

Building Family and Social Support

Having a good relationship with your mental healthcare providers is important to your wellness. So is having healthy relationships with family and/or friends. Your family and/or friends may help you stay on track with your treatment plan and the goals that you and your treatment team have set.

Sharing your journey with family and friends can help gain their support. Talking to supportive family or friends may help lower your stress level and improve your mood. You may even want to share your goals or treatment plan with people you trust.

One way to build relationships is by talking with someone who has been through similar experiences. Learning that others have the same feelings may help you feel better. Joining a support group may also help you feel less alone. Support groups may offer:

- New ideas and thoughts from people who have experiences like yours
- Compassion and empathy
- Suggestions for other services or resources you may not have considered

You may also be able to find support at a church/synagogue/mosque/temple, at work, or even by volunteering.

To create a plan to grow positive relationships:

Build Family and Social Support

- ✓ Make a list of your supportive family and friends.
- ✓ Share honestly and openly with your trusted family/friends.

A study revealed that a person was 25% more likely to be happy if they had a happy friend who lived within a mile.



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- ✓ Call or visit with them and try and make at least one connection a day, if possible.
- ✓ Ask for the kind of help you may need, such as a sympathetic ear, help solving a problem, a fresh perspective, new ideas, or a good laugh.
- ✓ Ask what your family and friends think about an experience you are going through. Listen and show them you value their opinion.
- ✓ Ask about their day. Listening helps build relationships.
- ✓ Make plans with your family and friends that involve fun things everyone enjoys.
- ✓ Ask your healthcare provider, family, friends, or others in your community about support groups.
- ✓ Look online or in the newspaper for groups that share your interests.
- ✓ Become a volunteer. Giving to others helps you focus less on your own problems.
- ✓ Create a calendar of events so you remember to connect with your family and friends.
- ✓ Talk to a therapist.

Your family and friends may help you meet your goals and stay well. But remember, if you feel overwhelmed or that you cannot cope, call your healthcare provider right away.

Help Is Out There

Below are a few organizations with resources aimed at helping build relationships.

Mental Health America (MHA)
www.mentalhealthamerica.net

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
www.nami.org

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
www.samhsa.gov



Collaborating With Your Care Team

- Discuss any concerns you have about a substance use problem, such as taking drugs or alcohol, with your care team.
- Write down the things that trigger your drug or alcohol use. Bring this list to your next visit to discuss with your providers how you might work on coping with these triggers together.
- Ask about potential treatment options for a dual diagnosis or co-occurring disorder.

Questions? Concerns?

Never hesitate to ask. You have a right to know everything about your health and your care.

If you have any questions or concerns about your condition or your care, ask your doctor or a member of your treatment team right away. They are there to help you.

