

Week 23 HANDOUT C

HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY SUPPORT SYSTEMS

HEALTHY SUPPORT

You need and deserve at least a few people in your life with whom you have healthy relationships, people whom:

- You like, respect, and trust, and who like, respect, and trust you
- Make you feel good about yourself
- Listen to you without sharing personal information about you with others;
- You can tell anything
- Allow you to talk freely and express your feelings and emotions without judging you, criticizing you, teasing you, or putting you down
- Give you good advice when you want and ask for it, and who work with you to figure out what to do next in difficult situations
- Allow you the space to change, grow, make decisions, and make mistakes;
- Accept you as you
- Share fun activities with you

UNHEALTHY SUPPORT

Another obstacle to be aware of is the elements of your current support system that are not actually providing you with support. Instead, they base their actions/advice on the 'misery loves company' theory; or they lack the knowledge to provide you with accurate advice. Although this may be offered with the best of intentions, such support should still be carefully weighed against what makes sense for your life.

Examples of unhealthy support include those who have not yet found answers that have worked for them, and so they broadcast with confidence that such answers do not exist for anyone. Additional indicators for unhealthy support include:

- Encouraging you to act in ways that violate your values and/or boundaries
- Forcing you to remain in certain stages of healing (e.g. anger at your partner) because they themselves are not yet ready to move on
- Condescending responses (talking down to you)
- Cliché responses, with no effort made to identify with your personal experiences
- No recognition of progress and growth; continual focus on short comings

Week 23 HANDOUT B

DIFFERENT TYPES OF SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Friends and family – The more supportive people you have in your life the more effective your support system will be. Who do you have in your life that can serve as a support?

These should be people who know you well and are able to notice when your behavior becomes unusual or unhealthy. They should be positive and encouraging and help you experience more hope, courage and strength.

Therapy - Sometimes our friends and family aren't enough to help us get through a difficult time. Sometimes our friends and family have too much on their own plate to be dealing with our problems. During these times we might need professional support. A therapist can be a wonderful support to help you work through issues and struggles.

Support Groups – There are support groups for just about everything you could think of. Support groups offer you interactions with people who may have had similar experiences and can understand what you're going through. People can learn new skills for coping and connect with people who will hold them accountable.

Spirituality and religion – Having a spiritual connection or religious affiliation offers a wonderful source of support when we are struggling. Spirituality can offer a sense of hope and purpose in our life, and help us find greater strength and resilience. You can also connect with a community of others who have similar beliefs.

Leisure activities and interests – Hobbies and activities we enjoy not only offer us fun and relaxation but can help connect us to others. They provide us a break from our problems and give us a chance to feel good about ourselves. Consider what your needs are and how these different support systems can help you get your needs met. Whether spending time with friends, engaging in leisure activities, or a support group, these social supports give us a chance to bond with others and build relationships.

Try to find supports that offer you greater positivity. A healthy support system should not lead you to feel resentment, anger, and shame, but should increase your level of joy, purpose, and satisfaction.