

September 2016: Developing a Network of Supporters

There are times when you may find yourself without the support of someone who knows the challenges and struggles you face on a daily basis. It's important to create a network of supporters who will be there to help you maintain your self-esteem and make you better able to handle any situation.

By having people you can go to during the good times as well as the bad times, you are more likely to be a happy and healthy individual.

Close friends and family are common members of an emotional support system, but when those supporters are absent, there are others. Here are some examples of people who may be able to provide emotional support:

- Extended family members
- Casual friends and acquaintances
- Those you've met at your place of worship
- Your professors, coaches or other mentors
- People who share the same hobbies or are part of your special interest group (like a volunteer group or sports team)
- Neighbors
- Coworkers
- Professionals at WellConnect by Student Resource Services

As you build and use a support system, it's helpful to realize that having a support system requires you to both give and take. In order to build healthy relationships with those in your support group, know that these people have needs just like you. Follow these steps to build healthy relationships in your support system:

- **Be attentive.** Find out more about the members of your support group. Ask about their hobbies, likes, dislikes, families and friends.
- **Learn to take advice.** Ask for advice from your support group. This will create a sense of trust and closeness between you, and people may be more willing to help you succeed.
- **Give praise.** Praise a member of your support system when he or she does something well.
- **Take the first step to get to know someone.** Make new friends or coworkers feel comfortable by inviting them out to lunch.
- **Be ready to help.** When a friend is asking you for help, follow through when and if you can. You'll be more likely to have a solid group of people willing to give help to you if you give help to others.

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Sometimes you just need to talk it out.

WellConnect is always available.

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