



Tourette syndrome and making friends

Making friends is an important part of growing up – as well as a skill you'll need for later life. You might think that having Tourette syndrome (TS) will make it more difficult to make friends but there are things you can do to make it easier. This information sheet contains a few suggestions for you to try. It forms part of our information pack about TS for young people and families.

Be brave and talk to people

We know it takes a lot of courage to start a conversation with someone you don't know but this really is the first step to making a new friend. Think of some questions to ask to start with – such as which is your favourite lesson or what do you enjoy doing outside of school.

Find people with similar interests

It helps to have something in common with your friends so make a point of looking for people who are interested in similar things to you. You might look for a club for people with the same interests or something for young people your own age. The local library is a good place to find out about these things.

Explain about your TS

You might want to explain your TS and tics to people – most people won't mind at all once they understand that tics just happen. Look at our information sheet on explaining TS to other people for a few more ideas.

Work at friendship

Friendship is all about caring about the other person and being interested in what they're doing and how they're feeling. There will be times when you'll have to work at carrying on being friends but it's worth the effort. If your friend is a bit quiet, ask them how they are and make sure they know you're there to listen if they want to talk.

Friends change

Remember that people change over time – this is completely normal. When you have a big change in your life, like going to secondary school, you're bound to make friends with new sets of people. It's important though to hang on to your earlier friendships – things may cool down for a while but they usually go back to normal.

So in short...

- Talk to people
- Share interests
- Explain your TS if you want
- Keep making friends