



# Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program

For Those Who Serve and Those Who Support<sup>SM</sup>

## Building and Strengthening Your Personal Support Network

### Benefits of a Personal Support Network

- Increases self-esteem
- Expands level of functioning
- Helps with practical aspects of life (e.g., child care, transportation)
- Improves mental and emotional well-being
- Reduces stress and stress-related illnesses
- Increases immunity (resistance to disease)
- Provides companionship
- Supplies emotional support

### Types of Personal Support Network

Formal support networks – those provided through agencies or organizations

Informal support networks – people who are there for you if and when you need them

### Assessing your Personal Support Network

#### Extent or Size of Network

How many supportive relationships do you have?

How many close and/or dependable relationships do you have with people within one hour's drive from your home?

Do you spend time with someone who does not live with you?

Are you satisfied with the amount of time you socialize with others?

#### Quality

How satisfied are you with your relationships?

Does your network provide sources of support for most of your needs/issues?

Do you have a variety of support sources?

- Do you talk to friends or relatives on the phone, via e-mail, or through texting?
- Do you go to meetings, social clubs, or other group activities?
- Do you belong to online social networking sites or support groups for people with similar life situations?

In the majority of these relationships, do you feel that you are:

Understood

Loved, or at least appreciated

Heard

Informed

Useful

Able to talk about your deepest problems  
Have a definite role or place in the relationship

relationship

Able to be yourself



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### **Building and Strengthening Your Personal Support Network**

#### **Questions to help strengthen your personal support network**

How can you stay in touch?

How do you demonstrate loyalty?

How will you remember special days?

What can you do to keep a positive outlook?

How can you show appreciation for your friends and family?

How will you ask how you can help, before someone asks for support?

Why is it important to make time for face-to-face get-togethers? Like what?

How will you thank people for their support?

What might you need to plan ahead for? (times when you may need extra help)

#### **Tips to Build your Personal Support Network**

Get to know your neighbors and your local community

Get involved in groups, clubs, and classes

Join or start a support group

Take some risks

Become a volunteer