



# Build and Use Support Systems

A sense of belonging is good for the body and spirit. People with strong support systems tend to be healthier, happier and better able to tolerate stress. Your friends, family members and coworkers can provide valuable feedback, help you confront difficult situations and encourage you to meet your goals.

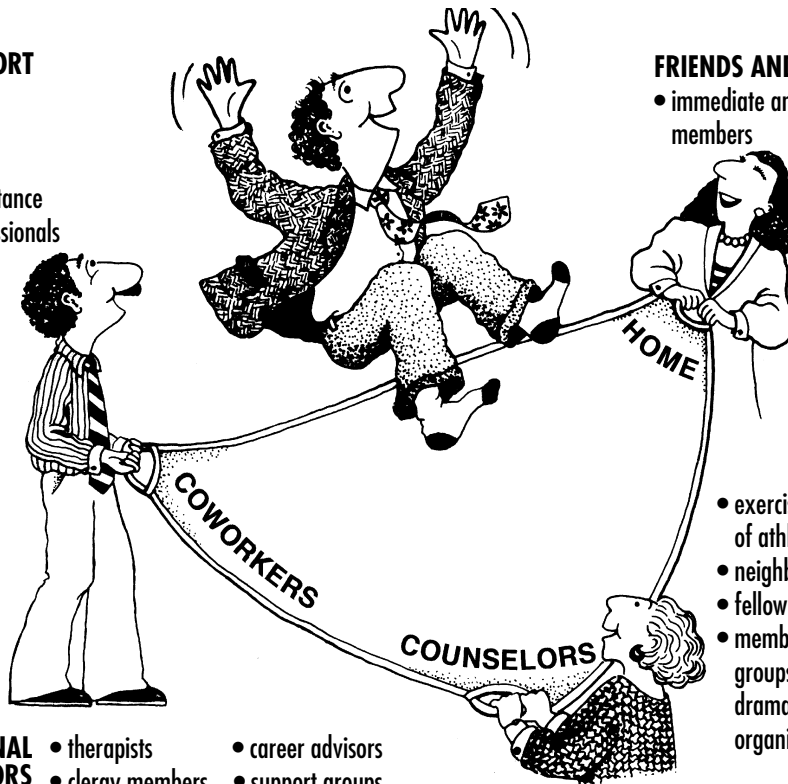
Spouses, partners and family members are frequently primary sources of emotional support. Coworkers and members of your professional organizations often form your career support networks. Support systems come in many shapes and sizes. Here are some common ones:

## CAREER SUPPORT NETWORK

- coworkers
- supervisors
- Employee Assistance Program professionals
- mentors

## FRIENDS AND FAMILY

- immediate and extended family members
- personal friends
- parents of children in your child's scouting or care group
- members of your house of worship
- people who share interests in hobbies, such as bridge, music or crafts
- exercise partners and members of athletic clubs
- neighbors
- fellow community volunteers
- members of special interest groups, such as outdoor clubs, drama groups or political organizations



## PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS

- therapists
- career advisors
- clergy members
- support groups

## GIVE AND TAKE

Support systems are second nature for some people. Others work hard to develop them. One thing to remember is that all relationships are a matter of give and take.

### • Give your attention.

People love to have others take an interest in them. Find out what makes your friends tick. Ask questions about their goals, hobbies, families and backgrounds.

### • Take advice.

People are flattered when you ask their advice. It makes them feel

important. And it makes them more committed to you and your success.

### • Give kudos.

It's easy to make people feel positive about themselves. All you have to do is notice what a person is doing well and comment on it.

### • Take the initiative with new friends.

Make the first call. Invite a friend to

join you for a concert. Ask a coworker to join you at a special seminar.

### • Give help when needed.

Say "yes" to a friend's request for company or assistance when appropriate. You'll be rewarded with a feeling of giving and belonging.