

Identify Your “Breathe” Supports

“Breathe” supports are people who can be relied upon to notice, before you do, that you are either stressed or distressed. They intervene and offer support. Support may come in any form. anything that helps you care for yourself in that moment and as you move forward.

The “breathe” idea comes from my experience with a friend who notices my tension and anxiety, reaches out to me and simply says “Shirley, breathe.” This brief response prompts me to pause, reflect on how I am feeling, and then move forward in a more mindful and helpful way.

Take a few moments to reflect on your “breathe” supports:

- Who supports you now, and what kind of support do they provide (social, physical, intellectual, emotional or spiritual)?
- Within your network of support, who is in regular contact with you and in a position to notice if you are either stressed or distressed? Can this person become a “breathe” support?
- Consider your network of supports. Do you have sufficient supports in place, or do you need to expand your network? What do you need to begin expanding your network?
- Consider where you are you in your own support network. Can you “take your own temperature”? What do you do to recognize your symptoms of stress and care for yourself?
- Or, what do you need to begin to recognize your symptoms of stress and respond with self care activity?

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