



Getting support to help you change your behaviour

Sometimes when we set ourselves goals or try to change our behaviour in some way, it can feel like it's hard to achieve on our own.

The people you have around you, also known as your 'social support', can help you to stay on track.

What is social support?

Social support means having people who can help you cope with many aspects of your life if you need them to.

They could be friends, neighbours, family, colleagues or health professionals.

Their support could include helping with stress and helping you look at things positively.

How can social support help?

Social support can improve the quality of our lives by improving our mood and making us feel happier.

Generally, there are three broad types of help and support those around you can offer.

There is:

- **Practical support** – for example, friends helping you with cooked meals when you can't cook for yourself because you're unwell
- **Emotional support** – for example, your friend lets you speak to them about how you're feeling about trying your hardest to reach your goals or change your behaviour, and offers you encouragement
- **Informational support** – for example, a family member finds useful local support services that you may wish to attend

How can others help me?

Now have a think about who are those people you have in your own life that can encourage you to stay on track to change your behaviour?

This person can be anyone, a family member, a friend, a colleague, a neighbour, etc. You might like to write these down.

It is also just as important to think about who may hinder your efforts to achieve your goals or change your behaviour.

Using your social support to achieve your goals or change your behaviour

Making a plan for how others may be able to support you can be a positive way of helping you stay focused and motivated.

It may help you to write down who you think would be able to help you change your behaviour.

It's also important to note how you think they could help you.

How to ask others for help

We encourage you to speak to the people you chose to nominate to help you. It is important to know if that person is willing and currently able to support you.

For example, they are not unwell or dealing with a major life event.

If they are able, it's then important to discuss how best they may be able to provide that support to you.

You may like to speak to your social support and suggest to them a way they may be able to help you. Or you could tell them your plans to change (for example, to save more money for holidays) and together agree on how they may be able to help you.

It is also important to remember that not everyone is able to provide all types of support effectively (such as practical or emotional). Some people may feel more comfortable providing one type of support over another.

A few examples of how others may be able to help you

Who (Person)	How (Possible ways others could help me)
Partner	To help make packed lunches to save money (practical support)
Friend (Joanne)	To let me talk to them when I might be finding it stressful trying to stick to my new behaviour changes and offer me encouragement (emotional support)
Colleague (Stuart)	To help me find information and advice for how I can continue to change my behaviour (informational support)

My own social support

Start by writing down a plan for getting help from your social support this week. Write as many plans as you feel may be helpful.

Try to be as specific as possible about how these people can help you. This way, when you ask them for their support, they'll know exactly how you would like them to support you.

Who (Person)	How (Possible ways others could help me)