



Goodbye to Going It Alone: Learning to Ask for Help Handout

Have you learned that being independent is a strength? Have you learned that this is something you should strive for? Independence is being able to see your feelings, needs and struggles. Independence also means that you have the courage to ask for what you need.

How do you know when you need help?

- Look to your feelings. Your feelings may tell you that you need help. What are you feeling now? Are you tired, sad, lonely, frustrated, or worried?
- Have you noticed body changes linked to your feelings? Has your sleep changed? Do you have more headaches?
- Have you seen changes in your behavior? Have you become short tempered or forgetful?

Practice paying attention to your feelings

- Make a list or find a list of potential feelings.
- Notice and name the feelings as they arise.
- Consider tracking how you are feeling in a journal.
- Observe your feelings.
- Explore what your feelings are trying to tell you.
- Let go. Attempting to ignore or resist a feeling may make it hurt more.
- When you accept the feeling, it will move along.

How do you ask for help? What are barriers that keep you from seeking help?

- Thoughts or beliefs: Believing you are weak if you need help or being worried you are a burden to others if you need help
- Emotional barriers: Fear or embarrassment about needing help
- Expectations: Believing that you can do everything on your own



Strategies to overcome barriers

- Take issue with the negative thoughts about yourself. Consider saying, “I deserve to get support.”
- Own your decisions: “It is my choice to sacrifice. It is my responsibility to ask for what I need.”
- Don’t expect, ask! Others can’t read your mind. Ask for what you need.

Who do I ask for help?

- Brainstorm a list of names and contact information. Keep your list close by, keep adding to it, and use it as a reminder that help is available. Your list of names could include family, friends and neighbors. It could also include agencies in your town, your church and support lines. Your list could include VA or medical providers too.

How do I ask for help?

- Be clear and be specific.
- Ask in a way that gives the person a way to say no. “I know you are busy and maybe you can’t help but I need a ride to the doctor’s office next week. I certainly understand if you aren’t able.”
- Speak in general terms. “I have been struggling to keep up with chores and caregiving for my husband. I am seeking help with chores, shopping and yardwork.”
- If you could give it some thought and let me know if you are able to help, that would be great. Any help you can give is appreciated. I know everyone is busy, so I understand if you don’t have time.
- Think of a few ideas how people can help you. Someone may not be able to help with your exact request, but maybe they could help in another way.