Have you ever had anyone slam a door in your face (or nearby)? It doesn’t feel good. Their angry response may make you feel nervous, uncomfortable, or even afraid. You may also feel invalidated and disrespected. Additionally, you may feel annoyed, defensive, or angry at them in return. Slamming the door is not a positive, helpful response. Likewise, people can verbally “slam the door” by making hurtful comments that make others feel left out or shut down, and they can experience all of the same feelings as when a physical door is slammed. It is important to be aware of the impact your words have on others and to respond in positive, helpful ways.

“Slammer” Responses/Things to Avoid _______    Helpful Responses

Read each scenario (one at a time) and discuss with your partner what make the response a “slammer.” Each person should then write down a helpful response to replace the “slammer.” Once you are both finished, share your responses with your partner and provide each other gentle, helpful feedback before moving on to the next scenario.

1. One friend has been sad and depressed the last week for no apparent reason. The other friend says, “You are being too much of a downer. I don’t think I can hang out with you anymore.”

Helpful Response _________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________
2. One friend is stressing out over life and is over-eating to deal with the stress. The other friend says, “You are so grossing me out, aren’t you worried you will get fat?”
Helpful Response

3. One friend has anxiety so bad that she throws up or gets sick to her stomach for no particular reason. The other friend says, “You are such a drama queen, everyone knows you are totally faking it.”
Helpful Response

4. One friend has been overly happy the last four days and exhibiting some atypical behavior. The other friend says, “Stop being such a spaz. You are totally freaking me out.”
Helpful Response

5. One friend has been having a tough time sitting in class and paying attention. The other friend says, “I know this class is boring but you need to stop being such a clown.”
Helpful Response

6. One friend is socially awkward and sometimes says things that don’t make sense to the rest of the group. A friend says, “You are so weird. I don’t know why we put up with you. You know no one really likes you.”
Helpful Response

7. One friend daydreams a lot in class. They frequently ask classmates what the teacher said to do and/or need to have instructions repeated for them. Another friend says, “Why don’t you EVER just pay attention?”
Helpful Response
Each of the following scenarios describe a situation in which a friend or classmate might be struggling. You need to respond in a positive/helpful manner. Write your own response first, and then share/discuss with your partner. NOTE - You could have a verbal response (what you might say) or an action response (what you might do).

8. A classmate gets severe panic attacks, especially when a big test is coming up. His/her teachers have announced that next Friday their will be a big tests in both math and a science. You can see that he/she is already worried. How might you help?

Helpful Response __________________________________________________________

9. A classmate has just returned to school after being in the hospital for two weeks to deal with a severe bout of depression. He/she is scared to come back to class for fear that they will be stigmatized, or gossiped about, because of their mental health issues.

Helpful Response __________________________________________________________

10. A new student showed up in class last week. You and your friends notice that he/she struggles with making friends. You have also noticed that some kids are starting to pick on him/her. You have decided to be helpful. What might you do?

Helpful Response __________________________________________________________

11. A classmate is diagnosed with ADHD. During in-class work time, he/she struggles with being able to focus and stay on task. How might you help?

Helpful Response __________________________________________________________

12. A friend in your group is struggling with anorexia. Other friends within the group have started to notice this person’s weight loss and are really worried. Today some of you plan to talk to your friend about your concerns for his/her health.

Helpful Response __________________________________________________________
Give an example of a real-life “slam the door” scenario and discuss what happened. (You may have been the “slammer,” the recipient, or an observer.) What could have been said or done differently? What would have been a more helpful response to the situation?