are not sure how to solve the problem, try writing a few ideas that you think might work.

# Homework Assignment

## Solving Problems In Friendships

### Caitlin's Problem:

Caitlin and Suli are best friends. They see each other every day at school and sometimes get together on the weekend. Two weeks ago, an exchange student named Heather joined their class. Caitlin likes Heather and wants to be friends. Suli is not happy about this. Suli is jealous of the attention Caitlin is paying Heather and is nervous the friendship with Caitlin will be lost. Suli tells Caitlin not to be friends with Heather. Caitlin wants to be friends with both Suli and Heather. Caitlin is scared that Suli will be mad and want to stop being friends if Caitlin keeps spending time with Heather.

**How can Caitlin solve this friendship problem with Suli?**

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### Taylor's Problem:

Taylor and Lee are good buddies. They sit beside each other in class. Lee is really funny and makes Taylor laugh. Sometimes, Lee acts like a "class clown". Taylor likes school and is a good student. Lee struggles in school, usually goofs around during class and often gets in trouble with their teacher. When Taylor is trying to pay attention in class, Lee often talks and writes notes that distract Taylor. Their teacher sent home a note to Taylor's parents telling them that Taylor is not paying attention in class. Taylor is not happy. Taylor is proud to be a good student. Now, Taylor is nervous to have lower grades because of this and is also worried to lose Lee as a friend.

**How can Taylor solve this friendship problem with Lee?**

Criteria	poor	fair	good	very good	excellent
Student thoroughly completed all three tasks					
Quality of the solution(s) provided					

**Grade out of 10.....**

**/10**