

# Building your Support System

FOR LEADERS



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.<sup>3</sup>

## Building your support system

**Your support system** can be made up of:

- ✓ family
- ✓ friends
- ✓ community members
- ✓ spiritual leaders
- ✓ coworkers
- ✓ mental health professionals

**Your 4-H members' support system** can be made up of:

- ✓ Safe and trusted adults
  - immediate family (parents, siblings, etc.)
  - 4-H leaders
  - teachers or other school staff
  - spiritual leaders
  - other community members
- ✓ Friends
- ✓ 4-H members

## 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](https://www.kidshelpphone.ca).**

**Kids Help Phone** 

4-H Canada has partnered with Kids Help Phone to develop this resource  
[KidsHelpPhone.ca](https://www.kidshelpphone.ca)



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