



● **MODULE 6:**
RELATIONSHIPS AND SUPPORT NETWORKS

If you do not already know, this module will help you to:

1. Understand the importance of supportive relationships;
2. Identify unhealthy relationships and how to disengage from them;
3. Understand how to be safe online and the impact your social media presence can have on your life;
4. Deal with conflict;
5. Understand the impact that friends' have on your tenancy;
6. Understand how isolation can impact on building unhealthy relationships;
7. Identify and build your support network.



MODULE 6:

RELATIONSHIPS AND SUPPORT NETWORKS

First off, let's see what you already know...

1. It is always best to have as many people around you as possible when living independently.
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. Imagine someone who lives in your street starts an argument with you about not collecting your bin in from the street straight after it has been collected. What is the appropriate reaction to this?
 - a. Shout at the neighbour without listening to their side of the argument
 - b. Call the police
 - c. Contact your landlord
 - d. Listen to your neighbour's side of the argument whilst being assertive and sticking up for yourself where needed
 - e. Apologise straight away
3. You have been friends with Sam for 12 years and went to school together. But when you move into your property, you begin to notice that Sam is always there too. You realise that Sam has not been home for 4 days, and that they asked you to leave a key when you went to a job interview yesterday. What should you do?
 - a. Approach the subject sensitively but tell Sam that you have noticed they have been spending a lot of time with you in your property, and that you could get into trouble for someone else living in the property without declaring it
 - b. Tell Sam they have overstayed their welcome and need to go home
 - c. Don't say anything, Sam probably has good reasons for spending all this time with you in your property and you would not want to lose a friend by confronting them.
4. Within your social media accounts, what information should you NOT include as public information?
 - a. Your address
 - b. Your birthday
 - c. Your cat's name
 - d. Your mobile phone number
 - e. When you are going on holiday

- 5.** Which of the following would help you build a strong support network?
- a.** Identify your friends who are positive influences on you and spend time with them
 - b.** Visit family members you haven't seen in a while
 - c.** Explore activities in your local area that you enjoy where you might meet people
 - d.** Identify you friends who are negative influences on you and spend time with them
 - e.** Look into volunteering, education or work opportunities where you might meet people

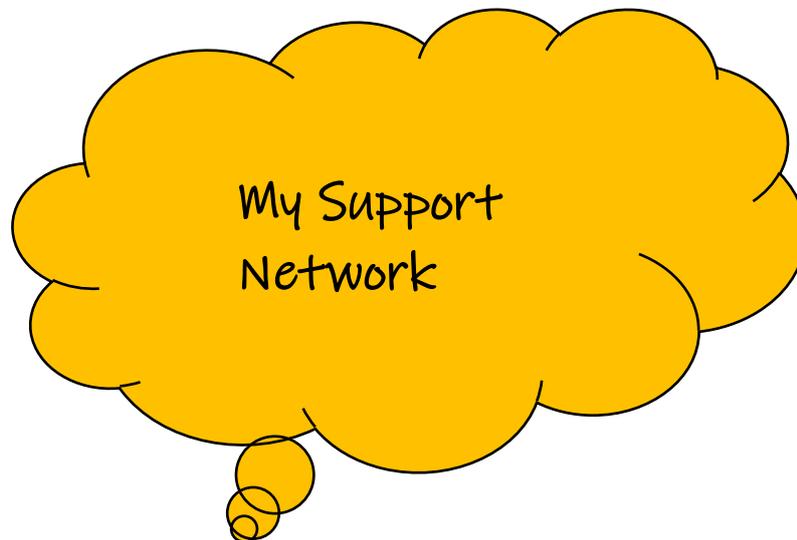
● MODULE 6:

RELATIONSHIPS AND SUPPORT NETWORKS

Support networks

Care Leavers have told us that when they move to live independently, feeling lonely is quite common and it is easy to become isolated.

We all know that having a support network around us is incredibly important – especially when you are living on your own. Think about the people in your life at the moment. Who would you class as your support network? Write your ideas below:



TOP TIP: As well as your close friends and family, social media can sometimes offer us some support. Think about whether your support network would get bigger if you thought about the people you speak to online or are friends with on social media. Add these people to the spider diagram above...



