

Cliques v. A Group of Friends

Kids need friends to support and accept them. Groups of friends can be supportive and fun. Some groups, however, can be hurtful and harmful.

Friends are important to teens. Adolescents often feel insecure. They struggle with who they are. They want to be accepted. Friendship groups can be supportive and fun. They fulfill a need to belong. Some groups, however, can be hurtful and harmful.

What is the difference between a group of friends and a clique? Groups of friends are usually formed around common interests. Kids gather together because they like music, sports, computers, games or even a school subject like Math.

Teens in these groups feel accepted. They naturally “fit in”, quirks and all. It is common for kids in these friendship groups to have one or two very close friends that occupy their time. Anyone with the same interest is welcome to move in and out of the group at any time.

This behavior is not the same in cliques. Cliques are tightly controlled friendship groups. Members do not gather because of shared interests. The goal of a

clique is to be the most popular group. Not everyone can be a member. In fact, kids must be invited to join.

Girls in cliques are under a lot of pressure to conform to the group’s rules and activities. They are often mean to others outside the clique. It is not uncommon for girls in cliques to have fun by bullying others. Girls in cliques are more vulnerable than girls who join a group of friends with a shared interest.

Your teen will have good and bad experiences with friends. You want your teen to find friends who are fun and supportive. A good friend is giving and forgiving. A teen’s friends and family should share the same positive values.



Help your child learn and practice the skills needed to choose and keep good friends who help — not hurt.

Be loving and supportive.

Talk about your values and beliefs.

Find groups or activities that support her interests and talents.

Encourage her to engage in activities that make her feel good about herself.

Discuss groups and cliques. Ask self-discovery questions. “How do your friends make you feel?” “Do you share the same beliefs?” “What makes a good friend?”

Encourage her to have a mind of her own. Remind her that she is the only one responsible for her behavior.

If she feels her group is starting to behave like a clique, encourage her to stand up for her beliefs. She may find that other girls in her group share her beliefs.

Brought to you by Parent Help Line at HSHS St. John’s Children’s Hospital to help keep kids safe, healthy and happy.



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