



CONCERN:EAP

Healthy & Resilient You

Social Support: The Other Social Network



Support System: Be a part of what you build

A **support system** is a network of family, friends, and colleagues who enrich your life while helping you cope with stressors like grief or overwhelming situations. Studies show friends are good medicine. A solid support system can act as a buffer against stress related health problems and enhance your resilience to stress.

The investment in social support will pay off in better health and a brighter outlook for years to come. A social support system can help you:

- ✓ Improve your personal satisfaction and well-being
- ✓ Achieve a greater sense of self-worth
- ✓ Build trust with others and cultivate more meaningful connections
- ✓ Overcome feelings of isolation or loneliness
- ✓ Receive sincere guidance or advice when you need it most

When you're a part of a healthy support system, you will continuously build more resources and stronger bonds with friends and family members who are not only there for you, but allow you to be there for them. Soon, you will feel more accepted, peaceful, and energized.

The Foundation of Support: Self Awareness

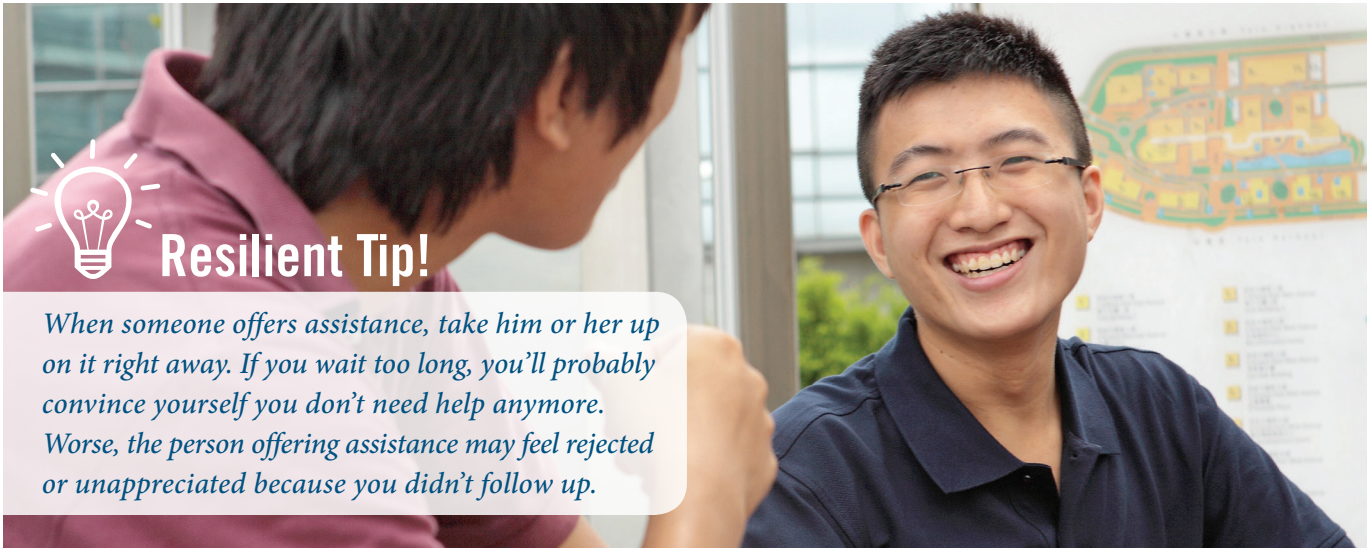
Developing and maintaining healthy social ties involves "give and receive". Sometimes you're the one giving support and other times you're on the receiving end. Are you ready?

Here are some things that you can do to nourish your friendships and family relationships:

- ✓ **Be aware of how others perceive you.** Don't be afraid to get an honest perspective from someone you trust. It will help you adopt a healthy, realistic self-image.
- ✓ **Resolve to improve yourself.** Cultivating your own honesty, generosity and humility will enhance your self-esteem and make you a more compassionate and appealing friend.
- ✓ **Avoid relentless complaining.** Nonstop complaining is tiresome and can be draining on support systems. Most people who complain are not listening to their support network or taking action to improve their situation.



Resilient Tip: Be the kind of friend you want to have.
If you treat others with kindness, generosity, and thoughtfulness, you'll soon attract people to you with similar values.



Resilient Tip!

When someone offers assistance, take him or her up on it right away. If you wait too long, you'll probably convince yourself you don't need help anymore. Worse, the person offering assistance may feel rejected or unappreciated because you didn't follow up.

Receiving Support: How to Accept Help

Everyone needs a shoulder to lean on during the hard times. It's part of being human. Sadly, most people don't reach out in times of crisis because they don't want to feel guilty or appear vulnerable. But if you've ever comforted a friend in need, you know how good it feels to be there for someone. Let your friends feel good for being there for you!

Giving Support: It's Not About You, It's About Them

When someone comes to you for support, listen, learn and keep the focus on the person who needs support. The most effective form of support is listening.

Stay Present. We're all guilty of mentally rehearsing what we want to say next instead of listening. Don't let the thoughts in your head interrupt what's happening in front of your face.

Empower people to help themselves. Rather than giving unsolicited advice, let the person who you're talking with express their feelings first, then collaborate to find solutions.

- ✔ Let them come up with the ideas
(it's ok to give a little nudge)
- ✔ Look at the pros and cons of each option
- ✔ Create a simple actionable plan

Even if you don't "solve the problem", the person that you're providing support to might feel better after expressing their feelings.



Resilient Tip: Make time for old friends. The friends you've known for years are likely to support you unconditionally. Make time to stay in touch. It's important to let them know how much you value their relationship.

Helpful Links:

www.entrepreneur.com/blog/224730
www.stress.about.com/od/relationships/ht/howtolisten.htm
www.healyourbest.com/ask-for-help-top-10-tip/
www.riversideonline.com/health_reference/Behavior-Mental-Health/MH00041.cfm



This newsletter is intended for informational purposes only, and should not be used to replace professional advice.

If you find your level of stress is impacting your well-being, you can contact us for additional help and support.

Call: 800.344.4222
www.concern-eap.com