

GETTING & STAYING CONNECTED

Lunch and Learn Handout & Resources

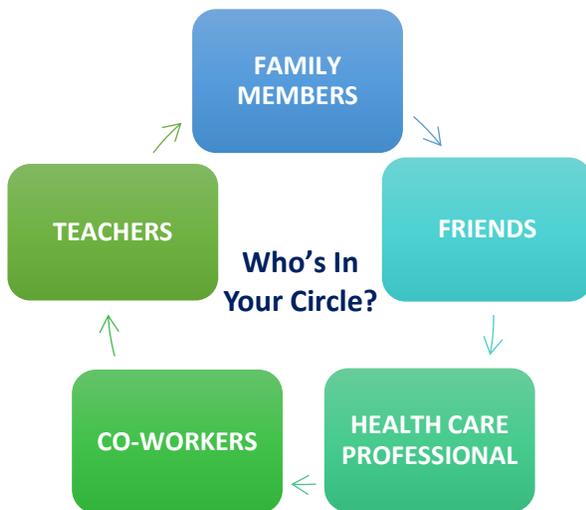


What is a Social Support Network?

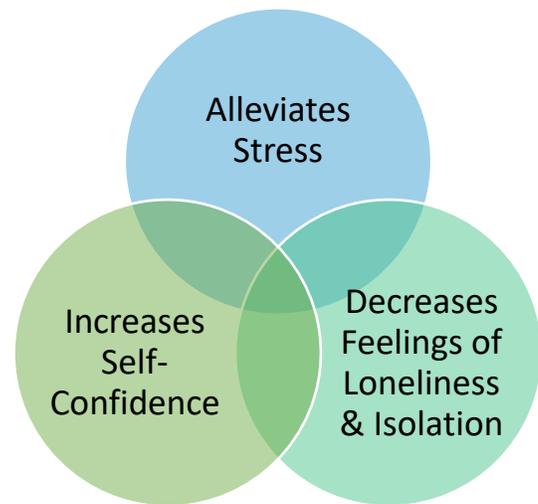
A social network is a community of people who can provide physical and emotional comfort. It usually consists of family, friends, co-workers and others. It gives us a sense of community where we feel valued and cared for. A support network shares in the triumphs and the trials. It takes an ongoing effort to ensure that you have social support that works for you.

- Are there people in your life with whom you feel you can talk about anything?
- Who do you call in a home emergency or to watch the kids in a time of need?
- You just got a promotion at work! Who will you share this with?

Who do you go to for advice, help, or emotional support?



Social support systems should be an important part of our lives.



You might feel like you have that “one” person in your life that you can rely on to be there through thick and thin. But when building a support network, it is important to have different people in your life who can provide different types of support.

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Make a plan to keep and strengthen the positive relationships in your life.

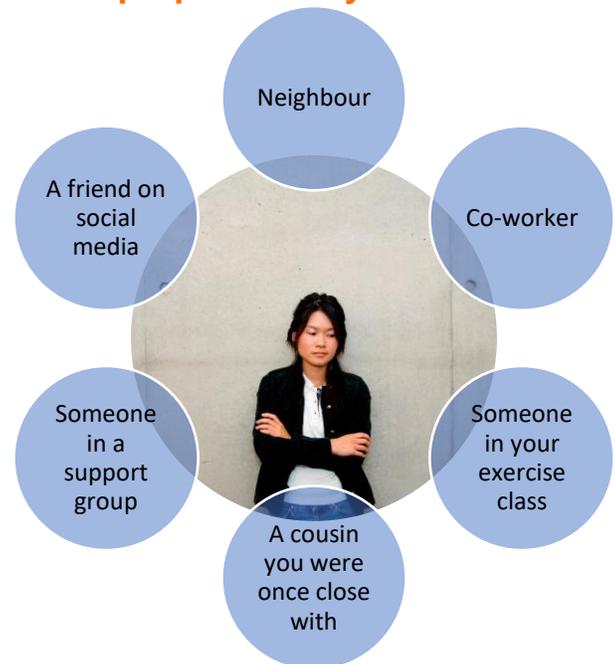
- Make a short list of friends and family members who are supportive and positive.
- Who do you feel like you want to stay in touch with? Set up a schedule to reach out through phone, email, or social media. Whatever works best and easiest for you.
- Sharing openly and honestly is the best way to access support. Be direct about your needs. Do you need problem solving, a soft shoulder or listening ear? Maybe just distraction and a good laugh. Whatever you need and whatever they deliver, make sure that you show that it is valued and appreciated.
- Listen and respond. Don't get caught up in your head thinking about what to say next. Truly and intently listen. Ensure the conversation is 2 way. Showing sincere interest builds quality relationships.
- Make future plans to have fun to boost your mood, have something to look forward to, and strengthen the relationship.

What Types of Support Do You Require?

- Emotional Support*
I feel supported, loved, heard, and accept affection.
- Tangible/Practical Help*
I have people who can help me with household chores, childcare, extra expenses, grocery shopping, meal prep...etc.
- Informational: Perspective & Resources*
I have people I can rely on to share their perspective, connect me to resources, or provide fact-based information.

- ✓ **Assess** who's in your life.
- ✓ **Adjust** with a change in lifestyle.
- ✓ Find a **like-minded** community.
- ✓ Complex issues: Find an **expert opinion**.

It's ok to not have a network in place. Make new connections with the people around you!



Please fill out the attached **Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS)** and discover your current level of social support. Does it need some tweaking? Follow-up with the "Assess Your Social Support Network" Questionnaire.

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ASSESS YOUR SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORK

List at least three people who provide each of the types of social support described in today's Lunch N Learn.

EMOTIONAL	PRACTICAL/TANGIBLE	INFORMATIONAL

- In general, how do you feel about your social support network?
- Does your current support network meet your needs for social support?
- Are all of the different types of social support covered adequately?
- Do you have enough people in your social support network?
- Do you think anyone in your support network might be feeling overextended?
- Do the people in your network provide the quality of support you would like? If not, what could you do to make the situation better?
- Do you have any gaps to fill in your support network? If yes, how will you go about filling these?
- Come up with at least 3 ways to expand your social support network in the areas that are lacking.

Exercise developed by Catherine D. Nugent, for Replenish the Well: An Experience in Self-Care, workshop presented at Peer Services: A Life in the Community for Everyone, Fifth Annual Conference of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Washington, DC, July 13, 2004

Lunch and Learn Resources

- <http://www.ddssafety.net/sites/default/files/attachments/10-06-11/FASocialSupportSystem.pdf>
- <http://cmhaff.ca/social-support>
- <http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/sites/default/files/wellness-module-3-social-support.pdf>
- <https://www.selfgrowth.com/articles/emotional-support-is-emotional-support-important>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5417a4.htm>