

Ify Otuya Mental Health Toolkit

10 Social Support Skills

Build connections that strengthen you.

Social support is vital for mental health and resilience. It's not just about having people around; it's about cultivating meaningful connections that provide comfort, understanding, and encouragement. Whether it's seeking advice, sharing experiences, or simply having someone to lean on, social support can make all the difference when facing life's challenges.

This guide offers practical skills to help you build, maintain, and nurture your social support system. Whether you're reaching out for help, offering support to others, or fostering deeper, more authentic relationships, these tools will empower you to connect in ways that enhance your mental and emotional well-being.

Let's explore how social support can create a sense of belonging, reduce stress, and make life's ups and downs more manageable.

10 Social Support Skills

These social support skills are practical and compassionate abilities that help you create, nurture, and benefit from healthy, supportive relationships:

1. Reaching Out When You Need Help

Recognizing when you're struggling and letting someone know—whether it's a quick check-in, a deep conversation, or asking for a favor.

2. Building and Nurturing Connections

Making time for friendships, family, or community—not just when you're down, but consistently.

3. Accepting Support Without Guilt

Letting others show up for you without feeling like a burden or needing to earn it.

4. Offering Support to Others

Being there for someone else in meaningful, empathetic ways—listening, helping, or simply being present.

5. Expressing Your Needs Clearly

Telling people what kind of support you need (e.g., “Can you just listen?” or “I’d love some advice”).

6. Setting Boundaries to Protect Healthy Support

Being clear about what’s helpful and what’s not, even with well-meaning people.

7. Joining Supportive Communities

Finding or creating spaces—online or in-person—where people share similar struggles or values.

8. Practicing Vulnerability

Being honest about how you feel instead of always saying “I’m fine” when you're not.

9. Checking In On Others Regularly

Strengthening bonds by showing you care—especially when others may be struggling silently.

10. Recognizing When Support is Toxic or One-Sided

Knowing when a relationship is draining, manipulative, or unhealthy—and taking steps to step back or seek balance.

Author's Bio:



Hi, I'm Ify Otuya, a mental health advocate, speaker, and founder of June E-waste Academy. I create empowering mental health content to educate, inspire, and destigmatize mental health struggles. Join me on my journey to mental wellness.

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