

The Right Words in Under 10 Minutes

Home + classroom safe (ages 5–16)



A simple, story-supported framework that helps parents, carers, and teachers explain organ and tissue health journeys — calmly, gently, and without medical jargon or pressure.



Anita Demchenko

Founder, Donate Buddies & Every Breath She Takes

Double-Lung Transplant Recipient,
Parent/Carer Communication Resource (Ages 5–16)

“Most families don’t need more information — they need the right words when a child asks a big question. Donate Buddies makes those conversations feel calm, safe, and possible.”

Ages 5–16

Emotionally safe
language

Under 10 Minutes

To use the framework

4-Step Framework

Safety → Simple words →
Calm answer → Close

Home + Classroom Safe

For parents, carers &
teachers

A calm way to talk about big health journeys (Ages 5–16)

For: Parents, carers, teachers, hospital support teams & community organisations

Solves: “I don’t have the right words to explain this to a child.”

✓ Ages 5–16 ✓ Under 2 minutes to start ✓ 4-step framework. ✓ Home + classroom safe

What this is / what this is not

✓ What this IS

- Simple, calm language for real conversations
- Age-appropriate words a child can understand
- A tool to open the door — not close it

✗ What this is NOT

- Medical advice or clinical information
- A script about surgical procedures
- Pressure to decide, act, sign up, register, or “choose donation”
- Scare-based or graphic explanations
- A replacement for your care team

The “Right Words” Framework (4 steps • under 2 minutes)

Step 1 — Open with a Safety Sentence

Choose what feels natural:

- “You’re safe, and it’s okay to ask big questions about donation.”
- “We can talk about this gently — and we can stop anytime you want.”
- “I might not have every answer, but I’ll explain it calmly and simply.”

Step 2 — Name the body part (one sentence only)

Keep it body-positive and calm:

- “Tissue donation means sharing helpful parts like skin, corneas, bone tissue, and heart valves.”
- “Tissues can help someone heal, move, see, or recover — without scary details.”
- “It’s different from organ transplant, but it can still change someone’s life.”

Step 3 — Explain what’s happening (without fear)

Pick one:

- “Sometimes doctors use donated tissue to help a person’s body repair or heal.”
- “A trained team handles tissue donation with respect and care.”
- “Captain Buddy and Tina the Tissue explain this in calm, kid words.”

Step 4 — Keep it calm (Short vs Story)

- Short version: “That’s the main thing about tissue donation. You can ask more questions whenever you’re ready.”
- Story version: “Captain Buddy can explain tissue donation gently — short version or story version?”
- Buddy version: “Tina the Tissue explains tissue donation in kid words.”

Quick Guide – DO / DON'T

✓ DO

- Start with safety – reassure before you explain
- Use body-positive, simple language
- Let the child lead with questions
- Pause and breathe – your calm is contagious

✗ DON'T

- Use medical jargon or clinical terms
- Make it about urgency, time pressure, or numbers
- Let adult worry lead the conversation
- Promise outcomes you can't guarantee

Ready-to-use scripts (Common hard questions)

“What does tissue donation mean?”

Ages 5–9:	“It means sharing something that can help another person’s body. Donated tissue can help someone heal.”
Ages 10–12:	“Tissue donation means donated tissue can be used to help someone’s body repair or recover.”
Ages 13–16:	“Tissue donation means donated tissue may help someone recover or repair parts of their body. It’s handled with care.”

“What kinds of tissue can be donated?”

Ages 5–9:	“Some tissues are like helpers – like skin, corneas (eyes), and bone tissue.”
Ages 10–12:	“Tissue can include skin, corneas, heart valves, and bone tissue.”
Ages 13–16:	“Tissue donation can include corneas, skin, heart valves, and bone tissue.”

“Where does donated tissue come from?”

Ages 5–9:	“It can come from a person who has died, and their family said yes to helping others. It’s handled with care.”
Ages 10–12:	“It usually comes from a donor who has died, with family consent. Trained teams handle it respectfully.”
Ages 13–16:	“It usually comes from a deceased donor, with family consent. It’s managed by trained teams with respect and care.”

“Does tissue donation hurt the person who donates?”

Ages 5–9:	“No. Donation only happens in ways that don’t hurt the person. Grown-ups handle the details.”
Ages 10–12:	“No. Donation is done respectfully and carefully, and it doesn’t hurt the donor.”
Ages 13–16:	“No. Donation is managed by trained teams with respect and care. We can keep details simple.”

“What is the difference between organ and tissue donation?”

Ages 5–9:	“Organs are big body helpers. Tissue is smaller parts that help fix or heal.”
Ages 10–12:	“Organs do big jobs. Tissue helps repair or replace smaller parts of the body.”
Ages 13–16:	“Organs replace a whole organ. Tissue donation helps repair or replace parts like corneas or skin.”

“Will the donor’s body still look normal?”

Ages 5–9:	“Yes. The person is treated with care and respect, and their body is looked after.”
Ages 10–12:	“Yes. Donation is done respectfully, and the person’s body is treated with care.”
Ages 13–16:	“Yes. Donation is managed respectfully by trained teams, and the person’s body is cared for.”

The One-Minute Close (end well)

Choose one:

- “I’m really proud of you for asking about tissue donation. We can talk again anytime you need.”
- “Right now, you’re cared for and not alone. Let’s do something normal together – what would you like to do next?”
- “If you want, Tina the Tissue and Captain Buddy can help us find the right words – no rush at all.”

For support teams – how organisations can use this

This mini-pack is designed to sit comfortably inside resources already offered by hospital support teams, school counsellors, and community health organisations. It requires no specialist training – simply print or share digitally as a gentle starting point for families, siblings, and classrooms navigating organ and tissue donation conversations. The language is written to complement, not replace, professional guidance.

Disclaimer: Educational resource only – not medical advice. Always follow the guidance of your treating care team.