Building and Strengthening Your Personal Support Network (Slide 1)

- We cannot accomplish everything alone

Objectives (Slide 2)

- Define personal support network
- Define and identify the components of a personal support network
- Describe the benefits of a personal support network
- Evaluate the effectiveness of your personal support network
- Describe how to strengthen and expand a personal support network

What is a Personal Support Network? (Slide 3)

- A personal support network is a group of people you can depend on for help on an everyday basis, in an emergency, or as needed
- Benefit of having a diverse network
- Having a personal support network helps with coping

What Kind of Support Can You Expect? (Slide 4)

- Different types of support
  - Help with belonging
  - Help with feelings
  - Help with things
  - Help with information
  - Help with finding help

Benefits of a Personal Support Network (Slide 5)

- Benefits of a personal support network
  - Increases self-esteem
  - Helps with practical aspects of life
  - Improves mental and emotional well-being
  - Reduces stress and stress-related illnesses
  - Increases immunity (resistance to disease)
  - Provides companionship
  - Supplies emotional support
- Having a support network help you and helps others
- You may gain self-confidence from helping others
- Having strong ties to others can improve your health

Personal Support Network Components (Slide 6)

- There are two types of support – formal and informal
  - Formal supports consist of government and private agencies and other organizations that have been established to assist people
  - Informal supports are individuals who are there for you when you need them

- ☐ **Exercise 1**: Assessing Your Personal Support Network
- ☐ **Handout 1**: Assessing and Strengthening My Personal Support Network *name supports in top row*
- ☐ Characteristics of the strongest personal support networks

Assess Your Personal Support Network (Slide 7)

- ☐ Two important elements
  - ☐ Size
  - ☐ Quality

Assess the Size (Slide 8)

- ☐ Assessing the size of your network
  - ☐ How many supportive relationships do you have?
  - ☐ How many supporters are within an hour of where you live?
  - ☐ How often do you spend time with someone other than those with whom you live?
- ☐ **Handout 1**: Assessing and Strengthening My Personal Support Network *complete items 1-3 for each support*

Assess the Quality (Slide 9)

- ☐ Assessing the quality of your personal support network
  - ☐ How satisfied are you with your relationships?
  - ☐ Do you have a variety of supports?
    - ☐ Do you talk to friends or relatives on the phone, via email, 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?
  - ☐ What kind of supports do you need from those in your network?
  - ☐ Does your network provide sources of support for most of your needs?
- ☐ **Handout 1**: Assessing and Strengthening My Personal Support Network *complete items 4-5 for each support*
- ☐ Supports should meet relevant criteria
- ☐ **Handout 1**: Assessing and Strengthening My Personal Support Network *complete items 6-13 for each support*

Coping Styles and Support (Slide 10)

- ☐ How people cope with stress can shape how friends respond
  - ☐ If you are open to support, you may receive helpful support
  - ☐ If you deny problems, you may receive disengaged support
  - ☐ If you get overwhelmed, you may receive over-involved support

Strengthening Your Relationships (Slide 11)

- Reciprocity helps maintain good relationships
- Ways to start enriching and enhancing your friendships
  - Spend quality time together
  - Stay positive
  - Communicate openly
  - Be supportive
- **Exercise 2**: Strengthening Your Relationships
- **Handout 1**: Assessing and Strengthening My Personal Support Network *complete page 2*

Expand Your Personal Support Network (Slide 12)

- There are ways you may want to bring new people into your network
- You may feel more comfortable with some of the ideas than with others
  - Genuinely work to help others (without trying to get something in return)
  - Lean on geographically close friends and long-distance friends
  - Rely on friends who have empathy for others
  - Go for the winning combo: Seek to develop new friendships and enrich current friendships
  - Remember that quality matters more than quantity
  - Get a pet (unless caring for one would be a burden)

Take Care of Yourself (Slide 13)

- Focus on taking care of yourself
  - Take care of physical and emotional health
  - Avoid negative content on social media
  - Be patient when waiting for friendships to develop

Review of Objectives (Slide 14)

- What is a personal support network?
- What are some examples of a formal personal support network?
- What are some examples of an informal personal support network?
- What are the benefits of having a personal support network?
- How can you assess how supportive your personal support network is?
- How can you strengthen your personal support network?
- How can you expand your personal support network?

Building and Strengthening Your Personal Support Network (Slide 15)

- The importance of a good personal support network