

# Talk a Lot

## Problems

### What Would You Do?

Read the problems below and decide which group each one belongs in: **Children, Teenagers, Adults, or Elderly People.** There are four problems in each group. Then offer some advice to each person. Try to use some of the **discussion words, idioms, phrasal verbs, and slang words and phrases** from this unit in each answer:

1. We're thinking about putting your grandma in a home. She's eighty and she can't really look after herself any more. We can't have her here, because she'll clutter the place up. The problem is, she's dead-set against it...

2. The school holidays are looming and all of my best buddies are going away on holiday. I can't afford to do anything, but I don't want to get a crummy [not good] job. I can't face lying in front of the TV all summer...



3. There's an old man near us who lives on his own. I don't know if he's got any relatives, but we never see anybody going in or out. He looks in a bad way. I wonder what he lives on. I don't want to be nosey, but maybe I could help...

4. It'd cost a small fortune to put my daughter in a nursery full-time - almost as much as I earn. And my parents live 200 miles away. I could look after her myself, but I'd go mad spending every day at home with her...

5. It seems that Greg's been bunking off again. He says he can't stand his teachers and that the other pupils think he's a pushover. I don't want him to change schools, and I haven't got time to home-school him...

6. My husband started drinking three years ago, when his mum died. He's always kept it under control, but lately it's got worse - especially since he lost his job. Now he drinks every day, but he won't admit he's got a problem...

7. I have a good job, a loving family, a nice car, and plenty of money, but recently life has seemed more and more meaningless. What's the point of working hard and doing well, if this is all there is...

8. We were at the mall yesterday, when my mate took some clothes, put them in her bag, and walked out. Nobody saw and now she's dared *me* to do it. I know it's wrong, but I need a new bikini and I'm absolutely broke...

9. My wife left me last autumn, and now she wants to make it official. I was seeing other birds [women], and out partying most nights, but I love the old girl to death, and I know I can be faithful if I put my mind to it...

10. My husband is showing early signs of dementia, and I realise that things are only going to get worse. He won't go into a home, and we can't afford private care, but I know I won't manage on my own...

11. Somebody just phoned to tell me that my little Brian's been picking on other kids at school. The teacher was really angry! But he's such a nice boy at home. I really can't believe this news - my baby wouldn't hurt a fly...!

12. We decided we should both go together, so we sold everything and we're booked in for a slot next week. Paul's illness has been almost too much to bear, but now I'm wondering whether *we both* need to end it all...

13. I did time for two years for my part in a company fraud. It wasn't that serious, but now I can't get a job for love nor money, because I've been banged up. It's enough to make me want to go off the rails again...

14. The girl I fancy won't look twice at me, and my mates have started calling me "pizza face"... My mum thinks I should get a special cream from the doctor's, but there could be some unwanted side effects...

15. I'd *love* to go to university, but I don't want to be saddled with a massive debt when I finish. I'm too scared to get a loan, but I won't get a decent job without a degree, will I?

16. All of Pete's new friends are overweight, and he eats too much fast food when he's at their homes. He's really started piling on the pounds. How can I encourage him to exercise and eat more healthily?

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### Discussion Questions

- 1.** What is the biggest problem you have faced so far in your life? How did you deal with it? Who helped you? If you had the same problem again, would you tackle it in the same way? Has it helped you become stronger? How?
- 2.** Who do you usually go to for advice when you don't know what to do? Have you ever had counselling or therapy? Is it easier to trust a stranger than somebody close to you? Would you ever write in to a magazine for advice?
- 3.** Tell me about a problem that you've got at the moment. What caused it? How serious is it on a scale of 1 (not serious) to 10 (very serious)? How are you planning to handle it? Who will be the best person to lend a hand?
- 4.** Given the choice, would you rather have ten niggling problems or one big problem? Why?
- 5.** When did you last help somebody with their problems? What was the problem? What did you propose as a solution? What was the outcome? Would you recommend the same course of action if it happened again?
- 6.** Talk about troubles that your family and friends are facing at the moment. What are they and how are they coping? Are *you* part of the answer?
- 7.** Are you a caring person? Would you consider training to become a counsellor, and helping people for a living? Why? / Why not?
- 8.** What social problems do you notice each day? What impact do they have upon your life? Is education the key to reducing problems in society? Why? / Why not? What programmes should be run to teach people how to make more informed choices about their lives? Do most people bring their problems upon themselves? What steps can be taken to prevent problems occurring in the first place? What other ways are there to tackle social ills?

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Agree or Disagree?

Do you agree or disagree with these statements? Say why. Find out what your partner thinks, and mark the boxes with ✓ for agree and ✗ for disagree:

	Me:	My Partner:
1. My life is trouble-free.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. My friends consider me a really helpful person.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Problems are all in the mind! Live life to the full and you won't feel any problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. "A problem shared is a problem halved." – English Proverb	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I like to give advice, but I don't always take my own advice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Each person's individual problems are more pressing to them than the problems of all their friends and family combined.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I need to talk to somebody about my problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I would make a really good counsellor.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. "There is no human problem which could not be solved if people would simply do as I advise." – Gore Vidal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I've been through a lot in my life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. "If you can solve your problem, then what is the need of worrying? If you cannot solve it, then what is the use of worrying?" – Shantideva	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. I always try to avoid thinking about difficult things.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Adults tend to have more problems than children, but teenagers have to handle the most problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. "No problem is so formidable that you can't walk away from it." – Charles M. Schulz	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Weak-willed people will always have more problems than strong people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Any problem in life can be solved by money.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>