



FREE GUIDE 03 • MESSAGE STARTERS

Help Me Ask for Help

You do not need the perfect words. Choose a message, change anything you want, and send it only when and how it feels safe.

Before you use a message

If someone may monitor your device or accounts, do not save or send a message from them. Choose a safer device or ask a trained advocate to help you plan. You can also say these words aloud instead of writing them down.

To one trusted person

A small, direct request

"I am going through something difficult. I do not need you to solve it, but could you [call me / give me a ride / sit with me / help with a meal]? Please do not share this with anyone else without asking me first."

When you are not ready to explain

"I am not ready to share the details. I would still appreciate your company. Could you check in with me [today / this week]?"

To a peer support specialist

A first hello

"I read your profile and think your experience may relate to mine. I am not sure where to begin. Could you tell me how a first conversation works and what it costs, if anything?"

You choose what to share. You may pause, stop, or choose someone else. Find A Contagious Smile peer partners at acontagioussmile.com/peer-to-peer-support.



For school, work, or practical help

To a school contact

"My family is going through a difficult transition. I would like to discuss how to support my child and keep our contact and pickup information accurate. Who is the right person to speak with privately?"

To a supervisor or colleague

"I am managing a personal situation and may need [a schedule adjustment / time for an appointment]. I can share what is needed for work, but I would like to keep the personal details private."

Build your own one-sentence request

What I need right now:

What I am not ready to discuss:

The safest way and time to reply:

If a person responds badly

You are allowed to try someone else. One person's reaction does not define your worth or whether you deserve help.

A final reminder

Asking for one specific thing is enough. You do not have to earn support by telling the whole story. If you need safety planning, a trained domestic violence advocate can help tailor next steps to your situation.

This is educational peer-support information, not individualized safety, medical, mental-health, or legal advice. If you are in immediate danger in the U.S., call 911. For confidential domestic violence support, contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-SAFE (7233) or thehotline.org. If you or someone else is in a mental-health crisis in the U.S., call or text 988. Use a safer device if someone may monitor yours.

Sources: thehotline.org/plan-for-safety/internet-safety/ • thehotline.org/what-is-a-safety-plan/