

## The More the Merrier: Friends and Family Enhance Well being

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## Objectives

- Define types of support
- Define social network and identify the structural characteristics of your social network size and relationships
- Discuss the relationship between social support and positive health outcomes or well-being

## Types of Social Support

- Socio – emotional- sense of love and longing
- Affection
- Being listened to and valued
- Expressing respect
- Increased sense of self-worth; increased health status (Israel & Schurmann, 1990)
- Instrumental- tangible services and aid
- Financial help
- Housekeeping
- Personal-care
- Altering environment
- Decreases stress; increases life satisfaction (Revicki & Mitchell, 1990)

## Social Networks

- Definition- a social network describes the number of social linkages, frequency of contact, quality of relationships
- Social networks remain stable throughout life.
- Membership in social networks is associated with greater longevity

### *Reciprocity as integral for Understanding Social Exchanges*

- Reciprocity in dyadic relationships is important
- Receipt of help obligates individuals to reciprocate
- Partners in their relationship attempt to maintain a balanced ledger between giving and receiving support

(Blau, 1986)

### **Benefits of Social Support**

- Increase longevity
- Boosts immune systems - reduces the likelihood of illness
- Speeds up recovery process
- Less pain after surgeries-decreased need for medication
- Less Alzheimer's disease or cognitive impairment
- Lower risk of death from heart disease

### *The Contributions of Social Relationships to Psychological Well-Being*

- Need for reciprocation is critical to maintenance of self-worth (Wentowski, 1981).
- Empirical evidence suggests reciprocal support (giving and receiving) is key to successful aging (Rook, 1987) and a predictor of happiness (Antonucci & Akiyama, 1987).
- Balance between support provided and received may be crucial to well-being (Ingersoll-Dayton & Antonucci, 1988).
- If social exchange of support is one-sided, dominated by caring or dependence on others, elderly become lonely and dissatisfied with their social network (Rook, 1987)

### **Importance Socialization**

- Provides for physical and emotional needs
- Provide formal or informal network to provide help when needed
- Creates opportunities for continued growth and learning
- Gives purpose to life- "it is better to give than to receive"

## Sources of Socialization

- Family ?
  - Friends?
  - Work?
  - Sports
  - Church?
  - School?
  - Organizations?
- If you had a health crisis, how would these opportunities to socialize be affected?



## Factors that influence social support

- Finances
- Culture
- Gender
- Abilities
- Age
- Health



## *Maximizing Support: Participants Redefined Support as Deference*

- Four Types of Deference
  - Participation – involved in activities to please others
  - Pleasantness – not complaining; being agreeable
  - Cooperation – giving into; allow others to help; being cooperative
  - Gratitude – Being thankful; displaying verbal or behavioral appreciation

## Discussion

What can you do to enhance your social support network?

## Conclusion

- Friendship is a living thing that only lasts as long as it is nourished with kindness, sympathy and understanding
- A real friend warms you by her presence, trust you with her secrets, and remembers you in her prayers
- A friend is one who is there to care

You need an experience with at least one person, who cares about you. It doesn't matter at what age this person appears. If you didn't have a close relationship when younger, and you now have one close person in your life, that makes up for the early deficiency. That person can appear at any time in the life cycle, even on the day of death. One does not need to make up for lost time. (Weininger & Meinkin, 1983)

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