

# Asking for Help

## Learning to Ask

### What Do You Need?

- ✓ First, figure out what you need. Do you need physical support like food, shelter or medical attention? Do you need a friend or a shoulder to cry on?
- ✓ Try writing down what you need. Include everything you can think of.
- ✓ Prioritize your list. Ask yourself, "What do I need the most?"
- ✓ If you don't know what you need, ask a friend, relative, social worker, therapist or your doctor to help you figure it out.
- ✓ Figuring out your needs and asking for help can be scary. Don't be afraid to talk about how hard it is.

### Take Small Steps

- ✓ Once you've identified what you need, take a step-by-step approach to getting help.

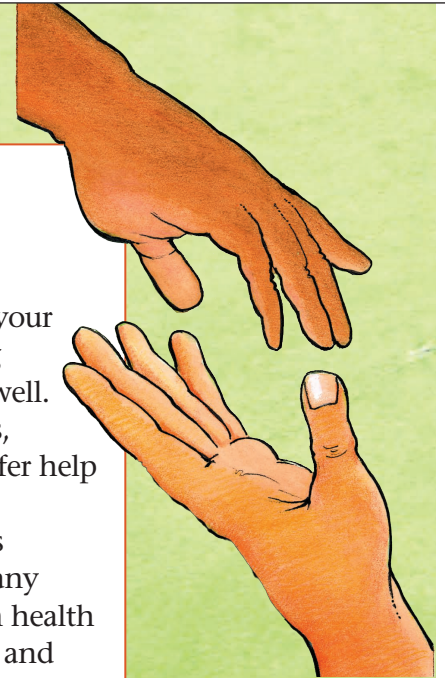
- ✓ Make a schedule of when you are most likely to need help.
- ✓ Whenever possible, arrange for help ahead of time.
- ✓ Keep a list of phone numbers handy for unexpected needs.

### Who Can You Ask?

- ✓ Family and close friends may be your first resource. But consider asking neighbors and acquaintances as well.
- ✓ Service clubs, community centers, churches and synagogues may offer help during times of need.
- ✓ Your local health or social services office may be able to help too. Many communities offer assistance with health care, meals, housing, finding jobs and transportation for those in need.

### How to Ask

- ✓ Be direct. If you are asking a friend or relative, say, "I need help."
- ✓ Make specific requests: "Can you drive me to the doctor on Tuesday?" or "Will you bring me dinner tomorrow?"
- ✓ Consider asking a friend to contact others for you. For example, a friend may be able to organize support during a long illness.
- ✓ It's good to ask for help, but it's also OK for someone to say no.
- ✓ Don't be distressed if someone says no to your request. Finding help may take a few tries. Try asking someone else.
- ✓ While it may feel hard to ask for help now, later on you may be able to return the favor.



# Who Needs Help?

We all need help sometimes. An accident, illness or other emergency can signal a time to reach out. Life changes, such as the death of a loved one or a move, can create special needs. Sometimes day-to-day living becomes just too much to handle. One thing is certain: At one time or another, everyone needs help.

## Asking... the Hardest Part

It takes courage to ask for help. You show your courage when you overcome false ideas such as, "I should be able to take care of everything myself," or "There's no point asking. There really isn't anything anyone can do." Just by thinking about asking, you are taking the first step—admitting that you need help.

## Be Prepared When Friends Offer

- ✓ When people ask, "What can I do?" pull out your list of needs.
- ✓ If you are part of a group or club, send around a sign-up sheet at a meeting.
- ✓ You may be surprised at how many people want to help but just don't know how.

## Check In with Yourself

- ✓ Are you figuring out what you need and how to ask? Are you getting your needs met?
- ✓ If not, try a different approach. Learning to ask for help takes practice.
- ✓ Do you need help just once or do you have an ongoing need? If your need is ongoing, consider widening your resources.

## Get Help with Your Feelings

- ✓ If you have discovered you can't ask for help or you feel overwhelmed, talk with a social worker, therapist or doctor.



✓ Have day-to-day problems or a special situation such as an illness or death left you feeling overwhelmed?

✓ Do you need help but are not sure where to turn?

Asking for help is a special skill. These suggestions can help you learn to ask, so that you can get the help you need when you need it the most.



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