

WHAT WORD COMES TO YOUR MIND?

Look at the partial word below and notice what your mind supplies first. There is no need to solve it immediately. Your first association is part of the reflection.

—	—	—	—	O	R	T
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

What came to mind first?

What might that response connect with in your life right now?

NOW REVEAL THE WORD

SUPPORT

Support can mean practical help, emotional presence, information, advocacy, adjustments, reassurance, companionship or simply somebody staying alongside us while we work something out.

Needing support is not a measure of weakness. Human beings have different needs, capacities and circumstances, and those can change over time.

WHAT DOES GOOD SUPPORT FEEL LIKE?

Support works best when it responds to the person rather than assuming everybody needs the same thing. Being helped can feel reassuring, but it can also feel exposing or uncomfortable when previous experiences have taught us that asking comes with judgement, rejection or loss of control.

Support feels genuinely helpful to me when...

Support becomes unhelpful when...

I find asking for help difficult because...

Something I need more support with right now is...

Listening before fixing

Sometimes the most useful question is: 'Would you like me to listen, help you think it through, or help practically?' Support does not always require an answer. Being heard without being rushed, corrected or immediately given advice can be valuable in itself.

Support should preserve choice

Helpful support aims to increase safety, access and autonomy rather than take over unnecessarily. Where possible, the person receiving support should remain involved in decisions about what happens next.

BUILDING YOUR SUPPORT MAP

One person does not have to meet every need. A support network can include personal relationships, professionals, communities, practical services, workplace adjustments, routines, technology and self-support strategies.

People I can contact for emotional support:

People or services that can help practically:

Professional or specialist support available to me:

One thing I would like to ask for more clearly:

One way I can support myself alongside outside help:

Make the request specific

Instead of 'I need help', it can sometimes be easier to say what would help: 'Could you sit with me while I make this call?' 'Can you listen without giving advice for ten minutes?' 'Could you write that information down for me?' Specific requests can make support easier to understand and provide.

If support has let you down before

It makes sense that trust may take time after dismissal, inconsistency or harmful experiences. You can begin with smaller requests, notice how somebody responds and build trust gradually. You are allowed to have boundaries around who supports you and how.

A MESSAGE FROM MAGGIE

Many people become used to being the one who copes, organises, listens or looks after everybody else. Asking for support can then feel unfamiliar, uncomfortable or even like failure.

I do not see support that way. We all have times when we need somebody beside us, whether that is emotional support, practical help, professional knowledge, an adjustment or simply another person who understands that things are difficult.

Good support should not erase your voice. It should help you feel more able to understand your options, communicate your needs and make decisions that belong to you.

If asking for everything feels too much, begin with one specific need and one person or service that might be able to meet it. Support can start small.

Maggie Learoyd MNCPS - Space to Breathe Therapy

THERAPEUTIC CONTEXT & FURTHER READING

Person-centred therapy emphasises empathic understanding, acceptance and respect for autonomy. Social-support research distinguishes between forms of support such as emotional, informational and practical assistance, while trauma-informed practice highlights safety, choice, collaboration and empowerment.

Suggested reading: Carl R. Rogers, *On Becoming a Person*; Brené Brown, *The Gifts of Imperfection*; Bruce D. Perry and Oprah Winfrey, *What Happened to You?*; Vivek H. Murthy, *Together*.

This resource is for reflection and psychoeducation. It is not a diagnostic tool or a substitute for individual medical, mental-health or emergency support.