

2 Complete the sentences with words in the box.

babysit/let down comfort/mourning
desperate/an apprenticeship down/the bill
mentor/expertise rough/grab
stranded/pulled over welcoming/rave

- 1 She acted as a _____ to me when I first started.
She was always happy to share her _____.
- 2 She was a real _____ to me when I was
_____ the loss of my grandfather.
- 3 He was sleeping _____ and so I decided to
_____ some food for him from the local store.
- 4 I offered to _____ for them because they'd
been _____ by the person they usually use.
- 5 They'd been incredibly _____ while we stayed
there, so we gave them a _____ review.
- 6 I was _____ on the side of the road and he
_____ and offered me a lift.
- 7 We went out the other night. I was feeling a bit
_____ because I'd lost my job, so when we
asked for _____ at the end of the evening, she
paid for everything.
- 8 I'd been unemployed for ages and was getting
_____. Then they offered me _____.

3 Work in pairs. What do you think the relationship is between each of the pairs of people in the sentences in Exercise 2?

The bystander effect

A few years ago, I was on a bus. It was quite crowded at the front so I pushed my way to the back, where I found a man lying on the floor, apparently asleep. Passengers were standing around him, occasionally glancing down. When the back door opened at the next stop, some people saw him and didn't get on, others just stepped over the man and took a seat. I had no idea how long he'd been lying there but, finally, a couple got on. They were shocked and started asking what had happened. Had anybody told the bus driver? No one knew. They got the bus driver to stop and an ambulance was called.

Some days later I saw a piece on the news about the man. Apparently, he'd passed out because of his diabetes, but, thanks to the couple, he'd made a complete recovery. The news didn't mention how many other people, including me, had let him down. Why had that crowd stood by and not helped? I have since learnt we were in the grip of what's known as the 'bystander effect'.

Psychologists have identified several causes of this phenomenon. Firstly, we may not realise it's an emergency, and if others show little reaction it confirms to us there's no need to help. Secondly, crowds reduce our feelings of personal responsibility. The more people there are watching, the more likely we are to think someone else will help. And finally, we may be scared that our help will lead to greater problems.

Understanding this now, if I have any doubt in similar situations, I always help. In the end, the worst thing that happens is that there really is no problem. I do sleep a bit better at night with a much better feeling than the guilt of having done nothing.