



If you would like more information on the **Friends Program**, please visit our website at: [www.mhaorangeny.com](http://www.mhaorangeny.com), click the "Programs and Services" link and then click the link for the "Friends Schedule." The schedule is updated during each module.

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**Mental Health Association  
in Orange County, Inc.**



Mental Health Association is a not for profit organization established in 1959 to promote the mental health and emotional well being of Orange County residents, working towards reducing the stigma of mental illness, developmental disabilities, and providing support to victims of sexual assault and other crimes.

In partnership with service recipients, families, volunteers and the community, MHA strives to fulfill its mission through culturally competent advocacy, direct services, public education, and responsiveness in times of community emergency.

The MHA family shares a system of values and behaviors that recognizes and respects the presence and contributions of all diverse groups.



**Mental Health Association  
in Orange County, Inc.**

**Friends  
Program**

*Everyone Needs A Friend...*



## FRIENDS PROGRAM

- Are you looking for social interaction for your child?
- Does your child have a hard time making and maintaining friendships?
- Does your child struggle with fitting in socially or at school functions?
- Does your child have difficulty in controlling their anger in social situations?
- Does your child have difficulty understanding facial cues and body language?

If you answered **YES** to some of these questions, then your child may be a match for the Friends Program!

“Friendships make the world go round”



Friends are vital to school-age youth’s healthy development. Research has found that youth who lack friends can suffer from emotional difficulties later in life.

Friendships provide youth with much more than just fun playmates. Friendships help youth develop emotionally and morally. In interacting with friends, youth learn many social skills, such as how to communicate, cooperate, and solve problems.

They practice controlling their emotions and responding to the emotions of others. They develop the ability to think through and negotiate different situations that arise in their relationships.

Having friends even affects school performance. Youth tend to have better attitudes about school and learning when they have friends there.

In short, youth benefit greatly from having friends.

*-University of Florida Study*

## FRIENDS PROGRAM Facts...

**FRIENDS** program is a social group for youth ages 9-17 that have social, emotional or behavioral challenges.

The goal of the **FRIENDS** program is to provide a guided, nurturing environment in which social skills can be developed and practiced through interaction with peers.

**FRIENDS** program consists of six modules composed of six weeks of group meetings that run throughout the year in various locations throughout Orange County.

There are two age groups that run on varied weekday evenings for one hour and fifteen minute sessions. The younger group consists of youth ages 9-13 years old. The older group consist of youth ages 14-17 years old.

**FRIENDS** program is free! There may be minimal fees associated with some of the community activities.

**FRIENDS** program is facilitated by an MA, CTS, CEP.

**FRIENDS** program always welcomes parent’s concerns, issues and involvement.