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Social Support and Stress

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A network which involves an individual's family, friends and peers who are able to support the person psychologically and emotionally is called a social support network. Psychologists say that a strong social support network leads to a better coping experience with stress.

Have you ever had a very stressful moment, and suddenly felt bold enough to face the stress all because someone tapped you on the shoulder and said the magical words, *"You can do it!"* ?

What is Stress?

Having a strong social support network can provide a lot of benefits to anyone, because all of us are bombarded by stress in our daily lives. Knowing what a social support network really is and how to cultivate your very own network of supportive people can do wonders in your life as you combat stress.

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Defining Social Support Network

Basically, a social support network is a network of family, friends and peers who provide support in times you are faced with stressful situations. This is not like a support group that is organized by a mental health professional, though; it's more like your group of social supporters who are present on a regular basis, and whom you can relate to even when you

are not under significant stress.

Unlike a support group, your social support network isn't formalized. You don't have to call your friends or family members, sit on a circle and talk about the stressful moments you are enduring. Actually, your quick talk with your parents, siblings or children, your lunch break with an officemate, or your counselling with a church leader are ways wherein you breathe out your stress experience with your social support network, and strengthen your relationship with them at the same time.

Advantages of Social Support Network

Stress can be better managed when your social support network is as strong as it can be. Here are the reasons why you should strive harder in strengthening your relationship with each identified member of your social support network:

Sense of Security

Your social support network has it all – information about your stressful situation, advice on how to manage stress, and even the silence and listening ear you need when you experience burnout. When you have them close by, you know you are secure even when stress seems to consume you.

Source of Strength

When you feel like giving up because of too much stress, your social support network is there to remind you of the abilities you possess to cope up with the stressful situation. They can personally help you with solving problems you can't handle yourself.

Feeling of Belongingness

In times of stressful moments, you may feel alone and no one is there to help you. Calling a friend, your parents, your workmate or your church mate and talking about your feelings, emotions and thoughts will make you feel a lot better and will remind you that there's always someone to comfort and support you.

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