

Worksheet for Establishing a Support System

By Peggy L. Ferguson, Ph.D.

A social support system is a network of relationships with individuals who contribute to your recovery and assist in meeting your needs for recovery. Your support system may include family, friends, professionals (such as doctors, counselors, dieticians, personal trainers, etc.), members of twelve-step meetings, coworkers, neighbors, spouses, children, or anyone with whom you share a relationship beyond superficial interactions.

Individuals who actively engage in a support system for their recovery generally experience a higher likelihood of sustained abstinence and ongoing progress in their journey to recovery.

Engaging in social activities and maintaining social connections with others can help alleviate feelings of isolation, depression, loneliness, boredom, and stress. Social support systems play a crucial role in helping you stay clean and sober and contribute to developing the tools necessary for improving your physical and mental health, enhancing problem-solving skills, and fostering emotional development and maturity. Everyone needs to feel wanted and to have a sense of belonging. As you undergo the changes associated with recovery, a social support system reassures you that you are not navigating these transformations alone.

To assess your support system needs and to assemble a support system helpful to your ongoing recovery efforts, answer the following questions:

A. Who was in your support system before you got into recovery?

Name	Kind of support they provided	Are they drinkers/drug users?	Did you drink/use with
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			

2023R, Worksheet for Establishing a Support System
By Peggy L. Ferguson, Ph.D.

7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

B. Who of this group, do I need to NOT spend time with right now, and why?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

C. What do I need from a social support system now?

- Someone to discuss a personal problem
- Someone to spend time with
- Someone to do things with (shopping, movies, walks, sporting events, going out to eat, etc.)
- Someone to help me with tasks (gardening, fixing something that is broken, taking care of my dog when I am out of town, etc.)
- Someone that can cheer me up when I am down
- Someone that reminds me that I am worthwhile and is on my side
- Someone to give me important feedback
- Someone to teach me how to do things
- Someone to work out with.
- Someone to provide comfort when I am scared, lonely, tired
- Someone that I can share my feelings with

2023R, Worksheet for Establishing a Support System
By Peggy L. Ferguson, Ph.D.

- ___ Someone who helps me achieve the next great thing in my life
 - ___ Someone who helps me find things that I need
 - ___ Someone who can serve as an accountability partner
 - ___ Someone who helps me solve problems by asking questions, giving me feedback, and making suggestions.
 - ___ Someone who can help me learn how to have fun sober.
 - ___ Others _____
-
-

D. List reasons why a recovering person might need a network of people who support his or her continuing abstinence and ongoing recovery.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

E. When I stop spending time with people that might not be good for my continuing recovery at this time, who will be left in my support system?

Name	Type of support	Notes

F. When I compare the list of what I need from a support system (C) with the list of who will be left in my support system (E), what needs will not be met by my remaining support system as it is now.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

G. Who (among the people that I already know), do I need/want to cultivate as a support person to round out my support network at this time?

Name	Type of support	Notes

H. What obstacles could prevent me from seeking individuals to join my support system, be my friend, or develop connections with others?

- It is difficult for me to ask for help.
 - I am shy
 - I have social anxiety
 - I don't want to tell anybody else that I am in recovery or that I have substance use disorder.
 - I don't know anybody that would be appropriate.
 - I don't want to be a burden to anyone.
 - I feel guilty about things that have happened in the past.
 - My spouse/partner gets jealous of my spending time with other people.
 - I asked people to do things with me in the past and nothing came of it.
 - I don't have time.
 - I end up providing all the support to the other person.
 - I am afraid that I will be rejected.
 - I don't want to sound helpless.
 - I don't want to be vulnerable by opening up to others.
 - I don't like the suggestions that other people offer.
 - Others _____
-
-
-

**I. What might I do to overcome these obstacles to ask people for help and support?
If I need to meet new people, where can I go or what can I do to accomplish that?**

- Ask someone to coffee, lunch, dinner.
- Ask someone to go to the movies, the theater, roller skating, fishing, or some other activity _____
- Ask someone to go to a support group meeting with me.
- Ask someone to start working out with me.
- Volunteer with some organization to help other people.
- Go to twelve step recovery meetings. Go early; stay late, talk to people.
- Attend church.
- Reconcile with people who may still be mad at me.

2023R, Worksheet for Establishing a Support System
By Peggy L. Ferguson, Ph.D.

- ___ Make an appointment with professional helper(s) such as minister, counselor, psychiatrist, nutritionist, personal trainer, recovery coach, etc.
 - ___ Join community organization(s).
 - ___ Taking a class; joining a group like yoga/meditation/stress management
 - ___ Others _____
-
-
-

J. My Call To Action.

Today, I will _____

This week, I will _____

This month, I will _____



2012, Worksheet for Establishing a Support System
By Peggy L. Ferguson, Ph.D.

- WWW.PEGGYFERGUSON.COM
- WWW.TransformationalEndeavors.Online
- WWW.holidaystressanddepression.Online