A social support system consists of a network of relationships with people who support your recovery and offer help to meet your needs. Your support system may consist of family, friends, professionals (i.e., doctor, counselor, dietician, personal trainer, etc.), twelve step meeting members, coworkers, neighbors, spouse, children, or any one with whom you have a more than superficial relationship. People that utilize an active support system for their recovery have a higher probability of sustained abstinence and continuing recovery.

Socializing and social contact with others helps to reduce isolation, depression, loneliness, boredom, and stress. Social support systems serve as a major tool not only to assist you in staying clean and sober, but with improving your physical and mental health, to improve your problem solving, and to enhance emotional development and maturity. Everyone has a need to feel like they fit in, belong, and are wanted. So many things change in your life with recovery. A social support system helps you know that you are not alone while you are making these changes.

To assess your support system needs and to assemble a support system helpful to your ongoing recovery efforts, answer the following questions:

### A. Who was in your support system before you got into recovery?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Kind of support they provided</th>
<th>Are they drinkers/drug users?</th>
<th>Did you drink/use with them?</th>
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</table>
B. Who of this group, do I need to NOT spend time with right now, and why?

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

C. What do I need from a social support system now?

___ Someone to discuss a personal problem
___ Someone to spend time with
___ Someone to do things with (shopping, movies, walks, sporting events, going out to eat, etc.)
___ Someone to help me with tasks (gardening, fixing something that is broken, taking care of my dog when I am out of town, etc.)
___ Someone that can cheer me up when I am down
___ Someone that reminds me that I am worthwhile and is on my side
___ Someone to give me important feedback
___ Someone to teach me how to do things
___ Someone to work out with
___ Someone to provide comfort when I am scared, lonely, tired
___ Someone that I can share my feelings with
___ Someone who helps me achieve the next great thing in my life
___ Someone who helps me find things that I need
___ Someone who can serve as an accountability partner
___ Someone who will tell me when my thinking is squirrelly
___ Someone that calls me on my dishonesty
___ Someone that helps me identify my motives
___ Someone that knows how to stay clean and sober and can teach me
___ Someone who helps me solve problems by asking questions, giving me feedback, and making suggestions.
___ Someone who can help me learn how to have fun sober
___ Someone that can give me a ride to meetings
___ Others _______________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
D. List reasons why a recovering alcoholic/addict might need a network of people who support his or her continuing abstinence and ongoing recovery.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Look over your list and identify which ones could be true for you. Instead of thinking of reasons why these reasons for a support group do not apply to you, identify the ones that could possibly be true.

E. When I stop spending time with people that might not be good for my continuing recovery at this time, who will be left in my support system?

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Type of support</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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F. When I compare the list of what I need from a support system (C) with the list of who will be left in my support system (E), what needs will not be met by my remaining support system as it is now.

1.

2.
G. Who (among the people that I already know), do I need/want to cultivate as a support person to round out my support network at this time?

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H. List other resources (places, groups, activities, etc.) that could help me meet new people to add to my support network.

1.

2.

3.

4.

I. What might keep me from asking people to be in my support system, to be my friend, or to cultivate relationships?

___It is difficult for me to ask for help.
___I am shy
___I have social anxiety
___I don’t want to tell anybody else that I am in recovery or that I have addiction.
___I don’t know anybody that would be appropriate.
___I don’t want to be a burden to anyone.
2012, Worksheet for Establishing a Support System
By Peggy L. Ferguson, Ph.D.

___ I feel guilty about things that have happened in the past.
___ My spouse/partner gets jealous of my spending time with other people.
___ I asked people to do things with me in the past and nothing came of it.
___ I don’t have time.
___ I end up providing all the support to the other person.
___ I am afraid that I will be rejected.
___ I don’t want to sound helpless.
___ I don’t want to be vulnerable by opening up to others.
___ I don’t like the suggestions that other people offer.
___ Others ____________________________________________________________

J. What might I do to overcome these obstacles to ask people for help and support?
If I need to meet new people, where can I go or what can I do to accomplish that?
___ Ask someone to coffee, lunch, dinner.
___ Ask someone to go to the movies, the theater, roller skating, fishing, or some other activity _____________________
___ Ask someone to go to a support group meeting with me.
___ Ask someone to start working out with me.
___ Volunteer with some organization to help other people.
___ Go to twelve step recovery meetings. Go early; stay late, talk to people.
___ Attend church.
___ Reconcile with people who may still be mad at me.
___ Make an appointment with professional helper(s) such as minister, counselor, psychiatrist, nutritionist, personal trainer, recovery coach, etc.
___ Join community organization(s).
___ Taking a class; joining a group like yoga/meditation/stress management
___ Others_______________________________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________
J. My Call To Action.

Today, I will _____________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

This week, I will _________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

This month, I will _________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2012, Peggy L. Ferguson, Ph.D., Hubbard House Publishing, Stillwater, OK.

Understanding Cross Addiction To Prevent Relapse
By Peggy L. Ferguson, Ph.D.

A simple guide for professional and the general information seeker alike. This relapse prevention guide specific to cross addiction issues covers description and explanation of the nature of addiction and cross addiction, examples of how cross addiction leads to relapse, and a worksheet to assist in relapse prevention. “Understanding Cross Addiction To Prevent Relapse” is a digital product.

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