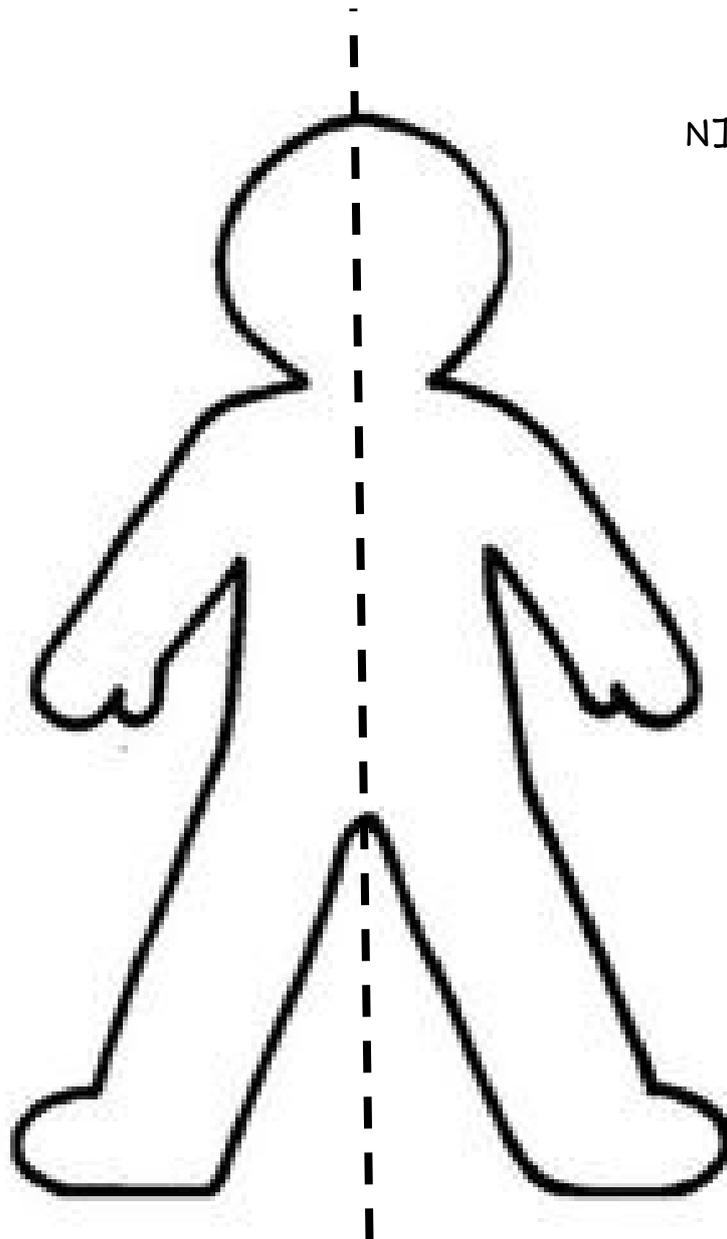
MODULE 6:

RELATIONSHIPS AND SUPPORT NETWORKS

Dream vs. Nightmare Partner/Friend

Think about the qualities you would want in your dream partner or friend. Then think about the opposite of these qualities. Write these down below and discuss why these qualities are on each side:

DREAM



NIGHTMARE

TOP TIP: You should be wary if your partner or friend has a number of the characteristics you put on the nightmare side. You will be able to get support from your Personal Advisor or close family and friends if this becomes a problem.

● MODULE 6:

RELATIONSHIPS AND SUPPORT NETWORKS

Unhealthy Relationships

Domestic abuse is defined by the Metropolitan Police as 'any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 and over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality'. Domestic abuse can be presented in a variety of ways including:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Psychological abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Financial abuse

Let's break those down a bit more:

Controlling behaviour: This type of abuse leaves the victim feeling dependent or subordinate to the abuser. This type of abuse can be very common, with acts including:

- Isolating the victim from sources of support
- Exploiting the victims resources for the personal gain of the abuser
- Depriving the victim of their independence, or rights to resistance or escape from the situation
- Regulating the victims everyday behaviour, setting out what they can and cannot do.

Physical abuse: This is the use of physical force against someone in a way intended to injure or endanger someone.

Sexual abuse: This is a form of physical abuse. Forced sex, even by a partner who you have had consensual sex with before, is an act of violence and aggression.

