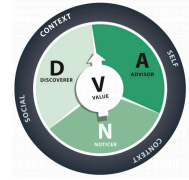


# DNA-v tip sheets for kids



## Helping kids with friendships

This tip sheet is for kids under 12 and their parents/carers or teachers. The first section is for adults to read. The second section has activities to do with your kids.

This tip sheet is on making friends. Look out for our next tip sheet on resolving conflicts.

### Nothing beats having a friend

We all want and need friends. It is a deep longing within all humans. Loneliness, which is defined as feeling isolated from friends (rather than being alone), is linked to many physical and mental health problems. And today we live in an increasingly lonely and disconnected world. Our kids play on electronic devices instead of with others. They have arranged play dates where a select few are invited instead of playing in playgrounds or community areas where everyone joins in. They are growing up in a materialistic world that defines a child as worthy because they have a certain symbol on their sneakers, when our real worth and happiness comes from being able to connect with other people.

How can we help kids to cope with this? We must skill them up on how to make and keep friends, and how to negotiate our modern world where it can be difficult to find supportive friends. Often we see children in the clinic whose primary issues are: struggles with friends in school, feeling like lonely outsiders, or feeling socially excluded, pressured, or bullied.



You can use DNA-v to help your kids learn more about friendships. Perspective taking, called "social-view" in DNA-V, is being able to share another person's emotions, to understand their point of view, and to see how it may be different from one's own view. Young people who have strong social view skills are more likely to build supportive friendships <sup>1</sup>, and behave in a kind and prosocial way towards others <sup>2</sup>. The ability to take a social-view is linked to a wide variety of well-being measures. Social problems are often a mix of poor perspective taking and reactivity.

### DNA-v reminder

Discoverer, noticer, and advisor are simply words we use to remember three skills we can develop in order to live a life with value and vitality.

**Advisor** = advice I give myself about things that are happening

**Noticer** = what I notice inside me and around me

**Discoverer** = what I do, test, try and track in the world

The Noticer, Advisor, and Discoverer tip sheets explain in more detail. [Click here to download.](#)



DNA-v social view<sup>3</sup> can help kids learn to:

1. Develop social skills so they get better at taking another's perspective. A key skill developed in this tip-sheet.
2. Expand their own self view. By seeing from other people's perspective, they can discover how normal it is to be worried about what others think. (See the DNA-V self-view tip sheet.)

3. Use D, N and A skills in a social setting to build positive social relationships and deal effectively with conflict (see the Discoverer, Noticer and Advisor tip sheets).

## Become a DNA-v detective

DNA-v detective's use stories, pictures and television shows to guess what people are thinking or feeling. Over time, we want to help kids learn that how we look on the outside does not always portray what is going on inside us. Sharing different views can help us.

We want kids to know that we have happy and sad feelings, we all have positive and negative thoughts, and we can act impulsively or thoughtfully, *but* we don't always feel, think or act the same at the same time. For example, we can feel frustrated but still act respectfully towards others.

Friendships are like this too. We're not always sad together, or happy together. Sometimes friends have totally different experiences even in the same situation. We have to learn how to ask, guess, and check our guesses about how others are feeling. Sometimes we can guess correctly but sometimes we are way off.



### DNA-v Detective Game

Look at the drawing on this page, the one in the classroom. It is deliberately vague, like many social situations. Have shared discussion with your child using some of these questions: -

- Which one do you think is Sally?
- Why is the teacher saying she is taking DNA-v 'bonus points' too far?
- What do you think the teacher is thinking and feeling?
- What do you think Sally is thinking and feeling?
- What do you think is happening for the other students?
- How would you know if you were right?

Practicing similar activities with stories or pictures can help your child with social perspective taking.

## Practice D,N, A discussions

Talk often about your child's views and share yours too. The aim is learning that other people can be the same, or different. (choose a time when no one is angry or upset for these kinds of discussions):

### Seeing things through different eyes

- What I am noticing right now? What are you noticing now?
- What is my advisor saying? What is your advisor saying? (i.e. What am I telling myself about this situation)?
- What sort of things could I do or discover now? What sort of things can you do or discover now?

## Teaching kids how to create pals: Pause, ask, listen and share.

DNA-v social-view aims to teach children to step into another shoes. We want kids to know that the situations they struggle with are really hard, and would be hard for us adults too. For example, we all feel bad when another excludes us. And, sometimes we react in ways that are different to each other or unexpected. The idea is to learn how and when to share what we are experiencing. Begin in safe places, i.e. with safe adults, families and established friends.

Begin to practice sharing in small ways, remembering it's a hard skill to master.

Help kids to slowly try out the 4 steps of PALS by discussing shared experiences together.

PALS is not just for difficulties, it can be used for sharing a fun experience, a story,

- What new things might I discover to help us be together? What might you discover to help us be together?

### Seeing things together

- How are we the same? How are we different?
- What can we notice now?
- What do we do now?
- What do we both like?
- What can we share?

Remember we are not aiming for your child to be correct or the same as you. We are wanting them to learn to be flexible with others, and to learn to be open to asking about and sharing with the people they love.

### PALS

#### 4 steps to learning another person's perspective

Try this with 2 children, and one adult leading.

1. **pause** - just stop for a second and notice one or two breaths. (Sometimes a few slow breaths can be helpful)
2. **ask** - them what their D, N or A is right now. (what is their advisor telling them, or what do they notice in their body/feelings, or what they have been just doing (discoverer))
3. **listen** - ask them to guess the other person's D, N, or A experience right now
4. **share** - come up with shared discussions.
  - How alike are you?
  - How different are you?
  - What clues did they see in the other person?

(Note: you can do 2, and 3 in any order)

anything.

Keep in mind that your goal here is to help your kids get a sense of their own D, N and A behaviour, and then to see that other people have D, N and A behaviours too. They might be the same or different.

Remember, your child won't have the same thinking skills as you, so don't expect them to come up with the same insights you have.

Go slowly here, model your own D, N, and A skills by speaking it out loud, and help them walk through the 4 key steps (they might be 4 simple steps but we all know they are very hard to do!).

If you and your child have a totally different view on an experience, it's ok. That is what we are trying to learn. We are the same, but we see things differently at times.

## Coming next...

Tip sheet on helping kids with friendship difficulties, conflict and bullying.

## Resources - all free!

- See the **DNA-v basics tip sheets** for more information on discoverer, noticer, advisor and values.
- See the DNA-v **social-view for families** tip-sheet for more on helping families get along. It can be used for friends too.
- Click here to download the **DNA-v self-view tip sheet** for helping to understand self-concepts and practice self-kindness.
- Click here to read about the **DNA-v game**
- For more information on DNA-v for kids go to [www.thrivingforkids.com](http://www.thrivingforkids.com) or [www.thrivingadolescent.com](http://www.thrivingadolescent.com)

## References

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