

## VIRTUAL HEALTHCARE NEIGHBORHOOD (VHN)

### WEEK 3 SOCIAL SUPPORT



### **Outline:**

**Page 2: Improving my social support networks**

**Page 7: Knowledge check**

**Page 7: Activity**

## **How do I improve my social support network?**

### **1. Don't be afraid to take social risks**

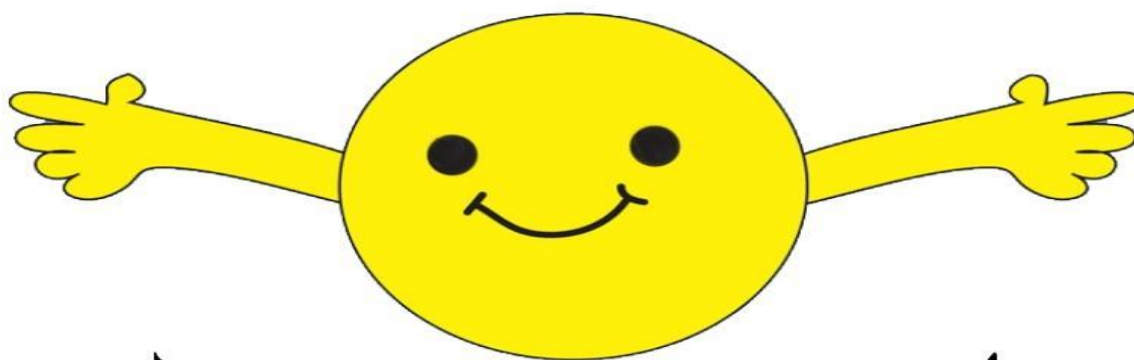
Seeking out new people and introducing yourself to them may be a useful way to meet others. For example, you may decide to go to a event, even though you won't know anyone else at the event. Informal gatherings, community centres, recreational courses or clubs, volunteer positions, schools and workplaces are also common places to meet people.

### **2. 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. Be as specific as possible in your requests. However, be careful not to overwhelm your support providers.

### 3. Reach out

Ask the people you know to help you broaden your networks.



# REACH OUT!

### 4. Create new opportunities

You may create new opportunities to meet others when you step outside of your usual activities. For example, you may meet new people when you join a club or group or get involved in an organization.

### 5. Let go of unhealthy ties

Walking away from any relationship is painful—even when the relationship is causing harm—but it may be necessary.

It may be possible to spend less time with certain people without fully abandoning the friendship.

## **6. Make a plan**

Figure out what supports you need and figure out how you might find it.

## **7. Be a joiner**

Sometimes, the best way to find the support you need is through a support group or engage in a virtual healthcare neighborhood.

## **8. 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.



## 9. Avoid negative relationships

Negative relationships are hard on your emotional health.

Some negative aspects may be obvious, such as abuse.

Other times, they may be more subtle, such as excessive dependence or control issues. You aren't responsible for the other person's behaviour, but it can still take a toll on your own well-being. You may find yourself dealing with the

problems in unhealthy ways. It can be hard to avoid certain negative relationships, especially when these relationships are with family members. In this case, it may be best to limit the amount of contact with these people (or buffer that contact with other helpful supporters), and avoid relying on them for support

## 10. 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.

