

What are Natural Supports?

Natural Supports can be defined as personal ways of getting help for things an individual cannot do on his/her own. A “natural” support is a



parent, relative, neighbor, church, or close friend with whom

someone already has an existing and trusting relationship.

Natural Supports not only make sense, they also save the individual and the mental health system money by asking an acquaintance to help with these types of activities instead of paying someone to do them.

NATURAL SUPPORTS:

Getting Help From People We Know the Best and Trust the Most!

Examples of Natural Supports

There are many ways in which a natural support system is a benefit. Some of the kinds of assistance that such a system can provide include:

- Assistance in and around the individual's home (house cleaning, mowing the lawn, dropping off meals, helping with laundry).



- Provide sound money management advice (budgeting, check writing, comparison shopping, how to save money).

- Help in getting around the community (giving rides, shopping, running errands, attending sporting events or church).
- Support in work or school (car pooling, tutoring, buddy system, etc.).

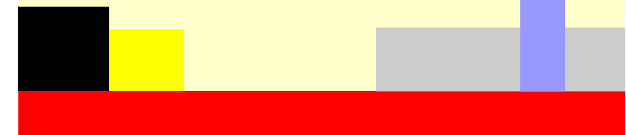
When Natural Supports Don't Exist

When an individual does not have a personal network (such as when they move to a community away from friends and family), building a natural support system should be something he/she develops as soon as possible.

Workers can assist individuals to develop a natural support network that will work for them. Workers

can also assist individuals to find ways to give back to their natural support people,

and do their part to build a nurturing, “give and take” relationship.



What does the term 'Natural Supports' Mean to You?

From our consumers:

- "My dad and brother give me rides to see my family in Grand Rapids so I don't have to ride the bus."

Sue — Northern Lakes CMH

- "People put together baskets from the food pantry to give to people when they run out of money."

Bernard — Northern Lakes CMH

- "My coworkers support me — complimenting me and helping me get through some things."

Paul — West Michigan CMH

- "My best friend makes me laugh. She cares and calls, and comes to visit me. She's very supportive."

Penny — West Michigan CMH

- "School sporting events get the whole family out together and let the kids interact with other kids."

Faith — Northern Lakes CMH

- "My younger sister lifts my spirits when I get down, laughs with me when I'm happy, cries with me when I'm sad, and if I'm crying, makes me laugh and feel better."

Tricia — Northern Lakes CMH

For more information about **Natural Supports**, and how you can develop a natural support system of your own, contact the Northwest Community Mental Health Affiliation at:

Northern Lakes Community Mental Health

Grand Traverse, Leelanau Counties

(231) 922-4850

(231) 935-3871 TTY

Crawford, Missaukee, Roscommon,

Wexford Counties

(800) 492-5742

(231) 876-3281 TTY

West Michigan Community Mental Health

Lake, Mason, Oceana Counties

(231) 845-6294

(800) 992-2061

(800) 790-8326 TTY

www.nwcmha.org

Northwest Community Mental Health Affiliation receives its principal funding from the Michigan Department of Community Health.

These materials were reviewed by consumers.



Natural Supports

The right care • The right place • The right time