Honour-based abuse: This type of abuse is often the result of someone attempting to protect their 'honour' and can include physical violence and verbal threats. Victims of honour-based violence have usually been perceived to have shamed their family, and the abuse is a way of reducing the impact of this and maintaining the perceived 'honour'.

Forced Marriage: Forced marriage is very different to arranged marriage. In a situation of forced marriage, the victim may be threatened by a family member if they do to enter into the marriage. This is a criminal offense, so if you think someone is becoming a victim of a forced marriage you should report it to the police.

Emotional or Psychological Abuse: This often includes verbal abuse including: yelling, name calling, blaming and shaming. Isolation, intimidation and controlling behaviour also fall under the category of emotional abuse.

Coercive behaviour: This includes acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten a victim

Gaslighting: This is defined as trying to convince someone they are wrong about something when they are not. This can become toxic over a long period of time and can result in a victim doubting their own ideas and thoughts.

● MODULE 6:

RELATIONSHIPS AND SUPPORT NETWORKS

Self-Esteem and Conflict Management

Self-esteem is the way you think about yourself. For example, people with low self-esteem have little belief in their own ability, which can have a damaging impact on many aspects of life.

A great way to challenge low self-esteem is to think about the negative views you have about yourself, put them aside and then identify some of the positive things about yourself and what you can do well – there will be more than you think! You could even think about the things your family and friends would say you are good at. It may be helpful to write these down to remind yourself.

Low self-esteem can have a damaging impact, take this scenario for example:

STEPHEN: Stephen has been living on his own for a couple of months, but recently has been feeling low in mood and has no belief in himself. Here are some of the things that could happen next:

1. Stephen could have friends stay in his property throughout the week so he has some company, however there is often a limit on the amount of time guests can stay in a property before it affects your rent and tenancy
2. Large groups of people could turn up to his property for a party arranged by others
3. He could find himself become a victim of cuckooing

CONSEQUENCES: Although Stephen could argue the above issues are not directly his fault, they put him at risk of losing his property because:

1. There is usually a limit on how long guests can stay at Stephen's property before this impacts his rent and tenancy, especially if he does not tell his landlord someone is staying for an extended period of time;
2. Neighbours could complain if they hear a lot of noise coming from Stephen's property when he has a lot of friends over;
3. Having more people in the property increases the risk of things getting damaged. If these are substantial, the landlord could evict him.

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN THEN? If Stephen is evicted from his property, he may find it difficult to find somewhere else to live as housing associations will know he has been evicted in the past and will question whether this could happen again.

Having higher self-esteem would allow Stephen to stand up to his friends and tell them that they could not stay in his property all of the time and the reasons for this, as well as discouraging his friends from arranging a party just because he has a property of his own. Stephen could also avoid becoming more vulnerable and risk people targeting him because of living alone for things including cuckooing (which you will hear more about in a later module).



MODULE 6:

RELATIONSHIPS AND SUPPORT NETWORKS

Self-Esteem and Conflict Management

It is important that you are confident and able to manage any risky situations you may find yourself in, and this becomes even more important when you live independently so that you can avoid consequences like the ones mentioned earlier for Stephen.

Have a look at the following statements and arrange them in terms of how risky you think they are ranging from:

LEAST RISKY –

would not have much
of an impact on my life

MOST RISKY –

would have a big
impact on my life



Going back to someone's
house who you have only
met that night

Bringing someone back to
your house who you have
only met that night

Walking home on your
own after a night out

Waking up the next day
with no memory of the
night before

Regretting something you
said to a friend the night
before

Getting home on your
own and passing out
drunk

● MODULE 6: *RELATIONSHIPS AND SUPPORT NETWORKS*

Useful links –

For more information about self-esteem and ways you can boost it:

- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/raising-low-self-esteem/>

For more information about Domestic Violence and about services in your local area:

- <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/community/communitysafety/domestic/DomesticAbuse.asp>
x <https://www.staffordshire.police.uk/domesticabuse>
- [What is domestic abuse? | The Met](#)
- [Gaslighting — what are the signs and how can it be addressed? | Relate](#)

For more information about human trafficking:

- [Report human trafficking - Citizens Advice](#)

For more information about grooming:

- [Grooming | NSPCC](#)