



NAEMT Mental Health Resilience Officer Course Support Systems

An individual's social support system is a core component of their individual resilience. When helping an individual examine what their social support system looks like, it can be helpful to approach it from two directions: maintenance of one's current support system, and expansion of one's support system. These are described below:

Maintaining Current Support Systems	
Identify	<p>Social systems come in many forms. A few examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Friends• Family• Professional colleagues• Shared faith or special interest <p>Identify which of these relationships are already present. Examine which relationships are supportive and lean into those areas.</p>
Communicate	<p>Intentional communication takes work. Establish "check in" times. Make efforts not to cancel when plans are made. Communication does not have to be exhaustive – a simple text, e-mail, or phone call is sufficient. Make an effort to reciprocate when others communicate with you and return communication.</p>
Appreciate	<p>Thank those around you that you find supportive. Make sure they know how much you value their friendship. Continue to support those who show appreciation for your friendship.</p>
Be available	<p>Support systems should be mutually beneficial. Make sure that you are taking the time to support those who support you, and be available to them when they are going through tough times.</p>
Set boundaries	<p>Maintaining boundaries is appropriate. IF you feel that a relationship has strayed from being supportive, try to re-establish an appropriate boundary when appropriate, or create distance when re-establishing appropriate boundaries is not possible.</p> <p>Respect for other individual's boundaries is also important. Be open to feedback when someone indicates you may be crossing a line, and make a good faith effort to stay within the confines of what they feel is appropriate for your friendship.</p>
Create distance	<p>Be honest with yourself and with other individuals when the relationship is no longer working. Try to keep communication transparent, clear, and respectful. Creating distance when a relationship turns from supportive to potentially toxic does not have to be mean, but it should be clear. Distance does not always have to be permanent – friendships ebb and flow.</p>



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Expanding Support Systems	
Start close to home	Make an effort to get to know your neighbors and those that live and work close to home. Check in and help them when appropriate, and allow them to check in and help you when possible.
Professional networking	Tend to your professional support system. Collaboration with other individuals in similar professional roles can help expand your support system.
Recreation	Joining an organized activity provides an opportunity to meet individuals outside of your professional and social circle which you may not have met otherwise.
Volunteer	Find a cause that moves you, and volunteer in support of that cause. Meeting individuals who support similar causes can expand your social support system.
Online	When direct interaction is limited or not possible, taking advantage of organized and scheduled online activities with supportive individuals or groups can be helpful. Effort should be made to make sure this time is structured in such a way to avoid simply scrolling through social media. Organized chats, meet-ups, etc. may be more beneficial than simply searching through or reading group posts or pages on social media.