



Tips and tricks to being a positive support person

Support is unique, and the type of support needed can depend on what someone is trying to change. For some situations, encouragement and kind words (also known as emotional support) can support someone ^(1,2,3). In other situations, a tracking tool could be helpful ⁽³⁾. Sometimes it's a combination of things, such as doing a practical action and telling your loved one that they can do this! The kind of support someone needs can change over time, so be open to the idea that it may alter.

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How can you offer help and make sure that you are being a positive support person?

Below are some ideas that you might find helpful:

- **Ask if they want help.** Tell them that you are willing to help them make change, and that you can work out a plan for change together. You may need to try different things before you find what works.
- **Listen.** Listening can be a simple and effective way to show your loved one support throughout their journey. Listening and allowing space to communicate challenges, successes and ideas can allow your loved one to find solutions and continue to work towards their goal.
- **Offer the support you are comfortable giving and remember that it's ok to compromise.** You may not always want to do the same things as your loved one, or make changes to the same extent. Tell your loved one what you are prepared to do, and then compromise and work out a plan together. If your loved one wants you to walk with them every day, but you don't really like walking, maybe you could offer to join them once a week or offer to cook dinner while they go for their walk to support them in a different way.
- **Make sure you understand what they need and why they need it.** Knowing the reason behind the change can help you understand what this change will mean to your loved one, and how it will make them feel.
- **Join them if it's something you also want to do.** Maybe you do it together with your loved one, or do it as a family.
- **Help make healthy choices easier.** If they ask you to keep certain foods out of sight, perhaps enjoy that food at work or outside of the house.
- **Keep it positive.** Don't police or shame or criticise your loved one. Making someone feel bad doesn't help them change. Find the positives in what your loved one is doing.
- **Find new ways to spend time together.** Maybe you will discover your new favourite activity together. A walk after dinner rather than watching TV could be a great way to end the day.
- **Remind your loved one about a past experience where they have tried to make change and have been successful.** Talk about what worked, what didn't work, and decide if some of that knowledge can be used with the changes they are making now.

Remember to celebrate success along the way!

	Emotional support	Instrumental or practical support	Informational support	Technology/tracking support
Being active at every age	Offering my loved one compliments and encouragement. I could say "I'm proud of you" every time they get home from their walk.	Offering my loved one my help. I could cook dinner and clean up on gym nights so they can go to the gym without worrying about home duties.	Helping my loved one get trusted advice or information. I could provide the details of a local Exercise Physiologist so they can make an appointment to see them.	Helping my loved one record their progress. I could join them in a daily steps competition using our Fitbits.
Healthy eating	I could compliment the new healthy recipes that they make for us.	I could offer to meal plan and do the grocery shopping, so that we can have healthy foods in the house.	I could join in watching a documentary about healthy eating, so that we can learn together.	I could put a chart on the fridge so that our family can track how many serves of fruits and vegetables we eat each day.
Low-risk alcohol consumption	I could encourage and remind them to order a non-alcoholic drink when we go out to dinner.	I could buy a bottle of non-alcoholic wine for us to enjoy with dinner, rather than buying alcohol.	I could join in reading the Australian Alcohol Guidelines so that we can be informed together.	I could remind them to fill out their alcohol diary in their My health for life workbook so they can keep track of their consumption and how they felt before and after drinking.
Sleeping well	At night, I could encourage them to go to sleep earlier and gently remind them of the benefits they experience when they get more sleep.	I could go to bed earlier, so the house is dark and quiet and it's easier for them to sleep.	I could research 'sleep hygiene' strategies to see what changes we could make together in our daily routine and our house to improve sleep quality.	In the morning I could ask how refreshing their sleep was (on a scale of 1-10) and ask if their sleep was disturbed by anything. This will help them to reflect on their goal and strategies.

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Living and coping well	I could offer words of validation when they are stressed, e.g. "I can see how much you're juggling right now and know that it's draining. You're doing a great job".	I could offer to take the children out for a few hours on the weekend so they can have some time to themselves.	I could offer to listen to a mindfulness podcast with them.	At the end of the day, I could ask them "What are three good things that happened today?".
Quitting smoking	To learn more about helping your loved one quit, visit: quithq.initiatives.qld.gov.au/helping-others-quit .			
	I could say "I know this is a hard journey and I'm here for you" on a daily basis.	I could spend time with them doing something they enjoy, to keep their mind off smoking.	I could send them a link to an article about quitting smoking and how your doctor can help you quit.	I could encourage them to log their quit days in an app and at the end of every day, offer to sit with them for support.
How does your loved one want to be supported? How can you support them? Do any of the above ideas connect with you? Write your own support strategies below.				

References:

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