

Supporting Your Peers

when they are feeling down

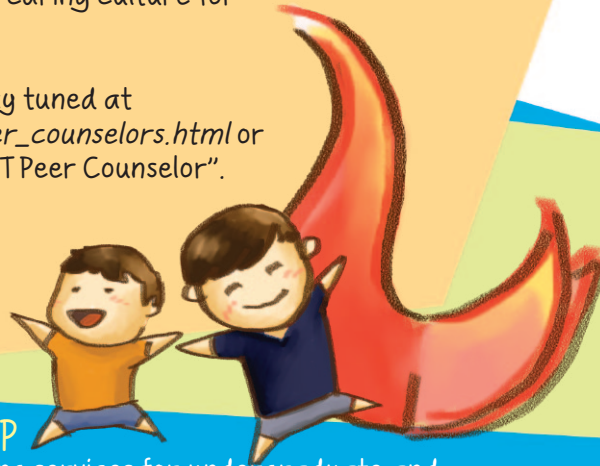


Showing love to someone you care for seems very natural, especially when you feel he or she is in need of support and companionship. But how can you do this in a better way and bring a positive impact?

The tips shared here may be useful for you.

Peer Counselor Training Program recruits undergraduate and postgraduate students every academic year to promote mental health awareness, to identify and assist students with psychological challenges and to build a caring culture for the HKUST community.

To learn more, please stay tuned at http://counsel.ust.hk/peer_counselors.html or our facebook page "HKUST Peer Counselor".



Seeking Professional Help

The University provides counseling services for undergraduate and postgraduate students. You may check out our Counselors' profiles on our webpage and make an appointment with them online. Two weeks' advance booking is allowed. Please be reassured that all information shared and anything discussed during counseling sessions will be strictly confidential.

Counseling and Wellness Center

Room 5003 (via lift 3)
Email: counsel@ust.hk

<http://counsel.ust.hk>
Tel: (852) 2358-6696

24/7 HEARing: (852) 8208-2688

This is a helpline exclusively for all HKUST students. Counselors are from Christian Family Service Centre.



Meet Our Counselors



香港科技大學 學生事務處 學生輔導中心
COUNSELING AND WELLNESS CENTER
STUDENT AFFAIRS OFFICE
THE HONG KONG UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



Before offering support

Ask yourself:

Am I willing to help?

- Do I feel really bad when I see this person suffer?
- Can I afford the time and patience to take care of this person all the way through to recovery?
- What if this person refuses or does not appreciate my help?
- Would my own mood and daily life be greatly affected?

Offering support

Some skills and attitudes could be helpful:

Active Listening

Be attentive and open, maintain good eye contact, stay interested. Paraphrase, clarify, and summarize what you understand from your peer as appropriate.

Genuine Care

Observe the person's needs, be more aware of the person's facial expressions, emotional changes and gestures. Offer comforting responses and suitable help.

Empathy

"That must be bad"; "I can feel how sad you are". Try to put yourself into the person's situation. Let the person know that you understand what they are going through.

Additional tips about Empathy: <https://youtu.be/1Ewgu369Jw>



What can I do to help?

- Ensure this person's safety? Make this person feel safe or stay calm? Spend a lot of time with this person?
- Listen and understand? Offer emotional support? Project hope?
 - Provide practical assistance and/or workable suggestions?
 - Make appropriate referrals when needed?

Respect and Accept

Listen first, try to understand the person's thoughts and behaviors before giving responses. Avoid being judgmental, use neutral words. You don't have to agree, but try to respect and accept why the person is acting the way they are.

Validate

Appreciate good intentions, acknowledge strengths, confirm the value of the issue as well as feelings.

Share and Give

Share your own perspectives and feelings in a non-judgemental way, suggest alternatives, offer practical assistance. Refer or even accompany the person to seek additional or professional help if needed. Allow room for decision making. Be thankful and keep everything confidential.

After supporting

Give yourself some space

It could be a cup of coffee to relax, some private time to settle your own thoughts and emotions, some exercise, watch a movie, or chat with friends. Anything you can think of to get yourself away from your peer's story which might have bothered you.

Get your own emotional support

If your emotions are affected, find someone you trust to talk about it. Seek help from Student Counselors if needed.

Embrace change

Allow time and space for your peer to take your advice. Respect the person's final decision (and pace) about whether or not to change. Be patient, do not give up. Continue to show your care and support. Remember, you treasure your peer the way he or she is and that they don't need to be the same as you.

