Building your Support System

It is important for everyone, including yourself as a 4-H leader, to have a support system in place, as we all experience challenges at some point in our life. It is important for you to be able to help your 4-H members build their support system, and it can start with you!

What is a support system?

A support system is a group of people you can turn to at any time and can:

- **Be there for you** when you need someone to talk or vent to
- **Help you deal with things** such as:
  - feelings or emotions – especially those you don’t understand
  - difficult events in your life
  - strategies for coping with stress
- **Support you** and root for you in things that you do
- Can help you to **determine next steps**
- **Help you find professional help**, if you need more support

Who do teens talk to when they have an issue?

Kids Help Phone’s *Teens Talk 2016* report identified the number one person teens talk to when they need support is a friend.
A support system can be one person or a group of people. It’s a good idea for yourself and your 4-H members to identify a few people to turn to, whenever they’re needed.

It’s important that your support system is made up of people with whom you have a healthy relationship with, which means that you trust them, feel safe with them and they accept you for who you are.

## Building your support system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your support system can be made up of:</th>
<th>Your 4-H members’ support system can be made up of:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ family</td>
<td>✓ Safe and trusted adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ friends</td>
<td>• immediate family (parents, siblings, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ community members</td>
<td>• 4-H leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ spiritual leaders</td>
<td>• teachers or other school staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ coworkers</td>
<td>• spiritual leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ mental health professionals</td>
<td>• other community members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Safe and trusted adult

When helping your members to build their support system, it is important to explain to them who a safe and trusted adult is. They are someone who is accountable, respects your boundaries and doesn’t ask you to keep secrets from others.

A safe and trusted adult is someone who is:

- ✓ thoughtful
- ✓ trustworthy
- ✓ respectful
- ✓ helpful
- ✓ caring

For more information on support systems, visit KidsHelpPhone.ca.

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Kids Help Phone 😊

4-H Canada has partnered with Kids Help Phone to develop this resource

KidsHelpPhone.ca