

## Guiding Clients to Build Effective Support Networks

Clinician strategies for empowering clients in self-advocacy and relationship-building.

- Client Resistance to Asking for Help *VS.* Normalize advocacy as a strength.
- Fear of Overdependence on a Support Person *VS.* Emphasize balance and boundaries.
- Limited Support Options *VS.* Connect clients to broader community resources.

### Teaching Advocacy Skills

- Equip clients with assertive communication techniques to express their needs.
- Example: I need emotional support without feeling judged.

#### Clinician Role:

- Provide communication frameworks (e.g., "I" statements).
- Conduct role-playing scenarios to practice advocacy skills.

### Encouraging Network Expansion

- Help clients find new sources of support beyond their immediate circle.
- Example: Attend one support group meeting next month.

#### Clinician Role:

- Suggest community resources such as peer recovery groups, online forums, and volunteer programs.
- Guide clients to set small, manageable goals for expanding their network.

### Assessing Client Needs

- Help clients identify their current support system and gaps.
- Who currently supports you, and where do you need more help?

#### Clinician Role:

- Use assessment tools like the Support Network Mapping Worksheet.
- Ask reflective questions to explore emotional, practical, and social needs.

### Supporting Healthy Boundaries

- Ensure clients can establish relationships that promote growth rather than dependency.
- Tip: Teach clients to say "No" when necessary to protect their recovery journey.

#### Clinician Role:

- Guide clients in defining healthy vs. unhealthy support.
- Encourage boundary-setting conversations with their network.

### Reinforcing Long-Term Maintenance

- Encourage regular check-ins and evaluation of support effectiveness.
- Does my current network align with my recovery goals?

#### Clinician Role:

- Help clients reflect on how their network is supporting their recovery.
- Provide periodic self-assessments to identify evolving needs.

### Next Steps:

- Introduce advocacy tools in client sessions.
- Use the "Support Network Mapping" tool to track progress.
- Encourage gradual skill-building over time.