

# Defining Natural Supports

Natural supports are personal relationships typically developed in the community which involve give-and-take. These relationships enhance the quality and security of lives for people. They may include:

- ✔ family relationships
- ✔ friendships within the community
- ✔ association with fellow students in regular classrooms
- ✔ people from a 12 step meeting
- ✔ members of a congregation
- ✔ acquaintances from a support group
- ✔ colleagues at the work place
- ✔ daily or regular contacts made with those who work in the neighborhood
- ✔ associations developed thru participation in clubs, organizations or civic activities

*"My advocate wife sees to it nobody gives me a raw deal. I don't know where I'd be today if it hadn't been for my wife."*

*-Consumer*

*"...paid providers will come and go... The only constant in anyone's life is the connection with family and friends."*

*-Cathy Ludlum*

*"I have heard people say 'I am getting more out of this support group than from my doctor, my talk therapist, or anywhere else.' "*

*-Consumer*

*"Having a friend is a way of feeling comfortable with who I am, having more esteem and respect—esteem and faith in myself and trust to let go and be who I am in a social setting..."*

*-Consumer*

Onken, S. J. et al. (2002). *Mental Health Recovery: What Helps and What Hinders?* A National Research Project for the Development of Recovery Facilitating System Performance Indicators. National Technical Assistance Center for State Mental Health Planning, National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors.



Center for Rehabilitation and Recovery