

Your Health: How to Find Emotional Support



Depending on others for emotional support is a normal part of life. You may have to lean on friends and family when facing difficult situations such as mental or physical illness. Your loved ones can play an important role during your treatment and in your day-to-day life. Your doctor and community also may give you extra support.

Asking for support from others is not always easy. It can be hard to tell someone about your problems or illness. But you should not be afraid to ask for help.

Where you can get support

- **Family.** Family members can help you cope by giving you comfort and encouragement during the treatments and decisions you face.
- **Friends.** Building strong relationships with others is important for your emotional well-being. Do not be afraid to ask your friends for support. Helping is a big part of friendship. At times you may be the one who encourages a friend.

- **Counseling.** Professional counseling can help you cope with situations that interfere with your life and cause stress. Counseling can help you understand and deal with your illness.
- **Your doctor.** Find a doctor you trust and feel comfortable with. Be open and honest about your fears and concerns. Your doctor can help you learn about treatments, including counseling.
- **Religious groups.** Religious or spiritual groups may help you meet people and get involved in the community. Some religious organizations can help you get counseling or other social support services.
- **Social groups.** Social groups can help you meet new people and get involved in activities you enjoy.
- **Community support groups.** In a support group, you can talk to others who have dealt with the same problems or illness as you. You can encourage each other and learn ways of coping with tough emotions.

Supportive relationships

Expressing your feelings is important. Having someone there to listen can help you see your situation in a new way. Talk to someone you trust. Be open about your fears. Talking about your concerns may help you feel better.

Be honest with your loved ones, and ask for support when needed. Do not be afraid to let others know how they can help. Your loved ones can offer support by:

- **Giving encouragement.** This can keep you from feeling hopeless or alone.
- **Offering to help.** Getting a helping hand can keep you from feeling overwhelmed. This may include helping with small daily tasks or bigger problems.

- **Going to doctor visits.** Your loved ones can offer support by being involved in your medical care.
- **Being honest and realistic.** Make sure your loved ones understand how serious the problem is. They can help by not setting unreachable goals or acting like the problem will just go away.
- **Respecting your wishes.** You are responsible for your decisions. Your loved ones can offer support and encouragement without interfering with your major decisions.