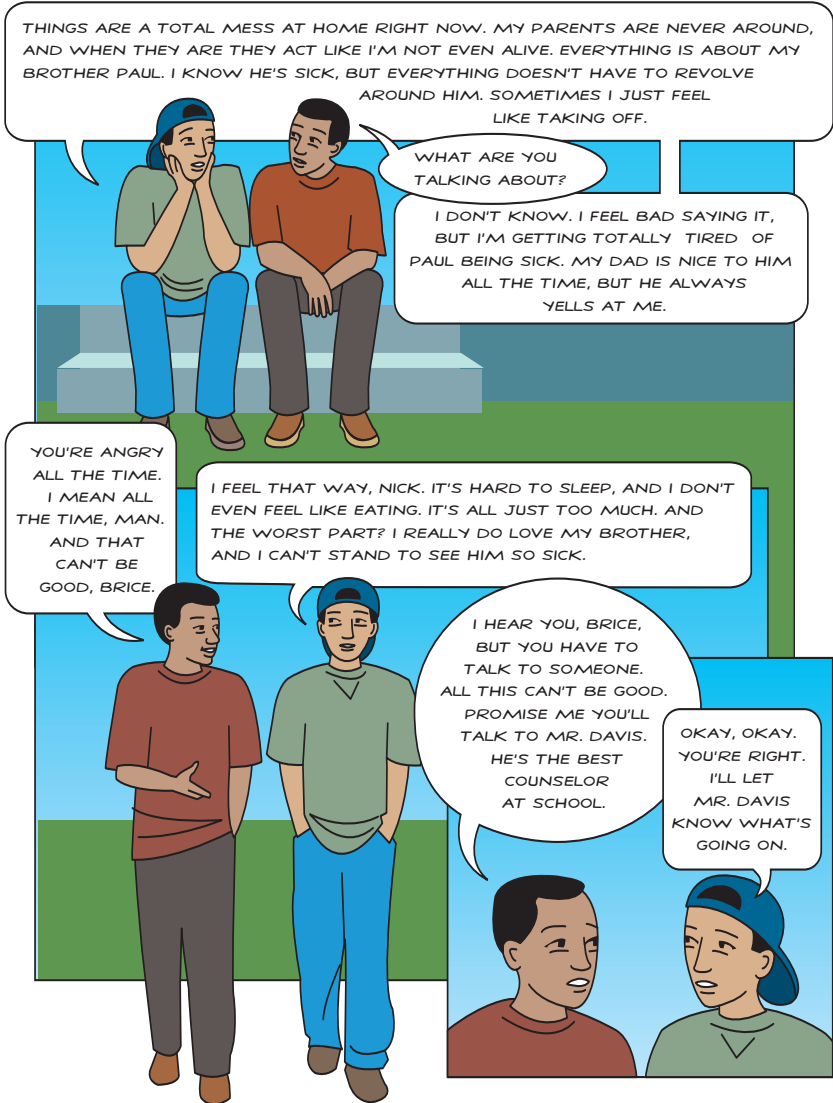


Talking With a Counselor

Sometimes talking to friends and your parents is not enough. When you are having a hard time, it can be helpful to talk to a counselor. Friends Brice and Nick talk about what is happening in Brice's home:



Why Go to a Counselor?

Remember—going to a counselor means you have the courage to recognize that you're going through a tough time and need some help. **Simply put:**

talking to a counselor can help you feel better.

Counselors are specially trained to help you sort out your feelings, gain new skills to deal with what's going on, and find solutions that work for you. Teens who've talked with a counselor say it helped to talk to someone

"It took a few visits, but then I got to know and trust my counselor. She really listened to me and was like a coach who helped me learn new skills and see new ways of looking at things. I grew a lot!"

—Samantha, age 15

"I was having a really hard time dealing with my sister's cancer. But I tried to be 'perfect' and pretend that everything was okay. I didn't want to stress my parents out even more. One day my aunt said it might help to talk with a counselor—even if it seemed like I had it all together. I was nervous at first, but I went. The counselor made me feel like I could tell her anything—and I finally opened up about how I was really feeling. It felt great to just have someone focus on me and what I was going through." —Jen, age 16

outside their circle of friends and family who didn't take sides, who they could trust. Others say they learned a lot about themselves and felt better able to face life's challenges.

Finding a Counselor

There are many ways to find a counselor. Here are some suggestions to get you started:

- Talk to your parents or someone else that you trust. Let them know you would like help to get through this difficult time. Tell them that you would like to talk to a counselor. Ask for help making appointments and getting to visits. Sometimes you can even bring a friend.
- Ask a nurse or social worker at the hospital if they can give you the name of someone you can talk to.
- Ask your guidance counselor or school nurse if you can talk to him or her.

Joining a Support Group

A good outlet for connecting with teens that are going through the same thing that you are is a support group. Some groups meet in person; others meet online. Some groups go out and do activities together. At first this may not sound like something



you want to do. Other teens have thought the same thing—until they went to a meeting. They were surprised that so many other kids felt the same way they did and had advice that really seems to work. Your parents or another trusted adult can help you find a support group.