Social support is the physical and emotional comfort given to you by your family, friends, co-workers and others. It’s knowing that you are part of a community of people who love and care for you, value you, and think well of you.

Social support plays a huge role in health and well-being and can make a big difference whether we’re coping with everyday stresses or managing a more serious health problem or illness.

Do you need help building your social support network? Here are some strategies to try:

**Think about what you need and make a plan**

Think about the type of support you need most at this time. If you need support for a highly specific problem, like managing a health problem, a formal support group may be the best option.

**Let go of unhealthy relationships**

Walking away from any relationship is painful—even when the relationship is causing harm—but it may be necessary. Use your judgement, though. It may be possible to spend less time with some people you can’t avoid without fully abandoning the relationship.
Get more from the support you have

It’s easy to assume that other people know what you need, but this usually isn’t true. You may need to tell others what you need. However, be careful not to overwhelm your support providers.

Reach out

Ask the people you know to help you broaden your networks and introduce you to other people or invite you to opportunities to meet others.

Take risks and create new opportunities

Seek out new people and introduce yourself. For example, you may decide to go to a party, even though you won’t know anyone else at the event. Or, step outside of your usual activities. You may meet new people when you join a club or group or get involved in an organization.

Be patient

Making new friends can take time. You may need to meet many new people to make just one new friend. Building intimacy also takes time. It can take several months to feel close to someone and feel like you can count on their support.

Take care of your relationships

You’re more likely to build strong friendships if you are a good friend, too. Keep in touch with your support network, offer support to others when they need it, and let them know that you appreciate them.

To learn more about social support and take a social support quiz, find the Social Support Wellness module at www.heretohelp.bc.ca/wellness-modules