















# Connection to Self and Others: Personal and Professional Supports

## Research:

- A strong social support network can be critical to help you through the stress of tough times, whether you've had a bad day at work or a year filled with loss or chronic illness. And the lack of social support can lead to isolation and loneliness. Since supportive family, friends and co-workers are such an important part of your life, it's never too soon to cultivate these important relationships. (Mayo Clinic Health Systems)
- Social support is exceptionally important for maintaining good physical and mental health. Overall, it appears that positive social support of high quality can enhance resilience to stress, help protect against developing trauma-related psychopathology, decrease the functional consequences of trauma-induced disorders, such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and reduce medical morbidity and mortality. (Southwick SM, Vythilingam M, Charney DS. The psychobiology of depression and resilience to stress: Implications for prevention and treatment. Annu Rev Clin Psychol. 2005; 1:255–91)

## Introductory Statement:

Your ability to make progress toward your goals can be affected by your support system, whether people in your life are draining or supportive, whether the people around you think your goals are important and can share resources to help you make progress.

## Open-Ended Questions:

- How would you describe your networks, both personal and professional?
- When you think about the important relationships in your life, which ones are supportive and which ones are draining?
- Tell me about the people in your life who can help you make progress on your goals (e.g., give you advice about school, provide job leads, serve as a mentor and give you other information or resources that could help you)?
- Can you share with me what you know of programs in your community that offer support and resources? Are you using any of these supports?

## Notes:

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# Employment and Career Management: Earnings Levels

## Research:

**Introductory Statement:** ECEAP uses a tool called The Self Sufficiency Calculator for Washington State<sup>1</sup> that helps people figure out how much they would need to earn to be self-sufficient. Generally, economic self-sufficiency means being able to support your family without getting any government assistance (such as food stamps, TANF and subsidized housing or child care). You may only work on part of your journey while you are in ECEAP. During that time, we want to make sure we support you to make as much progress as you can.

Current Population Survey data indicate that rural workers were more likely than urban workers to be poor or near-poor. Poor and near-poor rural workers were more likely than other workers to be southern, young, and in a minority group. Barriers to livable-wage employment included low educational attainment, being a single mother, and having young children. (Family Structure and Employment Characteristics Differentiate Poor from Near-Poor Workers, Dagata, Elizabeth M.)

Many of the severe labor market problems that American workers experience today, and will experience in the coming decade, are rooted not in the shortage of jobs, or in the quality of workers themselves, but in the quality of jobs employers offer. The most devastating effects of declining job quality, especially for workers with less than advanced degrees, has been stagnant or declining real (inflation-adjusted) wages and compensation, growing wage inequality, and the increasing incidence of low and poverty-wage jobs—especially

pronounced for young workers (ages eighteen to thirty-four). ( Declining Job Quality in the United States, David R. Howell)

## Open-Ended Questions:

- Can you discuss your current employment, are there opportunities for growth in your current job?
- What did you learn from previous jobs about what you enjoyed most or were good at?
- What skills or knowledge would you bring to a job?
- What type of career interests you?

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1. [www.thecalculator.org](http://www.thecalculator.org)

