

Self-Care: Building A Support System

Why We Need A Support System?

We all know that life can have its ups and downs. During those downs we really need positive people who will understand, listen and support us more than ever. Giving and receiving that support is one of the basic needs we have as humans. There are many benefits to having a strong support system in place in our lives including [reducing stress](#), [anxiety](#) and [depression](#). The size of your support system will depend upon your personal preferences. Many people do great in larger groups while others require a smaller group to thrive. It really doesn't matter the size as long as you have one.

We don't have to wait until we are going through some tough times to set up a support system. In fact, it is better to set everything up in advance as a good support system will decrease your stress and thus promote better mental health. We need people who will hold us accountable, respect our decisions, and give us a sense of belonging as well. The key is to make sure that these people are positive. If you are surrounded by [negative people it is time to start deleting](#) or reducing your contact with these negative people and encourage more contact with the positive ones.

Building a support system is more than the people who support you, it can also include information/resources you might need and how to access that information. It can also at times include professional support from your GP, hospital, school/college, church, and therapist. A strong support system will include all of these people along with family and friends. Even if you don't currently need their support having the information of how you can get access to them is reassuring and supportive. So make sure to have some contact information to hand of these types of professionals.

What Are The Benefits Of A Support System?

There are a number of benefits of having a strong support system including:

1. Reduced anxiety and depression
2. Helps build resilience
3. Improve physical health
4. Improve mental health
5. Feeling of belonging and security
6. Improve [self-esteem/confidence](#)
7. Reduce stress
8. Greater overall life satisfaction

4 Types of social supports we need.

There are four types of social support we all need in our lives.

Emotional support: This is having someone to listen and talk things through with, it can be a friend or trusted family member. At other times it can also be a therapist. These people help us manage emotions, stress, anxiety and depression.

Tangible support: This includes help with physical problems and financial assistance/advice. This can be practical ways family and friends can help us, such as with babysitting, help getting to work/school/college, help around the house.

Informational support: This is where we get help in the form of information/advice that will help us solve problems and challenges. Or help in getting access to informational resources. Again family and friends can help us here but so can professionals such as Citizen Advice, MABS, GP, specialists, teachers, etc.

Social needs: This is a basic need which gives us feeling of belonging, security, love and connection. It may come from family, friends, partner, church, support groups in the community.

How To Build Support System Into Your Life.

There are a number of ways you can build a support system into your current life.

Use these questions to decide who you need in your support system and what kind of support they can give you.

1. List 3 supports people/group/communities currently in your life.
2. Describe how each can help you: Emotional, Tangible, Informational, Social Needs.
3. List any barriers to utilizing any of your supports.
4. List the ways you could better utilize your supports.
5. How could your supports help you with a current problem?
6. List other people/groups/communities you feel you need to support you that are currently missing in your life.

Review who you have in your life:

Who supports you? Who is positive? Who drains you? Try and eliminate anyone who drains you and encourage your more positive friends and family members. Reach out, chat on the phone or meet up in person. I know people are so busy but we need to make this a priority now when you are feeling good. Even having one person who you know will be there for you no matter what is important. Make sure you let people how important they are to you and how much you appreciate them also. In my book I

have discuss deleting negative people, reviewing your responsibilities and setting healthy boundaries in relationships you can check it out [here](#).

Try new activities:

You need to be a little proactive here. This is a great way to try new things but also to meet new people. Especially if you only have a small social circle. Sports groups, book clubs, hobbies and interests of all kinds will expose you to like minded people, but make sure these new connections are positive.

Be willing to ask for help:

This could be in the form of asking a friend or family member for help. But it can also involve seeking professional help from your doctor, therapist, and mental health group. It can be good to share your experience with people who understand what you are going through and who can support you in a positive way.

Use technology to reach out:

We may not be able to meet with friends as often as we'd like but don't forget to use technology for this too. Write a text, direct message, set up group chats to stay connected or email each other. We can also use technology to find new friends such as within a support group online, there are so many available on social media. But again make sure these are positive and supportive to you.

Worksheet Below

MY TEAM OF SUPPORTS LIST

Family/Friends/Partner	My Mentor/Guide	My Mastermind Group/Network
Employee (er)	Professionals I Can Ask For Help	Contractors
Jobs I need to hire someone else to do!	My Accountability Partners	Notes
White Space: How I will take time off this year. Holidays I will observe: (Weekly/Monthly)		