**Building a Support System Worksheet**

**Purpose:**

A strong support system is essential for maintaining mental health, especially during times of stress or personal crisis. People who have reliable emotional support are more likely to cope effectively with challenges, feel connected, and have a sense of belonging. A support system can include family, friends, mentors, therapists, pastors, or even support groups. This worksheet helps you identify and strengthen your support network, fostering relationships that nurture your mental well-being.

By actively building and maintaining a healthy support system, you ensure that you have the resources to navigate difficult emotions, manage stress, and stay resilient in the face of adversity. The goal is to create a network of people you trust and can rely on for guidance, compassion, and understanding when needed.

**Worksheet Instructions:**

1. **Identify Your Current Support System:** Think about the people in your life who provide you with support, whether emotional, practical, or social. Who do you turn to when you're feeling overwhelmed or need someone to talk to? Take a moment to write down the names of those individuals.

**Who are the key people in your current support system?**

1. **Evaluate the Quality of Support:** Not all support systems are equally effective. Some people may offer emotional support, while others may provide practical help. Take a moment to evaluate the type of support each person offers and how you feel about it. Do they listen without judgment? Do they offer helpful advice? Do they simply provide a comforting presence?

**What type of support does each person provide (emotional, practical, social)?**

**How does their support make you feel (supported, understood, uplifted, etc.)?**

1. **Identify Gaps in Your Support System:** Are there areas in your life where you feel you need more support? Perhaps you lack a close friend to talk to, or you feel like you don't have enough emotional support in times of stress. This is an opportunity to recognize any gaps and think about how you can fill them.

**Are there any areas where you feel unsupported?**

**What specific type of support would help you in those areas?**

1. **Strengthening Existing Relationships:** Strengthening your current support system is often just as important as adding new people. What can you do to nurture and maintain the relationships that are already part of your network? Sometimes, simple acts of kindness, appreciation, or communication can deepen these connections.

**How can you strengthen or improve the relationships with people who already support you?**

**What steps can you take to deepen these connections (e.g., regular check-ins, expressing gratitude)?**

1. **Expanding Your Support Network:** If you feel your support system is lacking in certain areas, consider where you might be able to expand. Could you join a support group, reach out to a professional, or connect with people who share similar interests? Expanding your network of support is about seeking people who genuinely understand and encourage your mental health journey.

**Who can you reach out to in order to expand your support network (e.g., new friends, group activities, professional support)?**

1. **Building New Connections:** Building new relationships takes effort, but it can be immensely rewarding. Are there ways to meet new people who align with your values or who might be able to offer helpful support? Whether it's volunteering, joining an interest-based group, or pursuing online communities, new relationships can be a vital part of your mental health toolkit.

**What activities or places could you explore to meet new people?**

**How can you approach making new connections (e.g., joining clubs, talking to a coworker, participating in community events)?**

1. **Reflect on the Importance of Support:** Take a moment to reflect on the role of support in your mental health. How has having a strong network of support impacted your well-being in the past? Think about moments when you felt cared for or understood by others. The strength of a support system lies in knowing that you are not alone in your challenges.

**Why do you believe a strong support system is important for your mental health?**

**How can you ensure that your support system remains strong moving forward?**

**Reflection:**

* **How did it feel to assess your current support system? Was there any surprise in recognizing the gaps or areas for improvement?**
* **What steps do you feel are most important for strengthening your support network right now?**
* **In what ways can you nurture your support system while also working to expand it?**

**Conclusion:**

A strong support system is a cornerstone of mental well-being. By recognizing the importance of the people who support you, evaluating your current network, and actively seeking to nurture and expand your connections, you can create a system that helps you thrive. Remember, building and maintaining a solid support system is an ongoing process, one that requires care, communication, and effort, but it is well worth the investment in your mental health. The more support you have, the better equipped you’ll be to handle life's challenges with resilience and confidence.