



Understand Social Support

This activity will help you to understand the different forms of social support and to consider the ways in which support can be helpful and, at times, not helpful.

Instructions:

After watching Bill and Marilyn’s case study, answer the following questions.

- 1. What are some examples of **emotion-focused** support that Marilyn provided? Were they helpful?

Our thoughts about Marilyn’s emotion-focused support:

Marilyn created a loving and welcoming space where Bill felt safe expressing himself. She listened closely, showing she understood his perspective. She also conveyed confidence in his ability to navigate his emotions and embrace new opportunities, like returning to school.

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2. What are some examples of **problem-focused** support that Marilyn provided? Were they helpful?

Our thoughts about Marilyn’s problem-focused support:

By attending Bill's therapy sessions and learning what he needed to do, Marilyn was setting the stage to be an effective supporter. If needed, she could remind Bill of how or when to do his physical therapy exercises.

- By encouraging Bill to follow through on his exercises, she could help him when his motivation was low.
- By doing the exercises with him, Marilyn showed Bill that she cares and that he isn't alone.
- By working together to choose upbeat music, Marilyn helped Bill to see the exercises in a more positive light, as something fun the two of them were doing together.
- Marilyn encouraged Bill to do as many tasks as possible, helping him to feel, and stay, as independent as he could.
- Even though Bill rebelled at times and acted angry, Marilyn did not give in to his demands, and Bill was able to follow through with his exercise program.
- Marilyn supported Bill in his decision to return to school, sharing his perspective that although he couldn't continue with his previous form of employment, other careers were possible.