# Building Your Support System? Who Should Be Included?

In this presentation, I’ll be discussing the importance of having a support system and who should be included in that support system.

When the going gets rough, talking to friends, family, coworkers, community members, and healthcare professionals (like therapists) can really help. Your support system is basically the people you count on for help when you really need it.

Having a support system is super important because it’s basically like having a constant reminder that you’re not alone. By surrounding yourself with people who love and care about you, you’ll be ensuring that you’ll never have to take on certain hardships on your own.

Let’s kick off this presentation by talking about what a support system is in a bit more detail.

## What is a Support System?

In simple terms, a support system is a group of people who’ve got your back (and, in turn, you’ll have their back, too). Your support system can be made up of family members, friends, coworkers, and community members, but — as I mentioned before — your therapist would count as a part of your support system, too.

You can even form an online support system if you’re struggling to connect with people in real life. Sometimes, having a like-minded person to talk to online can be very helpful, even if they live all the way across the country.

Your support system is essentially there to keep you grounded. Remember, relying on others for support doesn’t make you weak! If anything, acknowledging that you need a support system and then actually *forming* said support system is a sign of incredible strength.

## How to Build Your Support System

Actually building your support system is going to take time. You need to form relationships with people, and know that you can fully trust them to be there for you in times of need. Let’s talk about some tips you can follow when it comes to building your support system.

### Figure Out What You Need

When you're putting together your support system, you’ll want to start by figuring out what you really need from it. Think about whether you want a better professional network, more reliable friends, or maybe some help from a mental health professional. Having clarity when it comes to your needs will help lay the foundation for the strong support system you’ve been looking for.

### Go Beyond Friends and Family Members

As important as friends and family members are, your support system shouldn’t *only* include friends and family members. Not everyone has a solid family situation, and relying only on friends might limit your options. So, broaden your circle. The more diverse your support team, the better chance you’ll have of connecting with people who have the right skills to give you the support you need.

### Nurture Your Support System

When it comes to nurturing your support system, you shouldn’t be afraid to take the lead and “stoke the fire” (so to speak) once in a while. Let your people know that they're part of your support system, and be clear about how they can support you. You should also be clear about how you can support them. Support is a two-way street, after all! It's not just about strengthening your personal connections; it's about making it more likely that you'll get the support you need, right when you need it.

### Consider Seeing a Therapist

Your therapist isn't like a friend or family member. They’ll be able to offer you an impartial perspective on your experiences. Not only will they provide you with support and feedback, but they’ll be able to help you see a unique perspective that your friends and family members wouldn’t be able to provide you with.