

→TEEN HELPLINE←

Imagine you have recently joined an online helpline that provides support to teens. Your job is to answer questions and give advice on how to deal with the problems other teens face.

Here are four examples of problems that young people have shared with the helpline.

“My schoolwork is stressing me out. Homework, tests and exams. It feels like I have no time for my friends and hanging out. I can’t relax. The only thing I think about is homework and studying. Whenever I have finished a test, I have another one two days later. I often forget things and I feel huge pressure most of the time. Can you help me?” Joshua 17, Manchester, England



“I need help. My problem is that I am going to another state to go to college next year, but I’m afraid because I’m very shy. It is difficult for me to meet new people and make friends. I’m scared that being alone is no good for me. I have been in a situation like this before, and I hope I can avoid repeating my bad experiences. So, what can I do to make new friends?”

Lorna 17, Nebraska, USA

“My parents are very strict and control every bit of my life. They say they’re protecting me, but don’t see how it makes me feel. I’m kind of an independent type, and I feel that my parents are taking my freedom away. It makes me feel like I’m trapped in a cage. I’ve tried talking to them a hundred times, but they don’t listen. I’m tired of all the restrictions. Please, help me before I go insane.”

Sam 16, Sydney, Australia



“My friends have told me that they think I’m addicted to social media. I am aware of my social image, and I have to admit I use my phone a lot. During classes my attention often gets drawn to online sites, and I lose control. I would like to start choosing differently, but I don’t know how. I have tried to stay focused on schoolwork, but it’s not enough.”

Jamie 16, Toronto, Canada

Choose one of the examples and write a response (500-600 words).

Include the following points:

- Sum up your understanding of the problem
- Give at least two pieces of advice
- Describe your personal opinion regarding the problem
- Reflect on how teenagers around the world face similar challenges.

A response to a helpline question shows understanding and offers advice without insisting that the person follows it. You might share some personal experience also.